

CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS

The Backdrop of Global Mission

How to face challenges the contemporary
world presents to missionary work

SCOTT A. ARMSTRONG



The Backdrop of Global Mission

A Cross-Cultural Missions Course

Church of the Nazarene

Mesoamerica Region

Scott Armstrong



The Backdrop of Global Mission
A book in the School of Leadership series.
A Cross-Cultural Missions Course

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Introduction

The School of Leadership book series is designed to provide a tool for the church to train and educate its members so they can actively participate in Christian service according to the gifts and calling (vocation) they have received from their Lord.

Each book provides study materials for a course of the School of Leadership program that is offered by the Theological Institutions of the Mesoamerica Region of the Church of the Nazarene. These are: AIBN serving Guatemala North; ASTN serving El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua; SENAMEX North serving Central and South Mexico; and SENDAS serving Costa Rica and Panama. The leaders and the schools (presidents, directors, academic vice presidents and directors of decentralized academic studies) actively participated in the program design.

The School of Leadership has five core courses common to all ministries and six specialized courses for each individual ministry. After completing the series, the respective Theological Institution gives the student a certificate (or diploma) in Specialized Ministry.

The general objective of the School of Leadership is “to work with the local church in equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, giving them solid, theological, Biblical knowledge and developing them through the exercise of their gifts for service in their local congregation and in society.” The specific objectives of this program are threefold:

- Develop the ministerial gifts of the local congregation.
- Multiply service ministries in the church and community.
- Raise awareness of the vocation of professional ministry in its diverse forms.

This series entitled *Cross-Cultural Missions* has the objective of helping churches to be aware of the reality of the world today without Christ. The purpose is to involve the church in the preparation and support of those called to cross-cultural missions. We want to thank Ruben and Monica Fernandez, Benjamin Cruz, Ana Crocker, Maddai Gonzalez, Erika Hasenauer, David Campos, Claudia Cruz, Esther Quezada, Marlen de Soria, David Cooper, Charles Gailey, Ulises Solis, Sara de Diaz, German and Patricia Picavea, Samuel Aparicio and Shelley Webb who all contributed to this project.

A special thanks to Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez for her dedication as General Editor of the project, to the Regional Ministry Coordinators, and to the team of writers and designers who collaborated to publish these books. An additional thanks to the teachers who will share these materials. They will make a difference in the lives of thousands of people throughout the Mesoamerica Region.

Finally, I give thanks to Rev. Edwin Martinez and his team in Mesoamerica Regional Literature for the publication and distribution of these materials, and to Dr. L. Carlos Saenz, Mesoamerica Regional Director, for his continued support in this task, which is the result of his conviction of the important need for the church to be comprehensively trained.

I pray for God’s blessing for all the disciples whose lives and Christian service will be enriched by these books.

Scott Armstrong
Coordinator of Global Mission
Mesoamerica Region

What Is the School of Leadership?

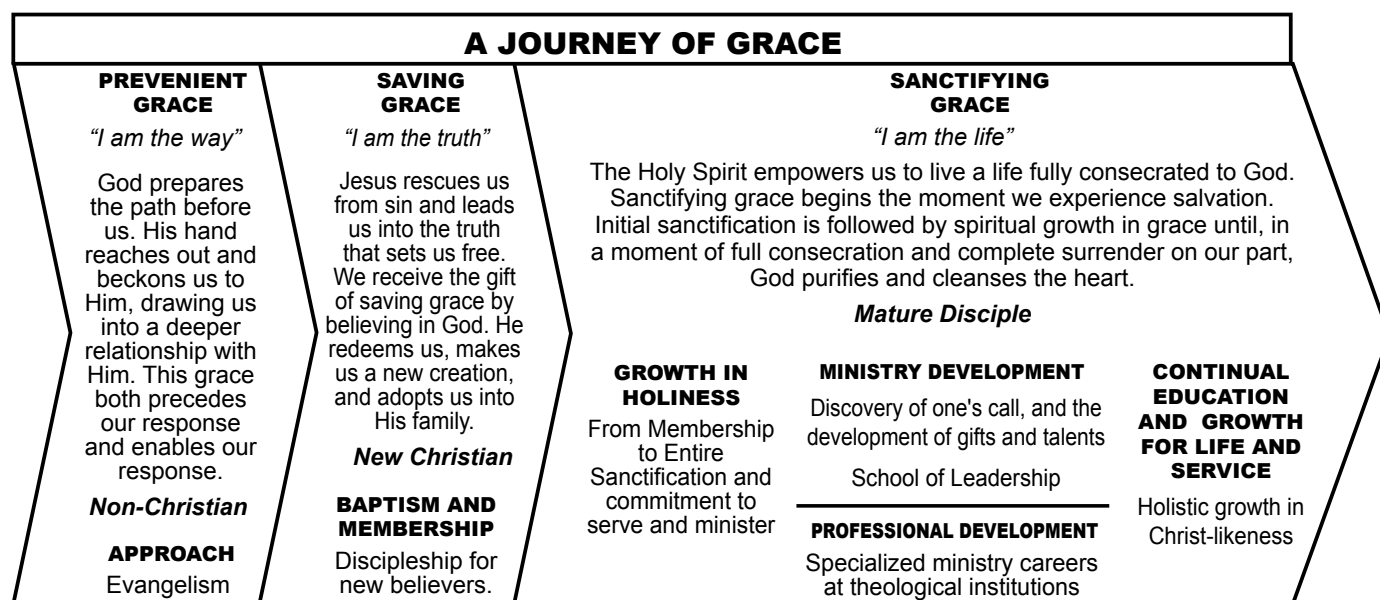
The **School of Leadership** is an educational program for lay ministry in different specialties to engage in the mission of the local church. This program is administered by the Theological Institutions of the Church of the Nazarene in the Mesoamerica Region and taught both at these institutions and in the local churches enrolled in the program.

Who Can Benefit from the School of Leadership?

It is for all the members of the Church of the Nazarene who have participated in Levels Saving Grace and Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness of the discipleship program A Journey of Grace, and who, with all their heart, wish to discover their gifts and serve God in His work.

The Plan - A Journey of Grace

In the Church of the Nazarene, we believe that making disciples in the image of Christ in the nations is the foundation of the missionary work of the church and the responsibility of its leadership (Ephesians 4:7-16). For this, at all levels of the church, the implementation of progressive discipleship is promoted as “A Journey of Grace” (John 14: 6), a lifestyle of discipleship. The School of Leadership is part of the “Sanctifying Grace - Ministry Development” section, and is designed for those who have gone through the “Prevenient Grace” and “Saving Grace” sections of the discipleship path.



The work of discipleship is continuous and dynamic; therefore, the disciple never stops growing in the likeness of his Lord. This growth, when healthy, occurs in all dimensions: the individual dimension (spiritual growth), the corporate dimension (joining the congregation), the holiness in life dimension (progressive transformation of our being and doing according to the model of Jesus Christ) and the service dimension (investing our lives in ministry).

Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez
Managing Editor, The School of Leadership Book Series



How Do I Use This Book?

This book contains eight lessons of the School of Leadership program, along with activities and final evaluation of the course.

How are the contents of this book organized?

Each of the eight lessons of this book contains the following:

- ▶ **Objectives:** These are the learning objectives the student is expected to understand at the end of the lesson.
- ▶ **Main Ideas:** A summary of the key teachings of the lesson.
- ▶ **Development of Lesson:** This is the largest section because it is the development of the contents of the lesson. The lessons have been written so that the book can be the teacher, and for that reason the contents have been written in a dynamic form and in simple language with contemporary ideas.
- ▶ **Notes and Comments:** The information in the margins is intended to clarify terms and provide notes that complement or extend the content of the lesson.
- ▶ **Questions:** Sometimes questions are included in the margin that the teacher can use to introduce or reinforce a lesson topic.
- ▶ **What did we learn?:** The box at the end of the lesson development section provides a brief summary of the lesson.
- ▶ **Activities:** This is a page at the end of each lesson that contains learning activities, for individuals or groups, on the subject studied. The estimated time for implementation in class is 20 minutes.
- ▶ **Final evaluation of the course:** This is the last page of the book and once completed the student must remove it from the book and hand it in to a course instructor. The final evaluation should take about 15 minutes.

How long is each course?

The courses are designed for 12 hours of class over 8 ninety-minute sessions. Each institution and each church or local theological study center will coordinate days and times of the classes. Within this hour and a half the teacher or the teachers should include time for the activities contained in the book.

What is the role of the student?

The student is responsible for the following:

1. Enroll on time for the course.
2. Buy the book and study each lesson before class time.
3. Arrive for class on time.
4. Participate in class activities.
5. Participate in practical ministry in the local church outside of class.
6. Complete and submit the final evaluation to the teacher.

What is the role of the teacher of the course?

The professors and teachers for the School of Leadership courses are pastors and laity committed to the mission and ministry of the church and preferably have experience in the ministry they teach. The Director and/or the School of Leadership at the local church (or theological institution) invites their participation and their functions are the following:

1. Be well prepared by studying the book's content and scheduling the use of class time. When studying the lesson, you should have on hand the Bible and a dictionary. Although the lessons are written using simple language, it is recommended that you "translate" what you consider difficult in order to help the students understand. In other words, use terms that they can better understand.
2. Ensure that the students are studying the material in the book and achieving the learning objectives.
3. Plan and accompany students in the activities of ministerial practice. The local pastor and the director of the respective ministry must schedule these activities. These activities should not take away from class time.
4. Take daily attendance and grades in the class report form. The final average will be the result demonstrated by the student in the following activities:
 - a. Class work
 - b. Participation in ministerial practice outside of class
 - c. Final evaluation
5. At the end of the course, collect the evaluation sheets and hand them in with the form "Class Report" to the local School of Leadership director. Do this after totaling the averages and verifying that all data is complete on the form.
6. Professors and teachers should not add tasks or reading assignments apart from the contents of the book. They should be creative in the design of the learning activities and in planning ministry activities outside the classroom according to the reality of their local church and its context.

How do I teach a class?

We recommend using a 90-minute class session as follows:

- **5 minutes:** Review the topic of the previous lesson and pray together.
- **30 minutes:** Review and discuss the lesson. We recommend using an outline, chalkboard, cardboard or other available materials, using dynamic learning activities and visual media such as graphics, drawings, objects, pictures, questions, assigning students to submit parts of the lesson, and so on. We do not recommend lecturing or having the teacher reread the lesson content.
- **5 minutes:** Break either in the middle of class or when it is convenient.
- **20 minutes:** Work on activities in the book. This can be done at the beginning,

middle or end of the review, or you can complete the activities as you proceed in accordance with the issues as it relates to them.

- **20 minutes:** Discussion about the students' ministry practice that they currently do and that they will do. At the beginning of the course you will need to present the schedule to the students so that they can make arrangements to attend the ministry practice. In the classes when the students discuss their ministry practice, the conversation should be focused on what they learned, including their successes and their errors, as well as the difficulties they encountered.
- **10 minutes:** Prayer for the issues arising from the practice (challenges, people, problems, goals, gratitude for the results, among others).

How do I implement the final course evaluation?

Allocate 15 minutes of time during the last class meeting for the course evaluation. If necessary, students may consult their books and Bibles. Final evaluations are designed to be an activity to reinforce what was learned in class and not a repetition of the contents of the book. The purpose of this assessment is to measure the understanding and evaluation of the student concerning the class topics, their spiritual growth, their progress in the commitment to the mission of the church and their progress in ministerial experience.

Ministerial Practice Activities

The following are suggested activities for ministerial practice outside of class. The list below includes several ideas to help teachers, pastors, directors of local School of Leadership groups and local ministry directors. From the list you can choose the practice most suited to the contextual situation and the local church ministry, or others can replace these according to the needs and possibilities of your context.

We recommend having at least three ministerial activities per course. You can put the whole class to work on a project or assign group tasks according to interests, gifts and abilities. It is advisable to involve students in a variety of new ministry experiences.

Suggested Ministerial Activities for the Course: The Backdrop of Global Mission

1. Do a survey in the community to learn which forms of syncretism, amulets, saint worship, and religions are practiced or used.
2. Design a workshop using PowerPoint to present to the church on the topic of the Great Commission and current challenges to global missions.
3. Organize a special workshop for children or teens to teach them how to distinguish between Christian and non-Christian symbols (charms, tattoos, or jewelry with symbols from the occult or other religions). The objective is to learn how our dress and appearance can demonstrate we are children of God.
4. Organize a mini-retreat for teens with the title, "Undercover Christians." The purpose is to experience the difficulties missionaries in creative access areas live with and to commit to praying for those missionaries.
5. Organize a breakfast or meal and invite a missionary who has served in a creative access area to speak to the group. The purpose is to hear the testimony of the missionary and have time to ask them questions.
6. Research whether there are illiterate people in your congregation and / or in your community. If so, start a literacy class using one of the contemporary translations of the gospel of Luke.
7. Show documentaries or movies to teach about the main religions of the world, their beliefs and their practices. This can be done in a home, sanctuary, or classroom; it can include teens, children, or adults, or it can be shown to everyone and then divide into groups for a time of discussion.
8. Plan a time of prayer and fasting as a church or in groups for missionaries who serve in creative access areas.



LESSON 1

The World in Numbers

The Backdrop of Global Mission

Objectives

- To learn about the progress of various religions and global evangelization.
- To raise awareness about the reality of a world in need.

Main Ideas

- Statistical data is very important for understanding the reality of the world in which we minister.
- By analyzing this data, we can answer many questions that will help us be more effective in global evangelism.

Introduction

In order to understand the current, unstable state of the world in regard to poverty, illiteracy, religions, and the growth of the gospel, it is necessary to present statistics which show the great responsibility of the church to take the gospel to all the nations.

Statistics help us to see a global view. That is, they help us to widen our vision from our own context to what is happening in the world. It is common for these statistics to scare us, which is why many people do not like them!

However, instead of getting scared we should use this data as information to learn how the seven billion people in this world are living. For example, currently half of the world's population live in rural areas and half live in cities. This means that cities have grown and are still growing. What are the implications of a large number of people moving to urban areas, where there is not enough housing or work?

These kinds of questions can be answered when one understands the statistics; it is just a matter of analyzing the data.

Poverty and Illiteracy

In this section we will learn global facts about poverty.



The statistics for 2012 tell us that 13 percent of the world population is illiterate. What does this number tell us about missions? It tells us that the more people learn to read, the easier it will be to communicate the gospel to them and help them learn about Jesus through Bible reading.

Before looking at statistics dealing with poverty, we need to understand poverty as a concept, since poverty is related to other factors, such as education, health, diet, etc.

Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, defines poverty like this:

Poverty is the state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money. Absolute poverty or destitution refers to the deprivation of basic human needs, which commonly includes food, water, sanitation, clothing, shelter,

*“Poverty is the state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money”
(Wikipedia).*

health care and education. Relative poverty is defined contextually as economic inequality in the location or society in which people live.

In short, poverty is the lack of basic resources to satisfy not only physical, but also spiritual needs. It is important to note that the concept of poverty should include a spiritual dimension. This means that people can be poor not only in material resources, but also in spiritual resources.

The statistics for 2011 tell us that more than 1 billion people live in extreme poverty and survive on less than one dollar a day – 70 percent of them are women. More than 1.8 billion have no access to drinking water. One billion are homeless, and 840 million are suffering from malnutrition – of these, 200 million are children less than five years of age.

In addition, statistics tell us 880 million people have no access to basic health care, and two billion lack access to the medicines they need.

Most of the poor in the world live in countries where the gospel has not yet arrived or has not been well received. Undoubtedly, missionaries who enter these countries have to focus on ministering to both the physical and spiritual needs of these people.

“Illiteracy in individuals stems from different, generally inter-related causes. For someone born into an underprivileged environment to parents with little formal schooling, the likelihood of being illiterate or experiencing serious learning difficulties will be higher”
(Literacy Foundation).

In some countries, reading comprehension can be deficient even when the rate of illiteracy is low because reading involves not only decoding letters but also understanding written messages. This deficiency is called “functional illiteracy.”

World Religions

Which religions have the most followers globally?



Here are statistics about the largest religions of the world. These numbers include atheists, those who do not practice any religion, and new religions. These two groups have grown in the last decades. Some of the religions listed have grown in membership, others have declined, and of course new ones have emerged.

The figures here are approximate numbers of the number of people who practice and/or follow each religion:

GLOBAL RELIGIONS IN 2009	NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS
Christian	2,271,727,000
Muslim	1,449,614,000
Hindu	913,455,000
No religion	773,947,000
Buddhist	387,872,000
Atheist	148,346,000
New religions	106,183,000
Jewish	15,088,000

Even though Christians are first on the list, they only make up 33 percent of the global population (6.8 billion people). This 33 percent includes Roman Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Adventists, and other Christian groups.

What does our heart feel when we realize the truth that the world is not evangelized? We might feel a call to go and serve, or we might feel the desire to give and pray constantly for missionaries and for the countries that have not yet been reached.

There are approximately 238 countries in the world. Every year Christian churches add 19.5 million new members and 50,000 new congregations are started. We live in an incredible time for the growth of the gospel! But there is still much to do.

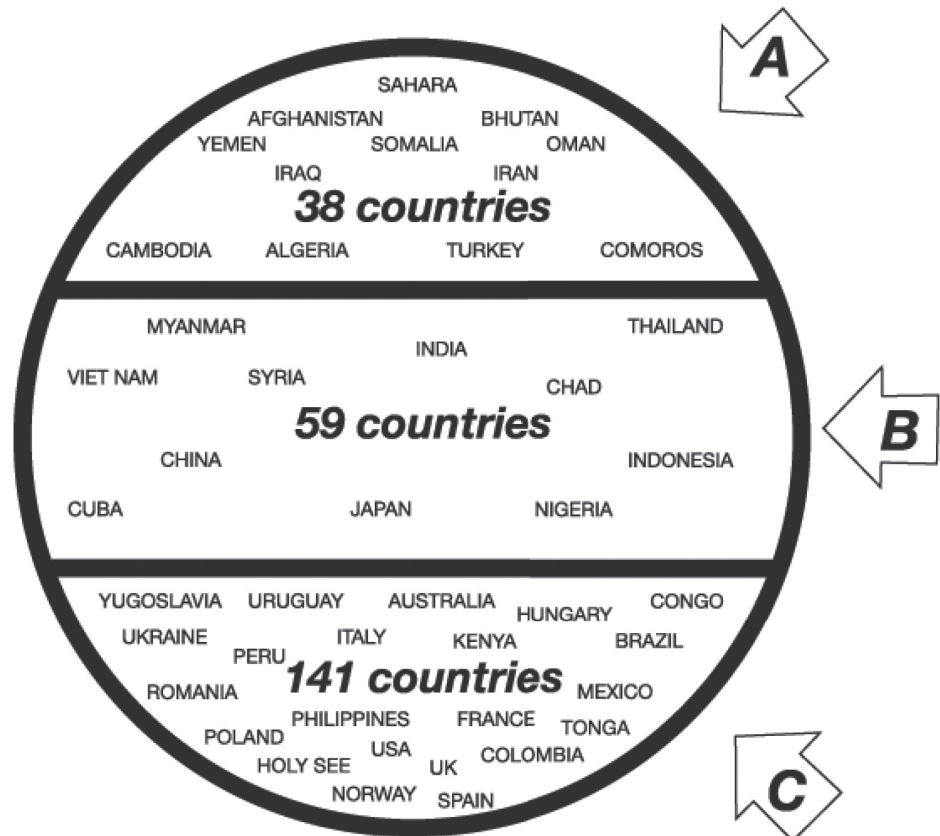
To better understand how the gospel is spread in the world, researchers from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary divided the world into three groups: A, B, and C. In their diagram, they divide the world into these three parts. Countries have been grouped not according to their geographical location but according to the spread of evangelism.

The section below the circle represents the “C” world, or “Christian world,” and it is made up of countries where the official or most practiced religion is Christianity. The other sections of the world, “A” and “B”, include countries where other religions are stronger.

The “B” world has countries which have been evangelized but have not responded positively. On the other hand, the “A” world is made up of countries where the gospel has not yet entered. The diagram includes representative countries with the largest populations.

“ABC” Diagram of the World

Worlds:



Cross-cultural
 “The process of dissemination or influence of the culture of one society when it enters into contact with another. To cross into a culture different from our own”
 (Pablo Deiros).

Creative Access Countries

Countries in which missionaries have to find alternative ways to attain visas due to church activities being restricted or evangelism being considered unlawful are called creative access countries. To gain access, missionaries might enter these countries as English teachers, IT technicians, business people or agricultural experts.

We can sum up what we have shared in three points:

1. Missionaries have done a good job in the past.
2. Christians must work to finish what the missionaries started.
3. We need more and more missionaries to go to those unreached places, as well as those places that have received, but not yet responded to the gospel.

It is important to remember that doing missions is a team effort: some plant, some water, and God brings growth. It is everybody's job.

Those who live in the "Christian World" also have work to do in order to reach those who have not accepted Jesus. We must pray for unbelievers and share the message of salvation with them.

The best resource that believers and missionaries who live in "non-Christian" countries have is prayer since they might not be free to minister to fellow believers or evangelize unbelievers.

Why do we sometimes insist on naming "difficult countries" or "countries which do not receive the gospel?" Within the coordinates of the countries which have not been evangelized or have had little evangelization there are 56 separate nations: 44 of them have Islam as their official religion, 2 Hindu, 8 Buddhism, and 2 have no official religion.

Now, without forgetting the question in the previous paragraph, we must remember that the population of these countries makes up 61% of the world. Can we now understand why we give them those labels? These "difficult countries" have the largest populations in the world. The "countries that do not receive the gospel" are usually the poorest in the world in all aspects (spiritual, health, economical, educational, etc.).

Missionary work in those countries becomes difficult when the population is illiterate. According to the statistics, there are 1,100,767,000 illiterate people in the world. The point is that over half of them live in the countries in the "A" world, countries which are difficult to evangelize.

Unfortunately this is not the only obstacle faced by the few (foreign) missionaries who go into those countries to "work." Yes, that is right: the few missionaries. They have to often fake being tourists or laborers and remain in one place for as little time as possible. This is why there are more missionaries working another job in these countries. The following list shows the approximate number of people who practice the main religions in creative access countries.

Number of people who are...		Missionaries working with...	
Western	100,000,000	Westerners	60,000
Tribal/Animist	242,882,000	Tribal/Animists	11,200

Buddhist	376,576,000	Buddhists	1,800
Chinese	400,600,000	Chinese	2,000
Hindu	841,078,000	Hindus	5,000
Muslim	1,271,884,000	Muslims	7,000
Total	3,233,020,000	Total missionaries	87,000

This table shows that there are 87,000 missionaries working among 3.2 billion inhabitants (without including the other 2.7 billion people in the world). What do you feel after learning about the reality of our un-evangelized world? If we are not feeling a call to go, we should at least feel the desire to give. The best we can do is to become involved through fervent and constant prayer for missionaries and for those countries that remain in the darkness.

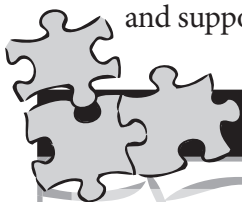
We must remember that these countries have all kinds of needs. For example, many lack drinking water or money to buy food. There are 2.8 billion who can be categorized as living in poverty, or 46% of the total world population. In terms of health, 3.2 billion have a high risk of contracting malaria, and approximately 2.2 billion are sick. Thirty percent of them are children. James 2:17 says, "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

The church of the Nazarene is responding to these numbers. This is why the church has ministries which help to meet the people's basic needs (even if it is not much) to keep those numbers from growing daily.

This help would not go directly to those who need it if it weren't for missionaries. This is why we need more people who will answer the Lord's call to missions. People can get involved in missionary work in two ways:

1. Asking God to open their eyes so they can identify people who do have a call to global missions, then encouraging and confirming their call, as well as supporting them in prayer and (if possible) financially.
2. Being involved in supporting missionaries through prayer, giving, fasting, teaching about missions in the local church, getting to know missionaries, and writing letters of encouragement and thanks.

One way or the other, we are all involved in cross-cultural missions. Some are sent, while some send and support. We must all be part of this because it involves teamwork. This work cannot be done without those who do the sending and supporting because without them the sent ones would not exist.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Statistics help us to understand the state of the world and missions, and they remind us of the urgency of the task at hand. The whole church must be part of the mission team: some go, while others send and support.

Activities

Time



20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer the following questions in groups of three or four. Once you have finished answering the questions, each group will share their responses with the whole class.

a- What is your church doing to be prepared to reach new disciples for Christ?

b.- How can your church help immigrant families in your city?

c.-Are there brothers/sisters in Christ in your church who have not finished their education and do not know how to read or write? What has been done to help them?

2. Make a list of the great needs which exist in other countries but are not big problems in your country. You can use the Internet, newspapers or other sources to answer the question.

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3. Spend some time reflecting on the list above. For example, many African countries have a lack of water, but maybe yours does not. Make a commitment to thank God each time that you have a drink of water. This may sound very simple or unimportant, but it makes a lot of sense to thank God for the “simple” things we have, and this will push us to get involved in changing these sad realities in other countries.

4. In your own words, describe what your vision is for the world and for your country, city and community. When you are done with this, share your ideas with the rest of the class, and together, make a list of all of the answers on a blackboard. You will be surprised to see that we all have different opinions about the world and our countries, cities and communities. Afterwards answer this question as a class: What role can our church play in order to make this a reality?



LESSON 2

Great Challenges

The Backdrop of Global Mission

Objectives

- To gain awareness of the ten greatest challenges our world faces today.
- To reflect on how to best respond to a world in crisis.

Main Ideas

- Everything that happens in the world (migration, missions, illiteracy, population growth, etc.) can be an opportunity to do missions.
- Today the whole world is a mission field and every country is sending missionaries.
- The church needs to be prepared to send missionaries to the countries with the most needs.

Introduction

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’”
(Matthew 28:18-20, NIV).

The challenges the church is facing in order to accomplish the mission Jesus left us in Matthew 28:19-20 are huge. In fact, Roger S. Greenway describes ten of the greatest challenges in his book *Go and Make Disciples!* In this lesson we will be looking at these challenges and reflecting on the impact they are having on Christian missions and the spread of God’s kingdom.

The Ten Greatest Challenges

What are the greatest challenges to doing missions today? 

1. Population growth

When Jesus gave the Great Commission the world population was probably not much over 300 million. What does this mean for Christian missions? Well, there is no doubt that the harvest field is much bigger than it was then. There are more people than ever who need to be reached with the gospel. More workers need to answer the Lord’s call to prepare and gather the harvest. Churches everywhere must be committed to mission, in other words, to send, sustain, and pray for their missionaries.

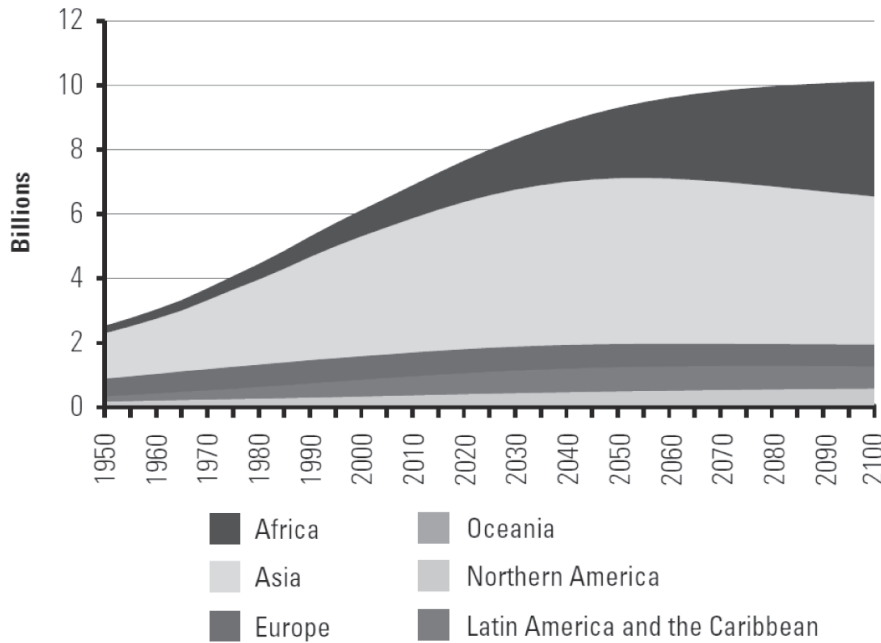
2. Population migration

People are moving from one place to another like never before. Statistics tell us people who are moving from place to place are more open to the gospel. This presents us with new challenges but also new opportunities to reach others with God’s Word.

The first kind of population movement is from rural areas to cities. The second kind is moving from one country to another. The third comes from the many refugees around the world. International students also represent a fourth kind of movement.

Population displacement or migration (when people move from their birthplaces to other places) contributes to church closings because people move to other places due to economic problems.

Total population by major area



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) Population Division "World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision" <http://esa.un.org/wpp/index.htm>

3. Doors that suddenly open

Ten years ago there were certain countries where it was impossible to distribute Bibles or preach the gospel, but today some of those countries are open. There is no door God cannot open. He works according to His divine timing.

These days "tentmaker" style mission work is opening doors to the gospel in many countries. These missionaries use their professions or jobs to integrate into a country in order to make the love of Jesus known. This "tentmaker" model started with Jesus' disciples, especially the Apostle Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla, who shared Christ and made disciples through their commercial enterprises.

4. Cultural barriers

Some of the greatest challenges we are facing in missions come from cultural barriers: different languages, customs, religions, values and attitudes. Cultural barriers separate people and make it more difficult to spread Christ's message from group to group. At the same time, Christ unites us and is able to knock down any barrier!

5. Other religions

Many people embrace the world's major non-Christian religions, such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Missionaries have a hard time obtaining visas to enter countries where these are the official state religions. New believers are persecuted and sometimes killed in some of these countries.

The world population reached 7 billion in 2012 and it could reach 10.1 billion in the next 90 years according to figures calculated by the United Nations.

"Tentmakers" are women and men called by God to work in cross-cultural ministry through their own professions or trades. They cultivate relationships and friendships with coworkers, clients, and other tradespeople, and through these friendships they present Jesus to them. One requirement asked of tentmakers is for them to have some ministry education. Knowledge of the Bible is fundamental, as is knowing the doctrine of the church.

This is why Christians everywhere must be prepared to defend and share the gospel.

6. The increase of missionaries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America

Christian missionaries no longer come mainly from Europe and North America. The number of missionaries from Asia, African and Latin America has greatly increased in recent years, and they serve mainly in places where the standards of living are difficult and there is great resistance to the gospel.

These new missionaries are going into countries where European and North American missionaries are not able to go. They are showing everyone that Christianity is not a “white religion” just for Westerners. When someone from the Philippines, Korea, or Brazil is able to stand and preach the message of Christ, they are witnessing powerfully that Jesus is the Savior of the whole world! (John 4:42).

Churches all around the world are becoming aware of their responsibility to participate in world missions. The church is taking the whole gospel to the whole world like never before. This is what Jesus was envisioning when he told the first church leaders to go and make disciples!

7. Western countries are now considered mission fields

Unfortunately, Christianity is losing out in big parts of Europe, Canada and the United States, places which used to be sources of moral and religious strength. Missionaries who used to be sent now have to be missionaries in their own countries. At the same time, due to population migration, every country now has a mix of ethnicities, cultures and religions. In other words, we are realizing every country, even those which used to send missionaries, should be considered a mission field.

8. The new face of the church and the new missionary centers

The face of the Christian church has changed because the majority of Christians now live in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Centers of Christian education and missionary organizations are moving from the Northern hemisphere to the South and East! Asia has both the largest population and the largest number of non-Christian people in the world. This means our Asian brothers and sisters need to unite to do missions where they are. Because some of these places are becoming more hostile towards Christianity, Christian workers need to be prepared to face new challenges, threats and persecution.

9. Increase in poverty

There is the sad reality that the number of people in poverty is increasing. The challenge for missions is to show Christian compassion in ways that will help people come out of poverty while at the same time proclaiming Jesus Christ.



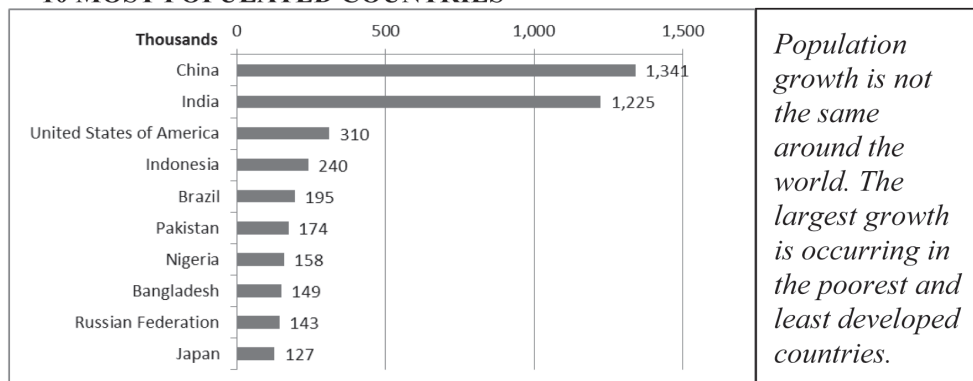
By the year 2012 there will be more than 3 million people 25 years of age and younger.

When someone in the Philippines, Korea, or Brazil stands to preach the message of Christ they provide a powerful testimony in declaring Jesus as the “Savior of the world” (John 4:42).

Churches around the world are becoming aware of their responsibility to participate in world missions. We can say with confidence: the church is taking the gospel to all the world like never before.

Current statistics reveal that the least evangelized countries are also the poorest in the world. There is a connection between spiritual need, physical suffering and injustice. We cannot ignore the poor and the lost who are clamoring for the freedom and mercy that the Christian gospel provides!

10 MOST POPULATED COUNTRIES



Population growth is not the same around the world. The largest growth is occurring in the poorest and least developed countries.

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) Population Division
 "World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision" <http://esa.un.org/wpp/index.htm>

Illiteracy:
This is a problem that every country deals with. There are one million people age 15 and older who do not know who to read or write. Unfortunately there are many young people included in this number who also have other problems the church must help them with, such as depression, sexual promiscuity, anorexia, bulimia, communication problems, delinquency, abortions, addictions, and others.

10. Children and youth make up half of the world's population

There have never been as many children in the world as today. This is a challenge for missions since it requires having materials, teachers and programs all designed for children and youth. More Christian workers are needed who will concentrate their efforts on reaching youth for Christ.

Among the youth there are subcultures called "urban tribes" which are growing more and more. They unite teens who share similar tastes in music, clothes, hair-styles, etc. The names of a few of these tribes are Punk, Emo, Rasta, Goth and Hip-hop.

For teens that belong to these groups, the problem is that they put external things ahead of internal things. They harm their bodies and immerse their minds in depressive states, and in some cases they go on to commit suicide. These teens have their own culture, which provides a challenge to a church trying to reach them.

Poverty:
Poverty affects all countries. More than 1 billion people in 2012 lived in extreme poverty (living on less than one dollar a day), and seventy percent of them were women. On top of lack of economic means one can add having limited or no access to medicines, hospitals, food, drinking water, education, and even less any means of "entertainment."

The Christian Answer to a World in Crisis

How do we spread God's kingdom in a world in crisis?



All of humanity is in crisis – even rich countries are facing crises such as suicide, drug addictions, violence and wars.

However, experts agree that there are four main problems that the world faces: housing, health, pollution, and safety. Some 100 million people around the world are homeless, and almost 100 million live in sub-standard housing.

Urban tribes:

Subcultures which originate and develop within urban areas. These are made up of young people who share certain ideologies, pastimes, clothing styles or musical tastes. Those who make up these tribes want to distinguish themselves from the "norm," that which is accepted by society, and in doing so separates themselves from cultural globalization. Some names of these tribes include: Rockers, Punks, Mods, Preppy, Hipsters, Emos, and Goths (among many others).

Globalization

(or globalisation) is the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture. Advances in transportation and telecommunications infrastructure, including the rise of the telegraph and its posterity the Internet, are major factors in globalization, generating further interdependence of economic and cultural activities (Wikipedia).

Those living in poverty are more exposed than others to illnesses since they lack even the most basic health care. Air pollution from cars, kitchens, heating systems, and industries is causing serious problems for all humans. Violence around the world is not limited to any place in particular, and it has been increasing in the last two decades.

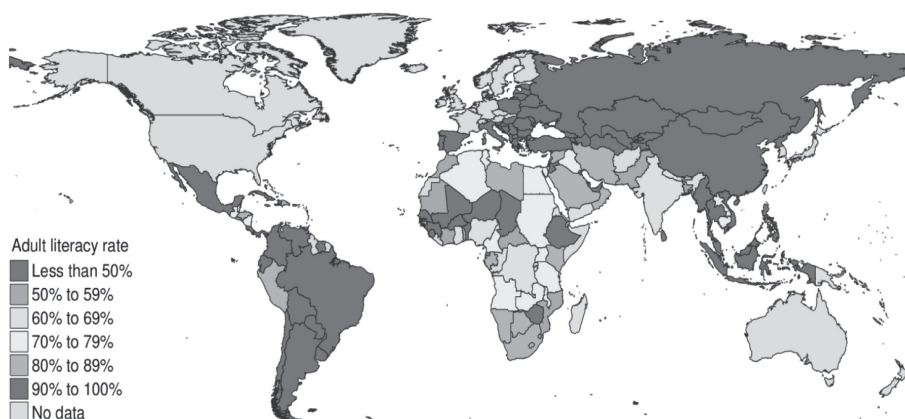
We can also add illiteracy to the challenges just named. According to UNESCO:

There were still 775 million adults who could not read or write in 2010. Half were in South and West Asia, and over a fifth in sub-Saharan Africa. In 81 out of the 146 countries with data for 2005-2010, more women than men are illiterate. Of these countries, twenty-one display extreme gender disparity, with fewer than seven literate women for every ten literate men. Globally the adult literacy rate has increased over the past two decades, from 76% in 1985-1994 to 84% in 2005-2010. But among forty-three countries with an adult literacy rate below 90% in 1998-2001, only three will reach the target of reducing illiteracy by 50% by 2015.

(EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012, UNESCO, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2012-skills/>).

There are many methods and means which the UN and other organizations could implement to achieve universal primary education. Unfortunately, there are circumstances that prevent it, such as decreasing standards of living and natural disasters. These conditions take away opportunities to receive a complete education, and they are likely to increase the number of children (especially girls) who stop attending school in order to help around the home in getting drinking water, earning an income or helping sick family members. Malnutrition and illness affect school attendance and lower the amount of learning that takes place when they are able to attend class.

Literacy Rates Around the World, 2012 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, September 2012)



Another challenge is globalization, which is the interchange of not only products but also technology and raw materials. It also includes the exchange of ideas, religions, arts, languages, literature, etc.

People around the world want all of the problems we have been naming to disappear. They desire to see changes in the world and, of course, in their lives. We know all things are possible through Christ, which is why we must share this message!

God wants us to be willing to reach out to people who are suffering because of the consequences of sin. In His infinite mercy, God desires that no one be lost and that all have the opportunity to know Him. Our missionary God is sending us to the ends of the earth. The church must be prepared to send her missionaries to the countries with the biggest needs.

In this ever-changing world it is inevitable that methods for doing missions will also change. If every church is called to serve the community they are a part of with the gifts given by the Holy Spirit, missionaries who are sent out must possess these gifts, which are cultivated and developed by first serving in the local church.

God will not stop calling His servants to go to the farthest reaches of the world, so the church must be prepared to send and also receive missionaries. Those missionaries whom God is calling can be found in our churches. This is why we must involve and motivate every person to use and develop their gifts, both inside and outside of the church, so that those who are called to missions will be sure and confident in the work they will be doing.

Our responsibility is to prepare all people since we do not know who God is calling or will be calling to missions. We should not be caught looking at the external characteristics to disqualify people from a life in missions. God chose David, a humble shepherd, to be the future king of Israel. In the same way, God sees in that mischievous and hyperactive child or that undecided teen a future missionary who will be taking the good news to other countries.

One of the greatest means for the spread of information today is the Internet. This is a great tool for communication, and the Church of the Nazarene uses it to communicate news, events and statistical facts.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Today's world presents us with incredible challenges to Christian missions and requires us to be creative and take advantage of the opportunities given to us. God continues to call people, and His church must work to prepare those who will one day serve on the missionary field.



LESSON 3

Islam

The Backdrop of Global Mission

Objectives

- To learn about the origins of Islam.
- To identify Muslim beliefs.
- To share strategies for bringing Muslims to Christ.

Main Ideas

- There are 1.2 million Muslims spread across three continents.
- Islam, Judaism and Christianity all find their origins in the life of Abraham.
- In some countries, people who leave Islam are sentenced to death.

Introduction

In this lesson we will present a panorama of Islam. It is estimated that the Muslim population around the world exceeds 1.2 billion people. Only 18% of Muslims are ethnically Arab; another 20% are found in sub-Saharan Africa and 30% in the Indian subcontinent (made up of Muslims in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India). Currently, Islam has more followers than Roman Catholicism, and it is the second largest world religion after Christianity.

The country with the largest Muslim population in the world is Indonesia, with almost 200 million faithful Muslims. There are also large Muslim centers in China, Europe, central Asia and Russia.

Historically, Islam was founded in the year 622 of the Christian era with the preaching of Muhammad in Mecca (a city in Saudi Arabia). Historical books agree that one way the religion came to gain so many followers was by force. Countries that did not want to accept Islam were forced to submit or pay an extreme tribute. One book describes its Imams (Muslim leaders and preachers) preaching in mosques with their swords at their sides as a signal that they had conquered the people.

Four of Islam's main branches are Sunni, Shia, Sufism, and Yazdânism.

Etymology and the meaning of "Islam"

The Ramadan Fast

All Muslims fast from sunrise until sunset during the month of Ramadan (the ninth month in the lunar calendar). They abstain from food, water and sexual relations. This is considered a method of spiritual purification which frees them from worldly activities and helps them to feel compassion for those who are less fortunate.

What does the term Islam mean?



The word *Islam*, from the root *s-l-m*, is derived from the Arabic verb *aslama*, which literally means "to accept, yield, or submit to." Islam represents acceptance of and submission before God. Its faithful followers must demonstrate their submission by only worshipping and obeying God and abandoning all idolatry.

In the Qur'an, their sacred book, the word Islam describes an attitude of worship, submission, and a connection between religion and faith (*islām* and *dīn*).

According to the Qur'an, the Islamic doctrine is made up of five pillars:

1. Testimony, which includes confessing that there is only one God and that Muhammad is the most important of God's prophets.

2. Prayer.

3. Alms-giving, or giving the *zakat*: an annual offering to help the poor and needy.
4. Fasting during the month of Ramadan.
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca, which must be done by every Muslim at least once in their lifetime.

God in the Islam Religion

Muslims worship "Allah."

In the Qur'an God calls himself *Allah*, a name derived from the Semitic root "El." Although the term is best known in the West as the word for the God believed in by Muslims, in Arabic-speaking countries it is used by all Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) to refer to "God."

There are four features which describe the Islamic doctrine of God:

1. The existence of God has been revealed to human beings through His servant (Muhammad) and also through natural instinct, reason, the five senses, creation, and as ultimate proof, in the sacred texts.
2. He is God, the One and Only, in His acts and dominion of the universe. In other words, He alone is Creator, Sustainer, Sovereign, etc.
3. He is the only Divine One, the only one who possesses divine qualities, and as such He is the only One worthy of worship.
4. His names and characteristics, which are revealed in the Qur'an or by the prophet Muhammad, must be affirmed by the faithful without distortion or negation, and without being equated to anything in this world.

Even though the characteristics which Muslims attribute to God are basically the same as the ones which Christians and Jews attribute to Him, there are significant differences.

In Islam, God is also referred to by ninety-nine other names, which are adjectives that describe different characteristics of God: The Compassionate (*Al-Rahmān*), The Almighty (*Al-'Azīz*), The Creator (*Al-Jāliq*), etc. Muhammad said that God had 99 names, and interestingly enough, some of them are very similar to the names used by Christians for God.

Mecca

Some 2 million people from around the world descend on Mecca each year at the start of the month of Ramadan. Pilgrims pray around the Kaaba, a great, black cube structure which is erected in the middle of the Al-Masjid Al-Haram Mosque. It is believed to have been the place of worship which God commanded Abraham and his son Ishmael to build. Men dress in identical white tunics which symbolize their equality before the deity. They circle the Kaaba seven times, travel between the hills of Al-Safa and Al-Marwah seven times (as it is believed Ishmael's mother did in the dessert), and pray asking God to grant mercy and answer their petitions.

In the Qur'an, Jesus' birth is described in this way:
 "[And mention] when the angels said, "O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary - distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to Allah]. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous." She said, "My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?" [The angel] said, "Such is Allah ; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is"
 (Sura Al-Imran, 3:42-49, from quran.com).

Monotheism vs. Polytheism



Islam is a monotheistic religion.

Muslims honor Jesus as one of their greatest prophets, but they do not believe he was crucified. They believe God saved him from those who planned to kill him and that God “raised him unto Himself.” According to Muslims, God transformed another person to look exactly like Jesus it was that person who was crucified on the cross, not Jesus.

Muslim scholars agree that the most important command God gave humanity was to recognize the absolute uniqueness of God (*in Arabic: tawhīd*), which means that He alone is to be worshipped. This worship can only be done within absolute monotheism, so Muhammad spread this message among those who had different types of worship: some worshipped angels, some prophets, some other pious men, some trees or rocks, and some the sun and the moon. Muhammad rebuked all of them for their acts, but also invited all of them into Islam.

The most serious sin that can be committed within Islam is to attribute divinity to or worship anything other than God (*in Arabic: shirk*). The following fall under the definition of shirk: seeking intermediaries to God; praying to prophets, the dead, or saints; superstitions; using amulets, stones, or talismans to ward off evil; offering sacrifices to anything/anyone other than God; magic, consulting fortune-tellers, astrology; praying to any image or statue; swearing by anything other than God; faking worship; praying to Muhammad, among others.

The Qur’an



How was Islam’s holy book written?

Muslims believe that the contents of the Qur’an were revealed to Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel between 610 A.D. and 632 A.D., the second being the date when the prophet died. Besides memorizing it, it is said that Muhammad’s disciples wrote the Qur’an in scrolls, rocks and leaves. This was because Muhammad did not know how to write, so in the very moment he had a revelation he would need to communicate it to someone who could write it down.

There are numerous traditions and opinions about how the Qur’an came together. Most Muslims accept that the first caliph, Abu Bakr, commanded Zayd ibn Thabit to collect all authentic verses from the Qur’an in their authentic form, be it in written or oral communication. This collection put together by Zayd and preserved by Muhammad’s widow (Hafsa bint Umar) forms the basis for the Qur’an today.

From the beginnings of Islam, the majority of Muslims have believed that the Qur’an can only be perfect in the original Arabic version which was revealed. All translations are fallible interpretations of the original text. There are many bilingual versions of the Qur’an today with the original in Arabic on one page and the translation on the other.

The Qur’an

The majority of Muslims worship the book of the Qur’an. They wrap it in clean cloths and wash their hands before reading it. Many Muslims memorize at least part of the Qur’an in its original language. Those who memorize the complete Qur’an are known as Hafiz (literally “guardians”). Today there are millions of hafiz around the world.

Muhammad, the prophet of Islam

Who was the founder of Islam?



Muhammad (born in 570 A.D. and died July 6, 632 A.D.) was the religious, political and military Arab leader who founded the Islamic religion. For Muslims, Muhammad is not considered the creator of a new religion but the one who restored the original monotheistic faith which had become corrupt. They recognize Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Jesus as important prophets, with Muhammad being the ultimate “Seal of the Prophets.”

For 23 years, starting at the age of 40, Muhammad disclosed the “revelations from God” he received. These went on to make up the content of the Qur’an, which was memorized and written down by his friends. During this time Muhammad preached to the people of Mecca, imploring them to leave polytheism behind. Even though some converted to Islam, Muhammad and his followers were persecuted by the main authorities of Mecca.

After preaching for 13 years, Muhammad and his followers set out on the first *Hijrah* (“migration”) to the city of Medina, then known as the city of *Yathrib*, in 622. There, with converts from Medina and immigrants from Mecca, Muhammad established his political and religious authority.

The *Sunnha* are the books that contain Muhammad’s biography, and they are very valuable for many Muslims because they believe it is indispensable for interpreting the Qur’an. For example, the *Sunnha* states that Muhammad himself ordered his companions to write down everything he said and these words became the Qur’an.

According to tradition, Muhammad was a person of excellent character, good looks, illiterate, and a prophet for all of humanity. Given the book’s complexity, the belief that Muhammad was illiterate is another signal for the Muslim devout that he could have only received the Qur’an through divine revelation.

It is often believed that “imams” are the Muslim equivalents to priests, pastors or rabbis. That is not the case however: Islam lacks a clergy class. In principle at least, an imam could be any person who knows the prayer rituals well. He is positioned in front of the faithful in mosques and serves as a guide for this ritual or prayer, even though it is not obligatory to follow him.

Though this is technically true, in practice there has arisen a type of professional class. There are people who study specifically to dedicate themselves to this task. In spite of this, in comparison to Christian churches or Jewish organization, their system is decentralized. From a strictly religious point of view (politics are another matter) there is no higher authority for overseeing the formation of a community.

In the Muslim tradition, Muhammad is known as the last and greatest in a series of prophets, the man who came closest to attaining perfection, and a man who possessed virtues in all areas of life, including spiritual, political, military and social.

Islam and Other Religions

How do Muslims get along with other religions?



There are different points of view about what the Qur'an teaches regarding other religions. Islam affirms that only Muslim prophets are true prophets and that none of them declared themselves to be Jew or Christian. As such, they believe that Abraham was not Jew or Christian, and in the same way believe that Moses and Jesus preached Islam.

Muslims have respected Jews and Christians as fellow "people of the book," but they also believe they have abandoned true monotheism and corrupted the Sacred Scriptures. As such, they see Christians as people who do not truly respect or fear God.

Technically, Islam is tolerant of Jews and Christians. They are allowed to live and practice their religions in Muslim territories, though they have to pay a special tax, the "Jizya," in place of the *zakat*.

Apostasy (leaving the Islamic religion) carries with it the penalty of death under Islamic law (this is according to Surah XVI, 106). This is why doing Christian evangelism is so difficult in many countries where Muslims are in the majority.

Now that we have gone through this brief review of Islamic history, we need to point something out. While the Muslim religion boasts that it is incorruptible, the truth is that it is often shaped by the social and political realities of its followers. For example, many Muslims in Jakarta practice rituals to ward off evil spirits or pacify spirits which they believe live in volcanoes.

Finally, we need to realize that we will see differences from place to place. Even though movies and books have sold us on the idea that all Muslims are Arabs, we must remember that this is not the case. As we mentioned before, Arabs make up a small percentage of the total Islamic population of the world.

Evangelizing and Ministering Among Muslims

How do we share Christ in the Muslim world?



You might be asking yourself this question: How then can we evangelize Muslims? Many people still believe that when the church sends workers to Muslim lands, as soon as they get off the plane (or whatever means of transport they used) they immediately start distributing tracts, putting together evangelistic programs, puppet shows, Jesus Film viewings and other similar things. These are all techniques commonly used in Latin American countries.

We believe that God will work in extraordinary ways to open doors that will allow us to work among Muslims. We know of Muslims who have been converted because Jesus spoke to them through dreams. In the meantime, we must be very careful of how we do missions in the Islamic world.

Jorge Benjamín Cruz España, who served as missionary in Muslim countries, tells of his experiences:

When we left from our countries for the Middle East, those who sent us had truly good expectations and a good plan. However, the reality on the field was different. I learned how to greet like the Muslims did, and I grew my beard out a lot.

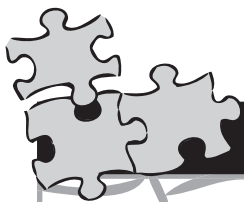
You can't imagine how difficult it was to take a Muslim to church. It was an interesting dynamic: many churches feared receiving them and they in turn felt uncomfortable at church. They feared being reported to the Wahhabis (radical clerics) and the secret police. There are laws in place in many countries which prohibit Muslims from converting to Christianity. Penalties for leaving Islam can range from (in the best case scenario) going to jail or being thrown out of the country to being sentenced to death.

Often Muslims have a wrong idea of Christians. For example, they believe we all consume alcohol and pork, foods which are considered haram (sinful) – in other words, prohibited.

The best witness you can give is to live what you preach. I had the opportunity to experience this several times when, knowing I was a Christian, they offered me alcohol. I was able to see many people show amazement when I refused these invitations, which were extended by Muslims.

I can't think of any exact evangelistic formula you can use to work among Muslims. I can only say that: first, you have to pray; second, you have to pray; and third, you have to pray. You must show a real interest in them, their daily lives, their problems – this means you will have to invest much of your life in them so they will see an authentic friendship. Only then, and with God's help, will you be able to enter their lives. Ask God to make you aware of opportunities where you can share His Word without having to impose your ideas on them. Little by little, with patience, you will see doors open and be able to teach them more and more about God and His love. You will also be able to witness how God's Word helps you in your everyday life and in every battle (spiritual, financial, physical, etc.). Ask them if you can pray with them for specific requests. Of course, when you pray, you must not end the prayer as we are used to, saying, "in Jesus' name." I know this is COMPLETELY against what we believe. However, remember that what is important is to win them over little by little.

Muhammad wrote in the Qur'an: "If the Most Merciful had a son, then I would be the first of [his] worshippers" (Sura 43:82).



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Islam is a monotheistic religion with many followers. It is difficult to evangelize Muslims, especially in places where it is prohibited.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. A former Muslim author (who has since given his heart to Christ) explained the method he used to talk to other Muslims about what it means to be a Christian. Using crumpled up sheets of paper, he made a paper ball. Each sheet of paper had a question written on it about what it meant to be Christian. For example: Does being a Christian mean you have to eat pork? Does being a Christian mean using a hijab (a veil that covers the head)? He removed the sheets one by one from the ball as he asked these questions. Taking layer after layer off, he arrived at the center – which was empty. From this Muslims learned to ask: If all of these things are nothing more than external characteristics, what does it really mean to be a Christian?

In groups of 3 to 4 make an “evangelistic paper ball” which you might use with someone from your community. Don’t use questions about the Islamic religion but instead write questions that pertain to the Christian faith. Ten recyclable sheets of papers should be enough. After each group finishes their “evangelistic paper ball,” they should present it to the rest of the class.

2. Working in pairs, look for Bible verses which refute the Islamic beliefs in the following table. When you are done, share these with the rest of the class.

Islamic Belief	Christian Belief with Supporting Bible Verse
1. Sin is purely personal. There is no such thing as original sin or sin inherited from Adam and Eve.	
2. Jesus is not the Son of God or even God. He was a prophet who did not die, was not resurrected, and did not pay for humanity’s sins.	
3. Man and woman were not created in the image of God.	
4. The woman was created inferior to the man to serve the man.	
5. The key to happiness for human beings is to live as Muhammad lived, following his example in everything.	
6. The gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) were written many years after Jesus lived and tell lies about who he was and what he did.	



LESSON 4

Buddhism and Hinduism

The Backdrop of Global Mission

Objectives

- To identify Hindu practices.
- To learn about Buddhist beliefs.
- To be able to defend our Christian beliefs.

Main Ideas

- Buddhism and Hinduism were born in India and one is derived from the other.
- Both religions promote polytheism and teach that salvation can be attained by human effort.
- They teach that death is not the end but the beginning of a cycle of rebirths, reincarnations or new lives.

Hinduism

There are three gods who dominate in Hinduism. **Brahma**, the creator of the world and the one who gives new bodies to the souls of those who are reincarnated. **Vishnu** is considered the sustainer of the world. He is the one who preserves the world from its destructive forces and protects it from extinction. According to tradition, he has been incarnated ten times as an animal and as a man in Rama, Krishna, and Buddha. **Shiva** is the god of the forces of nature, the prototype of the great ascetic who overcomes the universe and spreads salvation as a bearer of good. He is considered to be the incarnation of the feminine goddesses of nature.

Hinduism is a polytheist religion.

Hinduism originated in India from the beginnings of their civilization, close to 3,000 years before Christ. Hinduism is one of those religions which has a little of everything. This means that a Hindu husband can divide his devotion between the gods of his parents and those of his wife; or he can choose to be devoted only to one god and still be respected by other followers of Hinduism.

Hindus have a god called Brahma. He is the first of a triad of gods and is known as the creator. Other popular gods are Vishnu and Shiva. The first one has been compared to the Christian God because he lives in heaven, governs and sustains the universe, is the source of all that is good, and takes human form on occasions. Krishna is the most popular Hindu deity. He is the incarnation of Vishnu.

Hindu Practices and Beliefs

Hindus believe in reincarnation and transmigration of the soul.

A popular Hindu belief is the *law of karma* and the transmigration of the soul, better known as reincarnation. One of the goals of Hinduism is for individual souls to be liberated and be united with the universal soul. Until this happens, the individual goes through a cycle of birth and rebirth. This is what is called *the transmigration of the soul*.

The law of *Karma* attempts to find a balance between the good and evil actions of a person. A soul's likelihood of breaking the cycle of birth and rebirth increases as it is able to attain good *karma*. That is when it can unite with the *universal soul*. However, if the soul has more bad *karma* than good *karma* it will have to go through more rebirths, prolonging the time when it can be joined to the universal soul.

The goal of Hinduism is to gain freedom. That is the moment when *karma*, or good works, is “perfected.” The cycle of rebirth ends and gives way to the unification of the individual soul to the universal soul.

How can someone achieve good works and break the cycle of rebirth to attain freedom? Hinduism provides three paths: right action, wisdom, and love and devotion.

The first path involves giving offering and sacrifices to gods, goddesses, and spirits in ceremonies done in temples or homes. The second path concentrates on finding the basic essence of the universal soul in all things. The practice of yoga helps in this mystical experience between the individual and universal souls. The third path offers the Hindu a personal god who provides courage to defeat evil *karma*. Hindus must rely completely on this god through faith and devotion. Notice the differences between the three paths. The last one is practiced by tens of thousands of Hindus since it is the most attractive, and it is the most practiced belief of Hinduism.

Transmigration:
All religions derived from Hinduism, including the New Age movement, teach some kind of reincarnation or transmigration of the soul into a new being. According to these groups, when the body dies the soul returns to live in a new being (human or animal), thus continuing a cycle of rebirths.

Krishna

Why is the god Krishna so revered?



Krishna has become a revered deity not only for Hindus, but for many other people around the world. Krishna can do many things for his followers that other gods cannot do. For example, Krishna can repeal the law of *karma* or break the cycle of transmigrations of the soul. This is all accomplished thanks to the love and grace of Krishna towards people, and above all by the loving and obedient response of individuals to Krishna.

Krishna becomes a friend and an object of love because he accomplishes for people what they cannot do for themselves. With this kind of worship, it is not necessary to find time alone in the forest or practice extreme forms of meditation. Hindus can be in the presence of Krishna in the company of other believers.

In Hinduism, Krishna is considered the only complete incarnation of Vishnu and is worshiped as an autonomous deity.

How Do We Evangelize Hindus?

In this section we will read testimonies of missionaries to Hindus.



There is no one perfect way of evangelizing. We must always rely on the Holy Spirit to tell us what to say and guide us in what to do. However, through the following testimonies we can identify a few ways to evangelize to Hindus.

A missionary in south Asia was a professor, and it happened that one of his Hindu students had a sick sister. The professor asked if he could visit

Asceticism

is the renunciation of worldly pleasures with the goal of attaining a greater level of spirituality, intellect, or self-knowledge. It is practiced by diverse religions and it almost always requires abstaining from food, drink and sexual activity. In some cases, ascetics even cause themselves physical harm. It can involve withdrawing from the world to dedicate oneself to a life of meditation.

Mahatma Gandhi

(1869-1948) is one of the greatest thinkers of modern Hinduism. From the time he was young he practiced asceticism, non-violence, and religious fasting as a response to political oppression. Beginning in 1919 he became known as a leader in India's independence movement from British rule. In his books he promotes peace, simple living as the ideal for life, and respect and value for all living creatures.

her, and the student agreed. He prayer for the sick sister and she was healed! This visit served to establish a special friendship with the family. On another occasion the professor gave the father a wall calendar that had a different verse every month. The father accepted it. Month after month the Holy Spirit worked in his heart, until one day he felt convicted of his sin and believed in Jesus. Today the family holds fellowship gatherings with other believers in their own home and take training classes for Christian leaders.

The second testimony is about Serpa. He grew up as a Hindu, and his father was a high priest in that religion. Serpa's mother was mentally sick and tormented by demons because she had been active for so many years in this spiritual world. One day a Christian woman shared the gospel of Christ with her. Serpa's mother believed and was liberated and healed. Because of this, the whole family came to believe in Jesus Christ, including the father. Serpa and his sister used to sneak out of school so they would not have to go through the rituals of the Hindu religion. While they were hiding, they would pray to God that they would not be caught. Not only were they never caught, their absence was not even noticed!

Another testimony comes from a missionary couple in South Asia who helped a Hindu man who had a problem with his foot. The missionary tended to the man daily in his home, cleaning and bandaging the wound. A Hindu servant in his house observed this, and he later made the comment that he was a good-hearted man. The missionary took advantage of this opportunity to explain that service to others is also service to God. This act of compassion not only impacted the life of the wounded man, but also the servant's life.

Because Hindus worship many gods, the servant had not understood that the God of love of this missionary was different from all other gods. The Lord also spoke to the missionary's wife, reminding her that people are always observing how we conduct ourselves. This is why, from that time on, that missionary always asked herself, "Am I showing the love of Jesus to other people in my whole life, wherever I am?"

Buddhism



Buddhism came from Hinduism.

Buddha was raised in the Hindu faith, but in his youth he came face to face with certain transcendental questions about life. His main questions had to do with suffering, growing old and dying. Disillusioned by the answer offered by Hinduism, he decided to wander in the forest. Tradition tells us that it was there that he experienced his "enlightenment."

After this experience, Buddha dedicated his life to teaching others about questions of life and suffering. He taught that suffering is caused by cravings and that to be freed of these one must walk in the path of right

understanding, right action and right works. Buddha gathered a group of followers, taught them his doctrines, and in this way started to spread this new religion. Even though Buddhism is mostly practiced in India, it has spread widely.

Interpretations of the Teachings of Buddha by His Disciples

What are the most important belief systems of Buddhism?



Buddhism has two important schools, *Hinayana (Theravada)* and *Mahayana*. Both are named after two of the holy texts of Buddhism. There are versions of the *Mahayana* in Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan. The *Hinayana* contains sermons and speeches of Buddha, rules for monks living in monasteries, and metaphysical writings. These sacred texts of Buddhism emphasize the nature of Buddha, most of all his immortality and its universal expansion.

For Buddha, the problem with life was craving or attachment to the things of this world. The goal of his teachings was to help people fix their internal conflicts and progress towards their destiny in attaining *nirvana*. Buddha taught the importance of meditation since it led to tranquility and spiritual awareness.

The Four Noble Truths

What are the foundational beliefs of Buddhism?



Among Buddha's teachings, one that stands out is that the "soul" does not exist. Buddhism teaches that human beings are guided by psychological predispositions or forces called *skandhas*. These are made up of atoms but are not eternal. The five *skandhas* are form, sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness.

Buddha also taught four fundamental truths, which arose from his rejection of Hindu beliefs and practices as he formulated his own teachings. These are those truths:

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS OF BUDDHISM	
1.	All of life is <i>dukkha</i> (suffering and dissatisfaction)
2.	Suffering arises from craving or attachment to craving.
3.	If cravings cease, then there will be no more suffering.
4.	Practicing the <i>eightfold path</i> leads to the end of craving, and as a result of that, the end of suffering.

Gautama Buddha

(563-483 B.C.):

According to tradition, he renounced his right to be a political leader at the age of 29. He left his wife and son to become an itinerant pauper, seeking the truth. Having become disillusioned with Brahmanism, he devoted himself to meditation until he reached "enlightenment," received the title of Buddha, and dedicated the rest of his life to teaching a new religion. In the year 245 B.C., a council of 500 Buddhist monks gathered his oral tradition in the writings known today as *Tripitaka*.

In Zen Buddhism, "God does not exist, and even worse, God's existence is not important. All ideas of God are seen as yokes which must be destroyed at all costs. As such, Zen has been rightly described as a subtle form of atheism which eliminates and undervalues biblical faith in a God who is personal, creative, holy, loving, just, and transcendent" (Fernando Saravi).

Buddhism teaches that salvation is attained through self-effort and that we are all gods, instead of teaching dependence on the Creator.

When does suffering begin according to Buddhism? Suffering begins at birth when deterioration, decomposition and sickness also begin. It also begins when we are in the presence of an object we hate, and when we are not able to get what we want.

Buddha rejected the ordinary ways of responding to the dilemmas of life in the context of Hinduism. For Buddhists the way to escape suffering is to break the cycle of rebirth and reach Nirvana. To do this, they need to experience enlightenment and wisdom.

The Noble Eightfold Path

How does a Buddhist live?



The eightfold path Buddhists follow has three parts:

- 1) Right beliefs and intentions. In other words, having a right view of reality from having understood and accepted the four noble truths.
- 2) Ethical conduct has three components: right speech, right action, and right livelihood. This means one must not gossip, spread rumors, use hurtful words, use violence against any creature, steal, etc.
- 3) Mystical or meditative life. The disciplined life of reflection requires isolation and withdrawal to a place of quietude and serenity. This means submitting the mind to the control of the will to eliminate evil thoughts and focusing on good qualities.

Nirvana:
The final goal in the process of life in Hinduism in which the Atman (the self) is united with the Brahman (the One, the life-creating energy in the universe). In this way the Atman is freed from the world, suffering, and the illusion of the senses in order to be one with the divine energy.

Buddhist Devotion and Nirvana

What is the goal of the Buddhist?



All Buddhists, both laypeople and monks, make vows to Buddha. According to their religion, keeping those vows results in receiving blessings or *karma*. Monks achieve *karma* when they renounce the world, but laypeople achieve it by helping monks.

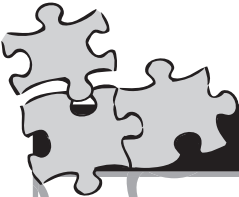
The word *nirvana* means extinction, referring to that which is extinguished or dies in fire. *Nirvana* also means the end of suffering, which is the cure for all evil and the goal of transformation.

In Buddhism the components of one's being are held together by the anxiety of desire, of craving. When these anxieties are overcome, the components are separated so they cannot be restored. They simply vanish. This is how *nirvana* is "non-existence" or "non-rebirth." Buddhism avoids answering questions about the afterlife because it is not a matter of concern. This silence is a cause of dissatisfaction for many Buddhists.

Today's Buddhism has evolved in many ways in order to adapt to the world. It has reinterpreted the teachings of Buddha to such an extent that they include a kind of savior whom they have named *bodhisattvas*. These people offer help to individuals in order to achieve their destiny. Buddhism is constantly adding to its classical teachings, and as a result the way of interpreting and teaching is constantly changing.

In this third millennium, there has been a renewed interest in reaching followers of Hinduism and Buddhism. For many years, the countries where these religions are located were believed to be almost impenetrable. This is changing today thanks to the work of missionaries who have worked little by little, with dedication and patience, love and compassion, to take the gospel to those lands.

In Buddhism, meditation involves various techniques of relaxation and controlling one's thoughts, emptying oneself and uniting with the universal energy (other living beings, including spirits) through which one is able to advance through steps and stages on the path to nirvana.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Buddhism and Hinduism are polytheist religions that have much in common. One is derived from the other, and they keep their followers in spiritual blindness.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Divide the class into three groups. The first one will represent Buddhists, the second one Hindus, and the third one Christians. This activity consists in defending one's beliefs. The groups will have a set amount of time to prepare their arguments. The teacher or a student will serve as moderator. Once the debate is finished, the class should discuss how effective this method is for sharing our Christian beliefs with others.

2. Based on the first activity, answer these questions:

a) When we talk with a Buddhist, is arguing or debating a good strategy to use?

b) How can we speak to followers of other religions so that they have the best chance of understanding the gospel and accepting Christ as their savior?

3. Make a plan for how the class will pray during the week for the evangelization of countries where Hinduism and Buddhism is practiced. Divide students so that each one is praying for one hour, one day a week. The table below has the countries with the highest numbers of followers of these religions. Before praying, try to find out everything you can about these countries and the needs of the people there.

Hindu Countries	Indonesia, Bali, Mauritius, Nepal	India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar	Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka	Fiji, Guyana, Pakistan, Singapore, Surinam	Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, South Africa, UK	Arabian Peninsula, US, Panamá	Trinidad & Tobago, Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia
Buddhist Countries	Myanmar, Bhutan	Cambodia, China	South Korea, Japan	Mongolia, Laos	Singapore Sri Lanka	Thailand, Taiwan	Vietnam, Brazil, Argentina
Day							
Hour							
Student							



LESSON 5

Syncretism and Indigenous Religions

The Backdrop of Global Mission

Objectives

- To define “syncretism.”
- To identify mistakes missionaries have made in the past.
- To see the value of discipleship as a missional tool.

Main Ideas

- In Latin America, syncretism originated during the conquest of the continent.
- European missionaries rejected the beliefs and practices of the indigenous peoples, and many imposed the Christian faith by force.
- In order to prevent syncretism from occurring, we must offer discipleship that will provide a dialogue between traditional religions and the Word of God.

Some “Christians” still practice witchcraft, ancestor worship, magic, divination, seeking out shamans, using amulets, and other such things.

In some parts of the world, there are people who faithfully attend Christian churches and ask God to meet their needs, but at the same time go to the town’s witch doctor for healing, to fortunetellers to learn their fate, or to exorcists to seek freedom from evil spirits.

Many Christians in our continent live what we might call a “double spirituality.” This is especially seen in places where indigenous religions are practiced, where many have mixed indigenous beliefs with the beliefs and practices of Christianity.

This mixture of beliefs and practices from different religions and spiritual traditions is known as *syncretism*. In order to understand the current state of our continent, it is important to know the history of Christian missions here.

Introduction

Origins of Syncretism

How did syncretism originate in the Americas?

*The religious **syncretism**, which dominates in Latin America, is a product of the combining or mixing of the religions that came before Christianity, which in turn became a new belief system different from the existing ones.*

When the American continent was being colonized, Europeans thought their own culture and they themselves were superior to the indigenous people living in these lands. They thought it was their duty to teach these “uncivilized” people their European culture and religion (Roman Catholicism). Later, a new philosophical movement sprung up in Europe known as the Enlightenment. It changed the way people saw the world, separating the “natural” from the “supernatural,” in other words, separating science from religion.

With the Enlightenment there came new scientific ideas, such as the Theory of Evolution, which influenced the missionary movement, teaching the idea that cultures could be in different stages of development, some

being civilized and others “primitive.” It was also believed that religions progressed through three stages of development: animism, metaphysical/theological, and scientific.

The first European missionaries were also influenced by these ideas. Many believed that their mission was to teach their superior and more civilized culture while at the same time evangelizing the indigenous people. In his book *The World is Too Much with Us: “Culture” in Modern Protestant Mission*, Charles Taber describes these first European missionaries:

The superiority of Western civilization as the culmination of human development, the attribution of that superiority to the prolonged dominance of Christianity, the duty of Christians to share civilization and the gospel with the “benighted heathen”—these were the chief intellectual currency of their lives.

These missionaries believed animist beliefs and practices were primitive superstitions. The same happened when other lands were colonized, such as India and Middle Eastern and Asian countries. Missionaries made the mistake of assuming that these people followed beliefs similar to the great religions (Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, etc.) instead of studying their and their family’s religious practices. We should not forget that these missionaries were influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment which affirmed that “reason,” supported by the advance of the sciences, would one day solve all of humanity’s problems. Religions dealt with the spiritual life and after-life, but science would ultimately solve all of our day-to-day needs.

Under the influence of the Enlightenment, missionaries planted churches alongside schools and hospitals to try to suppress animist “superstitions,” but they failed. The indigenous people continued their rituals in secret out of fear that they would anger the missionaries. That is how syncretism began: Christianity mixed with the beliefs and practices of indigenous religions.

To summarize, as a result of evangelistic efforts during colonial times, the indigenous people accepted the science of missionaries (which improved their quality of life), but they rejected the gospel. They accepted medicine and technology because these provided solutions to basic and everyday problems, but they either rejected or chose to incorporate some of the beliefs and practices of Christianity without leaving behind their indigenous beliefs and practices. Doing the same thing missionaries had done, they learned to combine different ideas. They adapted so they could turn to religion for difficult times, but to science for their everyday lives.

The “gods” of Native Americans were water wells, trees, sacred rocks and stars. To these, they added Christian symbols such as the Virgin Mary, saints, and other rituals.

The Enlightenment or Age of Reason
was a cultural and intellectual movement which emerged in France and England at the end of the 17th century. The name comes from its purpose, which was to give light to a humanity which was in the midst of darkness, ignorance, superstition and tyranny in order to build a better world through reason and science. It gave rise to new economic, political and social theories.

From the religions brought to America by African slaves, today Afro-Cuban Santería, Afro-Brazilian Macumba or Candomblé, and Haitian Voodoo are all widespread. In Cuba the names of the African goddesses are associated with the images of saints, such as: Temayá, who is Our Lady of Regla, the Patron Saint of the City of Habana; Changó, Santa Barbara; Ochún, Our Lady of Charity; and Obatalá, Our Lady of Mercy. In the Aztec religion, the female deity Tonantzin refers to Mother Earth, also named Coatlicue or Cihuacóatl. An altar dedicated to her was located in Tepayac, north of Mexico City. Franciscans tore down her altar and built a shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe around 1531 (Hernán Cortés worshiped there). This initiated a syncretism between the two “goddesses.” Twenty million people visit this shrine every year.

DECREASE OF THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF EUROPEAN COLONIZERS

CENTRAL MEXICO		PERU (ANDEAN REGION)	
YEAR	INDIGENOUS POPULATION	YEAR	INDIGENOUS POPULATION
1519	25,300,000	1570	1,264,530
1523	16,800,000	1580	1,083,500
1548	6,300,000	1590	947,301
1568	2,600,000	1600	833,788
1580	1,900,000	1610	737,913
1595	1,300,000	1620	589,033
1606	1,000,000		

(R. Geymonat, B. Vidal, and S. Gonzalez)

Syncretism Today

In this section we will describe the current state of syncretism.



Leaders of churches today have to face the problem of syncretism. In many cases there is a disconnect between what the church teaches and how believers live out their faith daily. What is the best way to avoid this problem?

The answer of leaders in the past has been to radically reject the old customs, considering them to be pagan. They condemned all dances, traditional rituals, sacrifices to spirits, and divinations and tried to eradicate them through punishment and discipline. However, today we know that rejecting old beliefs and customs can create serious theological and missiological problems since those beliefs are deeply tied to the culture of the people.

When new beliefs and practices are imposed in order to replace everything that has been practiced for many generations, it is natural for the people to reject Christianity as a foreign religion. This causes new Christians to be rejected by their families or communities. This is a common reason that prevents many from following Jesus.

Something else happens when people try to eliminate old customs: they continue to be practiced in secret. Over time these customs emerge again among believers, giving origin to what authors Yamamori and Charles Taber have called “Christopaganism.”

Many of the traditional practices were allowed by missionaries in an attempt to recognize the cultures of the people they were evangelizing. They thought that in the process of discipleship, the people would leave those old customs and vices behind. However, the opposite occurred, and the customs and practices endured and mixed with Christianity.

Facing Syncretism in Missionary Work

How should missionaries work with syncretism?



Here are four recommendations for missionaries facing the problem of syncretism:

1. The first thing one must do is an analysis of the local culture in order to know it well and understand what the beliefs and values are behind people's conduct.

2. A missionary must evaluate the beliefs and values of the culture through the lens of Scripture. Any new belief or truth that is taught must come from Scripture. This will not be difficult if the new believers have accepted the Bible as the basis of all truth. We must take into account however that people will read and interpret Scripture through the logic of their own culture. This is why we must teach them to interpret and understand the whole Bible through the life and teachings of Jesus.

3. Once beliefs have been evaluated critically in light of Scriptures, the missionary leader should guide believers in finding ways to worship and practice the Christian sacraments (baptism and communion) in ways that the Christian meaning can still be expressed within the culture.

4. Finally, it is the missionary's responsibility to guide the people to progress from where they started to where God wants to take them, so they continue growing in their faith.

Missionaries are responsible for discipling new believers and communicating Biblical and theological bases to them, especially those which are in contrast to popular religions. These include a theology of God, creation, sin, salvation, and the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is important to take into account that all daily practices must be related to the beliefs. One should live what one believes. This is why it is important to have a dialogue that compares the Bible's answers to those of their traditions.

An important theological topic involves the origin and purpose of life. The indigenous religions of the Americas practiced human sacrifice to gain control and power over nature and life. This desire to "be like God" was the sin of Adam and Eve.

Animist religions can be found in many communities. These are based on the belief that all things in the universe are invested with a life force or spiritual energy. It is related to the occult, spirit worship, and the belief in charms, amulets, other good luck objects, etc.

Many indigenous religions promote the desire of people to focus on and extol themselves and become gods and goddesses. The rituals might be different, but the goal is the same. In missionary work it is important to tell the story of creation because it will answer many foundational questions that have to do with the origin and purpose for the world and human beings, who were created in the image of God.

From the creation story, the beginnings of the people of Israel, the birth of the Messiah (Jesus), and the coming of the Holy Spirit to establish the Church, who are God's holy people under the new covenant, is all told. All of this falls under God's plan of redemption. Through the stories and the acts of God, we can know God and have a personal experience with him. Love of God urges people to renew their lives. God's love in them will move them to be sensitive to suffering, poverty, injustice, racism, and oppression in this world.

New believers need a solid Biblical and theological foundation in order to be ready to answer questions about their faith when asked.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Many Christians live a double life by keeping the practices and beliefs of their indigenous religions. In order to combat this religious syncretism, missionaries must disciple new converts with solid Biblical and theological teaching and help them to find ways to worship and follow the Christian rituals that are compatible with their culture.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The author George Seibold says that there are five types of “popular religion” in Latin America. Look through the list and identify which of these are found in your country.

- Indigenous religions from the American continent which maintain their old beliefs.
- Popular Catholicism with veneration of saints and images.
- Indigenous-Christian syncretism, which maintains the beliefs and practices of both religions, such as services for popular saints (common in Andean countries).
- Afro-Brazilian or West Indian syncretism (also keeps Christian connotations).
- Popular Evangelism

2. Following is a list of some of the “popular saints.” In groups of 3 or 4, identify those which are worshiped in your country, or you can add any others which are not listed.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lord of Death (Santa Muerte or San La Muerte) | <input type="checkbox"/> Inti Raymi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The White Girl (la Niña Blanca, Martita, or Flaquita) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jesús Valverde |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mashimon | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaucho Gil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> María Lionza | <input type="checkbox"/> La Difunta Correa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pacha Mama | <input type="checkbox"/> La Madre María |
| <input type="checkbox"/> St. Maximón or San Simón | Otro: _____ |

3. In the same groups, make a list of the popular amulets and talismans which people use in your country. Following is a list of some of the better known ones which you can use as a starting point.

- Cosmic talisman
- Coyote’s fang
- Rabbit’s foot
- Horseshoe
- Garlic cloves
- Energy stones
- The cross of Caravaca
- Candles with essences or colors to provide energy
- Jala Jala plant
- Hand of Glory
- Herbs, oils, and other potions to heal sicknesses caused by evil spirits
- Other: _____



LESSON 6

The Creative Access Context

The Backdrop of Global Mission

Objectives

- To understand the definition of a creative access area.
- To learn how missionaries work in these areas.
- To appreciate the importance of “making friends” in sharing Christ.

Main Ideas

- Countries where the gospel cannot be preached freely are called creative access areas.
- Missionaries can secretly enter creative access countries thanks to their diverse professions.
- The best way of making disciples in these areas is to demonstrate Jesus’ way of life through friendships.

Introduction

At the global level, the majority of those who have yet to be evangelized are found in creative access countries and/or the 10/40 Window

The name “10/40 Window” was created by Luis Bush, who today calls that same area the “Resistant Belt.” From the time of Paul and Barnabas, the gospel has found opposition among authorities who see Christianity as a threat to their established structures of political and religious power.

Jazmín is a nurse working with a humanitarian relief organization. Several weeks have passed since an earthquake hit a country in Asia, and the people are not able to return to their homes because these are all destroyed. Only rubble remains. She is committed to staying with them until they can attain more permanent housing.

Jeff, a businessman, never imagined that one day God would send him as an undercover missionary to live in a foreign country with a double identity. He is happy because one of his professors let him know he had been granted his Master’s degree. Without it he would never be able to gain access to this limited access country.

Speaking and writing the cursive form of the Arabic language has Rodrigo stressed. He looks at the Mosque tower outside his window. Taking a deep breath, he tries to focus again on the grammar lesson his tutor is teaching him. This is his second year of studying Arabic. He can form some sentences, but from time to time he wonders if he will ever be able to speak the language fluently.

All of these people serve in the 10/40 window. What is the 10/40 window? It is the part of the world located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the Equator. It goes from northern Africa to China and Japan. Two thirds of the planet’s population (over 7 billion people) resides in this “window” and almost every one of the 55 least-evangelized countries is located there. Eighty percent of the poorest people in the world live in the 10/40 window.

Creative Access Areas

What are creative access areas?



The names of the people in these stories are not real, but the stories are based on the real experiences of missionaries doing work in creative access

countries. They are missionaries, but the governments of the countries they work in do not know that. They are part of a new kind of cross-cultural missionary: the creative access area missionary.

These missionaries have been trained in evangelism, discipleship, compassion, and training of pastors. However, what is interesting is that they are able to gain access to these difficult-to-reach areas through other, non-religious jobs or services. Still, what are creative access missions? Why are they needed? How does a field or country get classified as a creative access mission? These questions do not have easy answers. This is because this new missionary strategy is not yet well defined. The situation inside creative access areas is constantly changing. This is why our ways of thinking and our methods should be flexible and adaptable to these changing contexts.

The reality is that since the year 2000 each new area where missionaries from the Church of the Nazarene have entered has been a creative access area. From that time until today, men and women serving God have shown courage in the face of opposition, even when it has meant social isolation, persecution, imprisonment, and even martyrdom. These stories of heroism and sacrifice are common in today's missionary field.

The reason for this opposition to Christian missions is varied and complex. In previous centuries, missionary work was closely aligned with the political goals of colonizing western powers. The offer of the gospel was, in many cases, tied to the imposition of a foreign culture.

Non-Christians justified their rejection of Christianity by pointing out that evangelistic efforts were accompanied by paternalism and an attitude of cultural superiority. It is important for missionary agencies from western countries to recognize this so they might avoid repeating the mistakes which closed so many hearts to the gospel.

Thanks to God, today missionaries are being sent out not only from western countries, but also on a global scale, into a world which is becoming more diverse each day. Missionaries are being sent from Africa, Asia and Latin America. However, a missionary's nationality or ethnicity does not guarantee they will be welcomed. In some cases the ban on missionary activity comes from atheistic political ideologies, such as in communist countries.

In other parts of the world the obstacles to Christian missions are religious in nature. In some Muslim nations, leaving Islam is punishable by death, and all evangelistic efforts within and outside of their countries are considered capital offenses under Islamic law. In other places, radical followers of Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions oppose Christian missions through social pressure, by passing laws against it, and even by resorting to violence and murder.

To conclude, the majority of people groups that have yet to receive or hear the gospel are located in areas which are not open to missionary work.

“It is important for missionary agencies from western countries to recognize the errors of the past so they might avoid repeating the mistakes which closed so many hearts to the gospel.”

What are the characteristics of creative access countries?

If we limit ourselves to traditional methods of evangelism and church planting, we will simply have to wait for conditions to change and for new doors to open to Christian missions. However, the church would be standing by as several generations die without having met Jesus. As we know, this is not a viable alternative for a church which has been commissioned by Christ to make disciples in all the nations.

*Definition of Christian martyrs:
“Believers in Christ who have lost their lives prematurely as a result of human hostility as they witnessed for Christ” (Barret y Johnson, 2001).*

YEAR	CHRISTIAN MARTYRS
1 to 1900	25 million
1900 to 2000	45 million (450,000/yr)
2001 a 2010	160,000 per year
2011	105,000
Every day in 2011	288
Every hour in 2011	12
Every 5 minutes in 2011	1

(Source: Barret y Johnson, 2011)

Missionary Life in Creative Access Areas

How do people work in creative access countries?



On November 21, 2011, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority published a list of 1,600 words which are considered “obscene;” using these words in a text message is considered a crime. The list includes more than 586 words in Urdu and 1,109 in English. This list of illegal words includes the name Jesus Christ.

Creative Access Missions is one way of responding to the call to do missions in areas where access is closed or restricted. The creative access strategy has these elements:

1. It is a means of gaining access to areas where using traditional methods is not an option. That is, where missionaries are not granted visas or where conditions are dangerous for people who are openly identified as missionaries.
2. “Staging” is used as a means of securing resident visas. This normally refers to jobs that allow the person to legally live and work in a creative access area.
3. Believers and mission personnel are in constant danger, so ministry activities are often done in secret. There are restrictions in what can be communicated about their missionary work. Photos, personal details, places of work and job activities cannot be publicized. Their missionary work cannot be officially registered or reported through public communications, not even to the churches that sponsor them.

What is life like for the missionaries who are serving in creative access areas? These missionaries have found jobs to match their abilities and

interests. These jobs are not “covers” or “fronts” – they are real jobs which give the missionary an opportunity to have direct contact with people so they can develop relationships with them, meet their needs, and provide an incarnational witness. Creative access missionaries are constantly praying that the Holy Spirit might work in them because they live what Jesus prayed in Matthew 10:16, “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.”

Even though missionaries face dangers, in most cases the threats to foreign Christian workers are less extreme than those to local Christians if it is discovered they are breaking laws regarding religious practices. Creative access missionaries never pressure local Christians to take unnecessary risks. Local believers know their context and have learned the boundaries in which they can safely work.

Today Muslim cultures are opening up to the gospel. More Muslims have converted to Christianity in the last 40 years than in all of prior history. Many of these conversions have occurred in Southeast Asia, where there are more Muslims than in the 13 countries of the Middle East combined. Muslims, of course, are also sending out their own missionaries.

Keys to Mission Work in Creative Access Areas

What is God teaching us through creative access missionary work?



Across the years, the experience of doing missions in creative access countries has revealed the following keys to new missionaries:

1. It is a “relational” mission from beginning to end.

When missionaries cross borders into creative access areas, they must leave the familiar and institutional aspects of the church. Religious titles do not have value. There are no church buildings, Christian bookstores, radio or TV stations, or direct access to denominational headquarters. One must be careful not to use the word “missionary” because, in most cases, being known as one will get one quickly deported from the country. Stripped of all professional ministry attire, the missionary finds him or herself reduced to the fundamentals of doing ministry in Jesus’ name.

Initially this can be quite unsettling. How can one invite people? There are no open churches or programs to invite them to. What tools can one use to bring people to Christ and into communion with other believers?

As missionaries wrestle with these questions, Scripture verses which did not attract them before start to jump from the pages and into their hearts. Verses such as Colossians 4:5-6, “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned

“Statistics from the World Christian Database indicate that today there are approximately 175,000 Christian martyrs around the world each year. This estimate includes local Christians as well as cross-cultural missionaries who die as a result of their obedience to Christ.”

(Barrett and Johnson, 30)

The safety of Christians is always the highest priority in creative access areas. Christians are frequently whipped or jailed for spreading the gospel, and in many cases, converting to Christianity is a crime punishable by death.

with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Also Romans 12:13, “Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

These simple words are transformed into the way of life for the missionary as the home becomes the main site for ministry. They begin to invite friends to eat, have fun, and play or listen to music. Eventually, when the time is right, they invite these friends to prayer meetings and Bible studies.

We have learned that hospitality is one of the most powerful ways of showing the love of Jesus, whose own circle of influence was wide enough to include the poor, the homeless, the leper, the prostitute, and the tax collector. Grace and compassion can be practiced via long distances once in a while, but showing hospitality means getting near those with physical and spiritual needs, and allowing them to come into contact with the kindness of the people of Christ.

Doctrines can be communicated through books, classes or sermons, and this is important. However, the love of Christ has to be experienced personally as non-believers find the love of God incarnated in the transformed lives of His disciples.

2. We give up institutional “success” for the cause of the Kingdom.

Every creative access area has its own unique set of dynamics. In some areas, although local pastors and foreign missionaries have to operate in secret, they can still plant churches, organize districts, and ordain ministers in accordance to the denominational model. In other areas, the Church of the Nazarene is growing at an amazing pace. However, there are places where the Church of the Nazarene has not been established. This means that finances and missionary personnel are being used, but new members and churches are not being produced. Is this bad? Would we be better stewards investing our resources in areas where the denomination could advance?

Our leaders have been confronted with this question. They have recognized that the interests of the church are to be subjected to the greater cause of God’s kingdom. The spiritual urgency represented by the number of unbelievers in the world is forcing all missionary-sending churches and organizations to put aside their narrow institutional objectives in order to work together to accomplish the mission Christ gave his church.

This means that in some places, the existing networks of local churches will support the work, providing resources and training. In other places, where established churches do not exist, the work will involve planting seeds of faith through compassion and evangelistic ministries, or in watering the seed that was already planted with the hope that churches may flourish one

The knowledge of the 10/40 window has made it necessary to develop specialized types of missionary service to help tear down the barriers which surround countries with limited access to the Gospel.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have you shared the gospel with someone that you met through your work or profession? Share your experience with the rest of the class.

2. Below you will find a list of jobs or professions. On the column to the right, write down one idea of how you might share the gospel through this job. Find creative ways! For example, a bus driver could play recordings of sermons on the bus.

- a. Shoe-shiner _____
- b. Bus driver _____
- c. Pediatrician _____
- d. Carpenter _____
- e. Police officer _____
- f. Store cashier _____
- g. Homemaker _____
- h. Garbage collector _____
- i. Chemist _____
- j. Professor _____
- k. Construction worker _____
- l. Lawyer _____

3. Working in pairs, come up with a code for undercover communication. You will be using it to write a short letter reporting your missionary work to your supervisor as if you were a missionary in a creative access area. The letter must include all of the words below, but they must be in code. For example, instead of saying "new believer" you could use "new friend."

Word you cannot use	Code word	Word you cannot use	Code word
Missionary		Jesus Christ	
New believer		Easter	
Bible		Baptism	
Discipleship		Lord's Supper	

Dear friend...



LESSON 7

Sending Latin American Missionaries

The Backdrop of Global Mission

Objectives

- To identify advantages that Latino missionaries possess.
- To learn how those in Latin America can support missionaries.
- To learn how we can encourage missionaries.

Main Ideas

- Latin American missionaries have an easier time adapting to and serving in countries located within the 10/40 window.
 - The local church is responsible for providing missionary experiences to future missionaries.
- Once they are on the field, missionaries depend on the support and backing of their sending churches.

“There are 60 million Christians in Latin America, so in order to have one percent of them be missionaries there would have to be 60,000 missionaries, but currently we only have 10,000. And that is just to reach one percent”
(Kerry A. Olson).

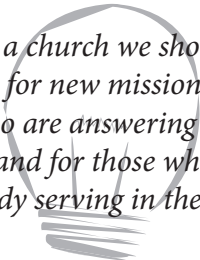
Four decades ago, Latin America was not very involved in missions and few expected that it would ever be very involved. It was common to think that countries with stronger economies would be in charge of this kind of sending ministry. However, over time, missionary organizations have changed their strategies. This has allowed missionaries to emerge not only from Latin America, but also from other countries, even though their economies are not as strong as those of previous sending countries.

Introduction

Latin America as a Missionary Sending Area

Why are so many missionaries today coming out of Latin America? 

In spite of the economic and social conditions in Latin America, missionary sending organizations are considering Latinos to be well suited for missionary work in the countries of the Middle East and the 10/40 window. This is due to the similar living conditions people living in these regions face, conditions such as these: poverty, overpopulation, economic crises, social problems, violence, migration, political instability and even war.

As a church we should pray for new missionaries who are answering the call and for those who are already serving in the field. 

Experience has shown that Latinos have an easier time adapting to these countries where the gospel has not yet entered, nor is it well-received. For them, many of the living conditions in these countries are nothing new, so these do not become obstacles to their missionary work. Latino missionaries can understand the situation these people find themselves in and can use these opportunities to present the gospel. Another advantage is that Latinos are similar in appearance to people who live in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Above all, the most important reason why Latinos are well-suited to be missionaries in these countries is the special calling which God has given to the Church of Latin America.

Slowly, over time, Latin America has changed the way it views missions. Before, these countries saw themselves as poor people who did not have enough resources to give to support missionaries. However, they have realized that they can do this. Latin America has the resources to support missionaries! If other poorer countries around the world have sent missionaries, Latin America can do so also, even if official economic statistics speak to the contrary.

Many Latinos still believe that they have nothing to give or that they cannot give. What many do not realize is that intercessory prayer is the principal source of support for missionaries.

Statistics of Missionaries Sent from Latin America

What has been the experience of missionaries from Latin America?



Below are statistics which show how sending missionaries from Latin America has increased. These figures were reported by Levi DeCarvalho, Ph.D., in his book, *Fortalezas y Debilidades del Movimiento Misionero Iberoamericano: Datos Generales de la Fase I. (Strengths and Weaknesses of the Iberian American Missionary Sending Movement: General Facts of Phase I)*.

CALLING HOW DID THESE MISSIONARIES RECEIVE THEIR CALL?	
% of Missionaries	Description
51%	a sense of restlessness or prompting by God
21%	at a missionary conference
17%	from personally knowing and/or talking to a missionary
6%	influenced by resources such as videos, movies, or books

EXPERIENCE WITH EVANGELISM WHAT HAS BEEN THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH EVANGELISM?	
% of Missionaries	Description
72%	had experience with evangelism in the local church
28%	did not have experience with evangelism in the local church

What problems could arise if missionaries did not have a supervisor?

Missionaries in the Church of the Nazarene are able to have medical insurance thanks to your support through the offerings to the World Evangelism Fund (WEF).

If the church is prepared to send missionaries, is she also ready to receive them when they come back? How can you learn more about this subject?

LOCAL CHURCH SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MISSIONARY CALLINGS	
% of Missionaries	Description
31%	no positive response to church members with missionary calling
57.50%	do not know what to do if member is called to serve outside of the country

HOW DOES THE LOCAL CHURCH ENDORSE AND SUPPORT ITS MISSIONARIES?	
% of Missionaries	Description
33.50%	They have the backing and support of the church
50.50%	They do not have the backing and support of the church

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES OF MISSIONARIES DOES THE MISSIONARY PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES (SUCH AS PRAYER, FASTING, ETC.)?	
% of Missionaries	Description
89%	followed spiritual disciplines before going out into the field
49%	practice of spiritual disciplines decreased once they were in the field

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MISSIONARY AND THE SENDING ORGANIZATION AND SUPERVISORS	
% of Missionaries	Description
30.50%	everyone in the organization works together
29.50%	have differences in opinion, but reach a consensus in order to work
40%	report serious disputes and differences of opinion
11.5% del total absoluto	believe that disagreements do not compromise their work in the field
28%	report they have a good field supervisor
30%	good supervisor, but live far away from them
5.50%	report their supervisor does not understand their problems
36%	report they have no field supervisor

MEDICAL INSURANCE FOR MISSIONARY FAMILIES	
% of Missionaries	Description
14%	have medical insurance in their country of origin
25%	have medical insurance in the country where they are living
10%	have an international medical insurance plan
50.50%	do not have any kind of medical insurance

MISSIONARY HEALTH	
% of Missionaries	Description
65%	report either frequent or infrequent fatigue
22.50%	have learned to overcome fatigue
7%	report never having experienced fatigue
4%	did not know how to report what they were feeling

REACTIONS TO RETURNING TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN	
% of Missionaries	Description
14.50%	feel good, as if time had stood still
52%	are aware that time has gone by and that they have been changed
33.50%	feel comfortable upon returning to their church and country of origin

"I believe the development of the media has transformed the world into a web of cultures and a world where we are slowly becoming one giant village"
(Trino Jara).

Generation Y refers to those born between 1982 and 1994, an era when many families enjoyed economic prosperity. These children grew with cable television, the Internet, answering machines, affordable cars, vacations, and even private school. They enjoy a variety of musical styles: punk rock, electronic music, hardcore punk, metal, rap, pop, fusion, and alternative rock.

A Fundamental Change in Contemporary Missions

How many cultures does a missionary work with as they serve?



There has been a fundamental change in contemporary missions. Mission and calling are one in the same, not options the church can choose between. However, being a missionary is not only living in a foreign country far from home, adopting a different language and culture, and ministering in a different context. Missionaries today must learn to minister as part of "multicultural teams." In other words, missionaries have to not only adapt to the culture of the country they are serving in, but also to the cultures of the missionaries with whom they are ministering and interacting.

For example, a Colombian missionary might go to an African country, and his team might include four other people, two from Spain, one from

Ethnocentrism is the belief that your own culture is superior to others in some or all aspects.

the United States and one from Argentina. The Colombian missionary must adapt not only to the culture of the country he/she serves in, but also to the cultures of the members of the team. Even though adapting to work with a multicultural team is not easy, we give God thanks for calling and choosing special people! God is including them all in the great work of salvation He is doing in our world, and many more workers are needed to reap the harvest.

A Latin Perspective

In this section we will learn from the experiences of one of our own missionaries.



*“There are many who aspire to be missionaries to be part of the “elite,” but there is no such thing as the elite!”
(Trino Jara).*

In the Church of the Nazarene it is a privilege to be able to count on so many full-time global missionaries. One of them is Trino Jara. He is from Costa Rica, and is one of the first missionaries sent from that country. He served in Africa for ten years as Regional Coordinator of Compassion Ministries and at the time of this interview, he was serving as a missionary in Ukraine (Eurasia Region).

Below is an interview with him covering the themes discussed in this lesson:

1. Briefly tell us a little about your calling to the missionary field. How did God call you to His ministry?

“When I accepted Christ as my Savior I made a promise to serve Him for the rest of my life and to spend myself in service to others, especially those who are needy. That is how I began to get involved in the work of the local church. The Lord gave me a burden for the poor since I had lived on the streets for many years during my childhood (I was a street kid). This helped me to understand how people live in marginalized communities.

This is how I became involved in compassionate ministries, even before Nazarene Compassionate Ministries came into existence. I also became involved with Nazarene Youth [International,], and at the same time I was pastoring and working to plant churches.

It was at the 1997 General Assembly where I received God’s invitation and confirmation to go to Africa to work in an agricultural development program through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries....

After years of doing volunteer work in the church, God called me to serve in Africa for ten years and now for two in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States, the former Soviet Union). In my case it was more than a calling. It was a promise I made to invest my life in the lives of other people.”

2. For how many years have you been a missionary in the Church of the Nazarene?

“Ten years in Africa: three in Malawi and Mozambique and seven in South Africa. I have now worked for four years in the former Soviet Union (CIS).

Before being a missionary for the church, I served for many years as a volunteer doing small missionary projects in Central America and Mexico, mostly with Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.”

3. With all of your experience you have seen many changes in the world and in the ministry. How different is it to minister cross-culturally today compared to ten years ago?

“On the positive side, the advance of communication has helped the work of mission. For example, twelve years ago it was very difficult to get internet access in Malawi or Mozambique. Today I can be in contact with my family in Costa Rica every day.

On the other hand, the work of sharing the good news has gotten more difficult since in most countries where we minister people are more focused on technology and they are forgetting about forming relationships.

This is a challenge for the new generation of missionaries that will have to be creative in developing new ways of sharing the good news with this generation, called generation “Y.” One positive aspect of this generation is that it is very interested in solving the problems of the world. This is where a missiology focused on developing (spiritually and socially) transformational youth and compassion ministries will be making use of effective tools to reach today’s youth.

Another important aspect is that in cross-cultural ministry today it is easier to reach other cultures. Cultural barriers? They do exist, but they are not as high or thick as they were 20, 15, or even 10 years ago.”

4. Have you seen a change in the Latin American church? In what ways have we advanced (or gone backwards) in training and sending our own missionaries?

“I remember many years ago a South American couple went to Costa Rica to study at SENDAS. They graduated as missiologists. I also remember how sad their graduation was because they had no opportunities within their own denomination.

That was the time when we thought that God only called “gringos” to be missionaries. But thanks to God the church changed and the process of internationalization brought down that wall, so that today we have many Latinos serving God in the missionary field.

We have made giant steps forward in training and sending Latino missionaries to other world areas. Thanks to God, the couple I mentioned before is now serving as missionaries in their region of South America.

These changes are not only affecting how the Church of the Nazarene is doing missions but also how the Latin American church understands missions. Today there is much more openness to participating in and supporting

The term “missionary furlough” or “home assignment” is used by missionaries to refer to the time they take to visit churches to talk about missions and ministry on the field.. One purpose of this time is to raise funds for the ministry.

missions, becoming involved in prayer for missionaries, and giving to Global Mission offerings as the churches also participate in receiving missionaries during the missionary furloughs.

I know of many Latino missionaries who have had good experiences as they serve in other parts of the world. They are doing a good job of strengthening the work of the Latinos who went before them.”

5. What are the biggest challenges for Latino missionaries today? Are there advantages for Latino workers in the cross-cultural field in cooperating with workers from other cultures or countries? What are they?

“For Latinos, the process of adapting to the culture is easier than for workers from other countries, especially in the processes of adjustment and witnessing about Christ. Learning to live in, adapt to, and understand the culture we are living in, especially when we have come out of contexts where there is religious freedom, is one of the greatest challenges we Latino missionaries face. Sometimes this happens to me when I visit a country where I face limitations, as in freedom of movement or expression.

“I personally believe the Church of the Nazarene has a better missionary structure than many other denominations and missionary agencies”
(Trino Jara)

This has to do in part with our ethnocentrism and tendency to compare other cultures to ours. This is a valid tendency as long as it is temporary, but it can affect the effectiveness of the ministry when it turns into a daily attitude.

Another challenge is the language. Personally I am grateful with the church for the way it sent me to Africa because they “threw me into the deep-end,” as we say in my country; in truth this was something very positive. In Africa I had to learn English, Portuguese, and try to understand the local dialect, Chichewa. This also allowed me to live in a culture with different needs and problems from the ones I knew in Latin America.

A third challenge, which is important to consider on our part of the world, is that in Latin America we have many needs and limitations in our ministries. This forces us to be creative in developing local resources to help in the development of the church. This in turn helps the global mission to use fewer resources in developing a church that is more committed and autonomous, which is the opposite of what happens on many occasions when people are sent from more developed countries.”

6. What would you say to someone from Latin America who is preparing to be a missionary?

“It is important to be actively involved in the life of the local church, the district, and even beyond if possible. You can be effective in the missionary field only if you have a good, strong foundation. There are many missionaries in the field who have a lot of theory but very little practical knowledge. They were never involved in the local church.

Another requirement that is often ignored is sacrifice. Jesus desires people who will go and sacrifice to accomplish what He commanded us, which is to “make disciples of all nations.” Unfortunately, in the past there have been many bad examples that have made young people want to serve in the missionary field only to be well-known.

If the Lord is calling someone to prepare to be a missionary, the best thing to do is to pray and to become familiar with the place, its geography, history, and economic, political, social, demographic, and spiritual characteristics (for example: what is the dominant religion and what are its doctrines?). Above all, pray for that place and give witness to your calling!”

7. What would you say to the thousands of local churches in our countries about their support and sending of their own missionaries?

“They need to continue to support missionary work. I believe the local church needs a deep knowledge of the reach of the denomination’s missionary work, which can be accomplished through classes and missionary emphases.

However, we need a lot of support through both prayer and financial help in order to continue sending people to complete the Great Commission. Local churches and districts must work together in organizing and funding short-term mission trips which can involve youth and children in the work of going and preaching the Word in other cultures and groups within their own countries.

This will help to develop a culture of commitment to missions. Once youth begin to express a desire to serve God in this area of ministry, pastors and churches have the responsibility to involve them in the life of service within the church. That is where missionaries are formed.

It is also important for local churches to encourage and support those young people within their own congregations who have felt a call to missions. Districts can commit to funding more young people to go into the missionary field, and sending them with the support of the churches of their district.”



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Today, Latin America can send and support its own missionaries. God has given our missionaries characteristics that facilitate their ability to enter and adapt to creative access countries. The local church is responsible for providing service opportunities for those who have been called to missions so that they can acquire the experience and commitment needed, and then the church must send them and support them as they serve on the missionary field.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pretend you are writing a letter to a child, sibling, or friend who has been on the missionary field for a year and a half and does not know what is going on in your family or church. What would you write?

2. Divide the class in two groups. One will write down a list of the positive opportunities Latin American churches currently have to send missionaries to the 10/40 window. The other group will make a list of the risks and obstacles the church and missionaries have to face. When finished, write both lists on the board and discuss what was learned from this activity.

Opportunities	Obstacles/Risks

3. In order to better identify with the adjustments of missionary life, make a commitment to abstain from eating something you really like for 15 days. It can be a candy or dessert, coffee or drink. At the same time, commit to not watching a television program or not visiting/communicating with a friend or family member. Use the time you usually spend doing these activities to pray for missionaries. This discipline will help you to better understand missionaries in a small aspect of your life.

During these 15 days I commit to stop eating this food: _____

During the same time, I will not engage in this activity (TV show, Facebook, etc):



LESSON 8

Areas of Missionary Service

The Backdrop of Global Mission

Objectives

- To awaken the missionary calling.
- To understand the different areas of missionary service.

Main Ideas

- There are many areas of service for a missionary such as the following: administration, construction, communication, education, food distribution, healthcare, etc.

Introduction

Nazarene missionaries are sent to be the “motors” which help to start the development of the church in the missionary field. The diverse tasks they perform all have the objective of reaching others for Christ and spreading the Kingdom of God.

In addition to their responsibilities as part of a missionary team, they are involved in a local church in the country they are serving, even as they continue to be members of the local church of their home country.

In this lesson we will present some of the tasks and service areas in which missionaries participate.

Administration and Development of the Church

There are six regional administrative centers (Regional Offices) located around the world and approximately 30 field offices run by the Church of the Nazarene. There are also hospitals, seminaries, and schools which need administrators to make their jobs easier. Serving as an administrator includes working with finances, personnel, and in organization. Some examples are Field Strategy Coordinators, Regional Directors and Personnel Coordinators.

Still, we must remember that not everyone in the world knows Jesus. That is why preaching and evangelism are foundational for spreading the gospel to all the nations. This is based on the commission Jesus gave us to “go and make disciples.” Every missionary should work in evangelizing and planting churches where there are no churches. Missionaries must also disciple and be mentors to leaders of local churches and districts.

Communications and Information Technology

Missionaries who serve in communications must have talent, experience and knowledge in that area. The work they do is very much appreciated by the church since they create and produce programs on radio, TV, and Internet, which present the gospel in brief but effective ways. They also serve in publishing books, magazines, websites, and other publications for the growth of the church.

The 6 regions of the Church of the Nazarene are these:

AFRICA
ASIA-PACIFIC
EURASIA
MESOAMERICA (MAR)
SUDAMERICA (SAM)
USA/CANADA

The places missionaries have trouble getting to are precisely the places where radio and television programs are able to reach. Even books become mediums by which the gospel can be spread. Missionaries who serve in the area of communications complete all of these tasks and more.

The field of information technology is essential to administrative offices and educational institutions. Computers and networks need people to maintain them, and online educational programs need administrators. The church needs people to assist with tools such as video conferencing, which can be used for committee meetings, classes, and trainings, and which helps leaders save time and the church save travel money.

Construction

On the mission field, new churches, offices, schools, houses and seminaries are always being built, many of them thanks to the ministry of Work and Witness teams. These teams pay for their own food, travel and lodging. In addition, they contribute time, energy and financial donations to the project. Because of this, coordinators are needed to be in charge of the logistics of hosting these groups.

Many groups that participate in Work and Witness also do evangelism through face-to-face interaction, vacation Bible schools, Jesus Film showings, and in other ways.

Compassionate and Healthcare Ministries

Compassionate ministries respond to human needs through programs that help child development efforts, victims of natural disasters, educational projects and other needs. Missionaries working in this area help to start projects in churches, districts and countries. They motivate brothers and sisters in Christ to become involved in solving the problems found in their own communities, finding creative solutions through sustainable programs.

Regarding healthcare services, approximately seven percent of Nazarene missionaries serve in public health programs and hospitals. The goal of missionaries who serve in this area is to equip and train new generations of professionals in preventive healthcare. Medical professionals, no matter their specialty, are able to gain easier access to creative access countries.

Finances

Finance is an important ministry because it facilitates the functioning of the church. People with training and experience in finance are needed in the administrative offices on our mission field. Above all, however, they must be people with integrity.

Missionaries who serve in the area of finance act as accountants, develop budgets, maintain both bank and petty cash accounts, pay for taxes and other services, and deal with currency exchange, among other responsibilities.

Work and Witness
includes any team, university group, and/or family that leaves their home to serve the needs of the global Church of the Nazarene. These teams provide resources, both human and financial, to spread the Kingdom of God. They contribute to missions by helping with construction projects, evangelism, compassion, medical services and other ministries.

In 2008, NMI helped Work and Witness to raise \$4.75 million to send 728 teams. This is an average of 14 teams mobilized per week, and 10,750 participants who donated more than 390 years of work-hours.

The church manages 2 hospitals, 63 medical clinics, 2 nursing schools, and 1 school. They serve 69,100 children outside of the United States and Canada.

Nazarenes support 10 universities in the United States, 1 in Canada, 1 in Trinidad, 2 in Africa, 1 in Brazil, and 1 in Korea, as well as more than 40 colleges, seminaries and Biblical institutes.

Education

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes the importance of education. Twenty-five percent of missionaries serve in this area of ministry, for the most part teaching theology courses and training pastors. Classes are offered through residential programs, distance learning, and by the use of new technologies (online, video conference, etc.).

In addition, the Church of the Nazarene has universities that provide not only theology degrees, but also other career programs. As a result, professors are needed who can teach in these various fields or careers. Some professors, who are also missionaries, work as short-term or volunteer missionaries. Professors can also be hired by universities in creative access countries. They share Christ by making friends and by letting their light shine through the example their lives give.

Global Mission: The Regional Department for Missionary Development

What are the objectives of the Global Mission?



What is Global Mission and what is its objective?

Nazarene missionaries who serve in the areas mentioned above are supported, represented and sent by the Church of the Nazarene's missionary sending department.

In our region, Global Mission is the office that mobilizes missionaries. This department is an extension of World Mission, which fifteen years ago only existed in the United States. Their job is to serve the missionaries of their region, and their objective is to discover, develop and deploy people who have been called by God into missionary service. Achieving this objective requires training candidates and local churches, and above all facilitating opportunities for service.

OBJECTIVES OF GLOBAL MISSION IN MESOAMERICA



How do I know if I have a missionary call?

Previously, missionary service in the Church of the Nazarene was solely coordinated from the central offices of the Church in the United States, and the majority of missionaries were from that country. Through the years, more opportunities were given to people from other countries who also had a calling. However, the Church of the Nazarene only had one center for training and sending missionaries. Today, with the creation of six separate regions, the work has been decentralized along with all of its ministries.

Thanks to this change, the Church of the Nazarene is now truly global, sending Nazarenes from all over the world to the entire world. God has called many people from our countries to complete the Great Commission.

Before being able to accomplish the tasks they have been assigned, Nazarene missionaries must go through a process of being discovered, developed and deployed. How does Global Mission accomplish these objectives?

Discover

When Global Mission discovers people with a missionary call, they are guided, helped and counseled so as to develop this calling. One cannot train and send people if the calling is not first identified.

Discovering them is not an easy task, and it can happen in different ways, such as through different ministries of the local church, short-term mission trips, special activities which are focused on missions, internet communications (such as a blog), etc.

There are many creative ways to find future missionaries.

Develop

Whether missionaries are able to be effective in the field depends largely on the training they receive. We desire for missionaries from our region to have fruitful ministries which they can be involved in for many years, and for the churches which are planted to be able to have a stable, constant and mature missionary presence. This is why we must pray so that missionaries are able to receive holistic development which includes the following areas:

1. Fundamentals of Christian ministry.
2. Doctrine, history, polity, and mission of the Church of the Nazarene and Global Mission.
3. Cross-cultural ministry.
4. Spiritual formation of the missionary.
5. Practical issues in missions.
6. Working as a team in missions.

Deploy

In Matthew 9:38 Jesus said, *“Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”* In John 20:21 he said, *“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”* These words from the Lord Jesus give clear evidence that He is the one who sends. However, Global Mission, along with NMI (Nazarene Missions International), is the agent which mobilizes those being sent. If our objective is to complete the Great

- Tools to discern the will of God in one's life:
1. The Word of God.
 2. Peace which transcends understanding.
 3. The prompting of the Holy Spirit.
 4. Gifts and talents.
 5. Wise counsel.
 6. Providence and special circumstances.
 7. Personal preference.

Commission, we must have a good system for deploying missionaries. For this reason, Global Mission has implemented the following strategies:

- Developing national systems of evaluation and approval of candidates for missionary service.
- Coordinating a national system for sending missionaries.
- Encouraging communication between those being sent and the local churches of the country for the care of missionaries through NMI.
- Facilitating both short and long-term missionary service opportunities.
- Connecting those who are ready to serve outside of their country with the right situations.
- Collecting funds. This is nothing new as Paul did it in his ministry both through letters to the churches and also personally.

“Let us hear the voice of the Lord calling workers to His harvest. Some will go, others will pray to support those who go, and others will give sacrificially so many can have the opportunity to be embraced by God’s love.”

Thanks be to God because in the last few years we have seen in the Mesoamerica Region a great movement of children, youth and adults responding to God’s calling on their lives. Still, many are discouraged when they look at the financial side of things. In fact, local churches are very enthusiastic to send missionaries, but often when the time comes to support the volunteer missionary, the faith and funds dry up. Maybe the following example can teach us about our great God and how He uses the local church to support those who are serving on the mission field:

“I believe that the Latino culture is allowing itself to be influenced or frequently discouraged by the word ‘cost’ when the time comes to decide whether to participate in projects or events, and even when helping other people.

In 2004 I had the blessing to participate in the first Maximum Mission outside of our region in the country of Spain. How did I do this? Only through God’s provision. They had invited me to participate, but the cost was \$1,050.00 U.S. for the plane ticket. I laughed and thought that with my salary I might be able to save this amount in a year and a half. So I did not think this opportunity was for me. But in my heart I had the desire to go and a feeling that God wanted me to be there. I never said anything to anyone, but this feeling grew day by day.

So after leaving it all in God’s hands just 15 days before the team traveled, I talked with my pastor. He told me I could collect offerings at church, and I also shared this with family and friends. Within one week I was able to raise \$200 more than what I needed for the trip! I was able to see the hand of God working in everything: the trip, the activities in which we participated and my life.

When God calls us He provides. Everything is His and if we believe this we will see God’s help in everything we do. Do not miss the chance to serve or help others just because you do not have the money at that moment. Prepare, pray, and allow the Lord to bless you so you can be a blessing to others” (Carlos M., Guatemala).

Final evaluation

Time



COURSE: THE BACKDROP OF GLOBAL MISSION

Name of Student: _____
Church or Study Center: _____
District: _____
Professor / Course: _____
Date of this evaluation: _____

1. Which of the great challenges to global mission moved your heart?

2. Talk about two of the advantages Latino missionaries have in adapting to creative access contexts.

3. Talk about a practice of syncretism or a popular religious practice in your context which this course helped you identify.

4. What did you learn from the ministry practice activities in this course?

5. How could this course be improved?

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About this book

The Context of Global Mission describes the current panorama of missions in the world including the great challenges it presents to Latin American missionaries, especially in those countries that have not been reached with the message of the gospel. It also reviews current strategies for making disciples in creative access countries and explains the various areas of service for those with a missionary calling.



The editor

Rev. Scott Armstrong has served as a missionary on the Mesoamerica Region for 19 years and has lived in Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. Scott is the regional coordinator of Global Missions and Genesis. Global Missions seeks to discover, develop, and deploy missionaries. Genesis is an initiative to make disciples and start new churches in the cities of Mesoamerica. Scott enjoys ministering to children and youth. He and his wife, Emily, have two children Elijah and Sydney.

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