

Connection Tour by Missio Nexus - Serving the Great Commission Community of North America with Paul Borthwick

Tuesday, May 28, 2013

@ US Center for World Mission (notes by Mike Jentes)

Topic of the Day: WHERE DO WE FIT? What is the role of the North American Church in the Global Mission Movement – Paul Borthwick

This topic is addressed more fully in Borthwick's new book: *Western Christians in Global Mission: What's the Role of the North American Church?*

Truth be told, this book is full of anecdotal opinions – coming from his extensive work alongside indigenous leaders, not a “full scientific survey”

Does North America have a role in the future of global mission?

Paul's answer is a firm -- “It Depends” ☺

We must avoid both extremes of:

- 1) get out of the way of the Majority World Church (his preferred term for the Latin, African & Asian Church conglomerate)
- 2) continue to clamour for superiority in global mission

Some people use the “baton has been passed” to the Majority Church analogy

Fundamentally this is wrong because – we can't leave/quit the race.

We do have something to offer the Majority World Mission Movement - We have a longer history and more mistakes made. They don't have to make our mistakes again!...we need to pass them on.

We in North America are somebody else's “ends of the earth”

Majority World churches asked a penetrating question, “ Will the North American Mission Movement march in the Global parade if we aren't leading it?”

5 Tensions For North American Mission Agencies/Movement:

1) What does it mean to be an international agency?

- a. How many Africans (internationals) do we have on our board?
- b. What does it mean to be international ...equal seat for everyone?
- c. Where will we partner with national leaders?
- d. Partnering with indigenous agencies?

Eldon Porter – help North American agencies via Missio Nexus

2) How elastic are we with theological tolerance?

- International theologizing (self-theologizing)

- Nigeria question – what do you think of Benny Hinn? (people were healed by touching their TV when he was preaching/healing
- “The rest of the world doesn’t know that the Book of Acts is over. They really believe that stuff.”
- Where do relatives fit in theology, “whole households” African and Asian questions are familial, not individual
- Do we have the capacity to suspend judgment on some theological issues?

3) What does Biblical Partnership look like?

- a. What does it mean? Who is the PRINCIPAL partner?
- b. Are we a Golf Team (bunch of individuals tabulating a group score) or a Rugby Team (everyone key and in the scrum)
- c. Westerners think of partnerships in transactional terms – time ending,
- d. Africans think of partnerships in family terms
 - i. Recommendations to do partnering without money
 - ii. Then after trust and relationship do small amounts of money, culturally appropriate
 - iii. Highly Recommend – Mary Leiderleitner’s book *Cross-Cultural Partnerships : Money and Missions*

4) What is the role for the North American church in pioneering and leaving?

Our greatest strengths

- Initiative
- Positivity
- Forward looking/ Future

(sometimes its actually Naïve optimism)

We must Listen & ask questions (Facilitator’s)

Observe and listen 4Xs as much as we talk! (2 eyes & ears, 1 mouth)

Letters to Dear Dr. Robert A. Blincoe, in the book are insightful:

Western Christians in Global Mission: What's the Role of the North American Church? (Kindle Location 2170). Kindle Edition.

5) What is our role in globalizing the North American Church?

- The conviction “we have a story to take to the nations” is diminishing.
 - Today it seems “Missional” just means my neighborhood
 - Stop speaking mission-ese
 - Our churches role in the great commission –
 - “back translation” What do you think? 30% would be great(business)
- 1040 Window (2 weeks before April 15th) ☺

Part 2 - Where do we fit? (Geared to Local Churches / Mission Pastors)

We are in a time where Mission is From Every Nation To Every Nation!

3 Trends in the Local Church Mission Action

- 1) Same Old, Same Old Group
(Just keep doing it the same way)
- 2) Heck with Mission Agencies, Let's Do it Our Own Way
(streamlined, but a little dangerous & no collaboration)
- 3) Let's Stay Home
(fix America first, the Majority World has more converts than us)

5 Challenges in Local Church Global Mission Engagement

1) Under 30 challenge

- a. People don't give in the same way
- b. People don't go in the same way
- c. Do they have a long enough attention span to do pioneer mission?
- d. Unreached people groups are long, hard work

2) Global Local Challenge

- a. Across the street, across the ocean
- b. World religions are here, not an exotic something from over there.
- c. Here and There
 - i. Offer an introduction on talking to ethnic people, other religions, help give people practical tips
 - ii. Call on Mission Agency for help
 - iii. The first 5 questions you ask your Hindu neighbor, or an Islamic person, or Buddhist...

3) Partnership Challenge

- a. What are other people doing?
 - b. Intentional Reciprocity – are we going and what do they have to teach us (Co-equal partners)
 - c. Is there anything we can do to serve what God is already doing?
 - d. Take Listening trips...really listen...
 - e. Why is partnership a one-way street? Don't treat it like a franchise, or a subsidiary!
 - i. Here's what we have to offer...do you need this?
 - ii. Here's what we would like to learn...
- Partnership is not based on transactional things (MOU's) but on relationships

- Secondary Impact Partnerships
 - Work with people who can go places that you can't go... Latinos to Islamic pockets
 - The Multi-Cultural face of our North American church is key to reaching our "global" world.

4) Short-term Mission Challenge

- a. Lots of benefits, Lots of critiques
- b. "Short-term missions is the first time in Christian Mission History when the missionary is the primary beneficiary."
- c. How do we link with locals?
- d. Short-term mission trips, with a long-term effect.
- e. Freak-show Missions - Draw a crowd and it can be used.
- f. Poverty-voyeurs, pigeonaries (fly in crap all over everything and leave)
- g. Please stop sending us your children – Mexico
 - i. Could not see poverty at home unless they go to Mexico and see people in a village in poverty
 - ii. What is the cost of short-term missions? What is the cost of NOT doing short-term missions?

5) North American Comfort Zone Challenge

- a. Re-evaluate our lifestyles
- b. Affluence comes naturally
- c. How do we prepare people to downsize their lifestyle, living more simply
- d. Example of MoveIn – commitment to be incarnational people in apartment, low-income housing
- e. We have an addiction to stuff
- f. Progress Paradox – Why does the richest place on earth have the most, mood altering, drug use, choices, different bottles of water? Middleclass Americans actually are the Top 1% of the rich people who have lived in all of human history