Reformed Mission in an Age of World Christianity

Ideas for the 21st Century

edited by Shirley J. Roels
foreword by Setri Nyomi

The Calvin Press • Calvin College
in association with
the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship
Grand Rapids, Michigan
I count it a real privilege to be an essayist to reflect on the conference theme: “Reformed Mission in an Age of Global Christianity.” I have reflected on the cross-cultural theme of “translation across borders” since 1981 when I started to teach a course on church and culture at Asian Theological Seminary in Metro Manila, the Philippines. To this day, I consider myself an Asian mission mobilizer, mission theologian (or missiologist or “reflective practitioner”), and mission educator. I was one of the three Filipino participants at the conference, along with Eliezer Pascua, a bishop of a Filipino Presbyterian–rooted denomination, and Joel Navarro, a music professor at Calvin College.

I approach this topic as a Reformed-friendly, if not a Reformed, theologian-missiologist. I inherited a Reformed legacy from my parents, who were the fourth generation of converts to Scottish Presbyterianism in southern China. During my college days, my church and campus ministries were closely linked to Christian Reformed World Missions in my hometown, Bacolod City, the Philippines; and in my postgraduate studies, I’ve favored the writings of evangelical and Reformed theologians at Asian Theological Seminary (the Philippines), Asian Center for Theological Studies (Korea) and Fuller Theological Seminary (USA). I still consider Reformed theology to be the best (though not perfect, because no theology will ever be perfect) interpretation of biblical revelation. Its understanding of the transformational relationship of Christ to culture, as propounded in Reinhold Niebuhr’s Christ and Culture represents my personal view of the church’s mission. Hence I feel comfortable using the first-person plural in this essay.

David S. Lim

Mission as Transformation: Holistic, Ecumenical, and Contextual

David S. Lim is the president of the Asian School of Development and Cross-Cultural Studies (Quezon City, the Philippines).
Like Richard Mouw, I identify myself as an evangelical who considers the Lausanne Covenant that resulted from the International Congress on World Evangelization (1974) to be the best missiological framework from which to write this essay. To me, evangelicalism emphasizes that missio dei (God’s mission) must always include evangelism, which invites people to have a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Lausanne Covenant is one of the best articulations of the theology and practice of missions among all “conversionist” types of Christians: Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Reformation Protestants (including Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican and Baptist traditions), Pentecostals, and Charismatic / Full Gospel, though using the language used mainly by the latter three types.

In this essay, my main goal is to highlight four strategic emphases by which those from the Reformed tradition of global Christianity can play a significant role in accomplishing the task of world evangelization and transformation across the borders of race, culture, religion, gender, age, education, wealth, citizenship, etc.—or, simply, cross-culturally. Reformed mission should enable us to lead in “mission as transformation,” in sharing the whole gospel (truly holistic) with the whole church (truly ecumenical) in the whole world (truly contextual, and truly transformational).

**Whole Gospel: truly holistic**

The main contribution of the Reformed tradition to global Christianity is its understanding that proclaiming Christ must be done holistically, through words and works (both “evangelism and socio-political involvement”), highlighted in article 5 of the Lausanne Covenant. Many of us from the global South who have Reformed roots promote mission-as-transformation mainly through the International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians. Later Lausanne events also added wonders to our missiology, though it was still controversial during Lausanne II (1989) and may still be so in many Reformed circles.

But Reformed theology provides the basis for today’s holistic emphasis on transformation as mission. It emphasizes the church’s mandate to be salt and light in the world, particularly, “Let your light shine before men, so they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). To be “whole,” the gospel of the kingdom (not just of salvation) must reflect the loving character of God and thus must be shared holistically for it to be truly transformational of peoples and societies, especially among the poor, as was modeled by Jesus himself (Luke 4:18–19; cf. 7:21–22). In fact, most people have been led to faith through friendship and kindness done in Christ’s name preceding actual evangelism. This is much more so in the instances of people movements and community conversions.

We need to emphasize three levels of engagement that flow from this Reformed tradition: (1) the evangelization of every village, town, or city as elders of the city through the joint holistic ministries of local ministerial fellowships for community transformation, including the parachurch groups and civil society organizations in our localities; (2) contributions to national transformation by turning our churches into training centers that equip every member to do marketplace and campus evangelism in their respective sectors as righteous and competent servant-leaders facilitating the development of ministries that enhance shalom; and (3) the development of ministries to the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors, especially diaspora or ethnic minorities, so that they feel welcomed in our neighborhoods. They must thrive so they also become our teachers on how to holistically relate and serve those who live beyond our borders globally, thereby equipping us to be involved in global transformation.

Are these three levels of holistic and transformational mission attainable and workable? Humanly speaking, they may seem to be impossible dreams and shallow rhetoric. But biblically, we know they are possible, for with God nothing is impossible! We have the Triune God on our side, and he is more eager and desirous than we to see his world reconciled to himself (2 Pet. 3:8–9; 1 Tim. 2:3–4). He became flesh to become sin for us, so that whoever believes in Jesus Christ will be saved, blessed, and transformed (1 John 2:1–2; Rom. 8:9–17). He also sent the Holy Spirit to give us power to be his effective witnesses locally and globally (Acts 1:8), and the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh (not just Christians, Acts 2:17–18) to convict the whole world (not just Christians) of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8–11). No evil forces can stop the advance of the church (Matt. 16:18–19)!

Hence, since Pentecost (and even starting from the ministry of Jesus Christ), the kingdom has been advancing and the field has been ripe and ready for harvest. The early church was in revival and an explosive mode of multiplication. But soon some things went wrong, and the church wandered away from God’s master plan of world evangelization and transformation. Yet there have been sporadic revivals to return to that blueprint. May God use Reformed Christianity to launch a breakthrough renewal movement that will reform and transform the global church to move according to that holistic master plan, hopefully for good!
Whole Church: truly ecumenical (all believers)

Second, the Reformation distinctive of *sola gratia, sola fide* should lead to a key missional benchmark: Christian unity. Christ has only one body, bound by grace through faith in him, but has the growing sense of unity in the latter part of the 20th century slid backward as we start the 21st century? Though the two main bodies of Reformed tradition have come together organizationally, many issues have led to divisions and disputes in our churches, both within and outside our tradition. Our Lord was very clear that for all peoples to realize that he is the Savior of the world indeed, his church must be united: “Let them be one, even as you and I are one, so that the world may believe” (John 17:21–23). He taught them that the new commandment is to love their brethren, as he loved them (self-sacrificially!), and “by this shall all people know that you are my disciples” (John 13:34–35). These are the clearest statements on the link between Christian unity and mission! The Apostle Paul also admonished that we should do our best to maintain the unity we have in Christ (Eph. 4:3). Let us accept as our brother or sister in Christ all those who affirm the sevenfold “oneness” that Paul enumerated: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all (Eph. 4:4–6). Let this slogan be our basis for Christian unity: In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, diversity; in all things, charity.

A famous Quaker proverb says that true community exists when the person you dislike most dies or moves away and someone worse takes that place. There will be a constant need for understanding, forbearance, and even forgiveness, for we have to deal with real people with real differences. May we commit to love one another, as Christ loved us, in spite of our (oftentimes big) differences—denominational loyalties, doctrinal distinctives, political platforms and party affiliations, cultural norms, and so on. Then we can be free to correct and rebuke each other in love when we perceive anyone going astray toward false teaching and sinful behavior; and we should work to achieve this at both the international and local levels.

The best global ecumenical practice is to work in unity with all Christian churches that believe in the orthodox faith embedded in the Apostles’ Creed and perhaps the seven Ecumenical Creeds. We need to bring the two major non-Catholic church bodies (the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance) to work more closely together and with the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), at least with evangelical or charismatic Catholics, and outgrow the anti-Catholic stance of our forebears. People who are “born again” do not need to leave the RCC, though they should be free to choose to do so. Several of us in the South have followed our Western brethren (like Richard Mouw, J. I. Packer, and Charles Colson) in advancing Evangelicals and Catholics together. A new generation of church leaders should take this wider interdenominationalism (which I call “biblical ecumenism”) to fuller fruition in the near future.

More importantly, this ecumenism must grow at the grassroots level as all Christians work together in partnership beyond our denominational labels. Let’s work more closely with our different Christian brethren in deepening our faith in Christ and studying God’s Word locally. Structurally, this means gathering in disciple-making groups, house churches, or Basic Ecclesial Communities so as to pray and work together in evangelizing and transforming our respective localities, towns, cities, nation, and the nations. Let’s teach all believers to major on the doctrines and values that we share in common, which are much more important than the minor things that differentiate us. Let’s care less about denominational labels and emphasize “more Jesus, less religion,” certainly a call we need to hear more often in a world where secular humanism and relativistic postmodernism seem to advance with hardly any opposition!

Let’s train every Christ-believer to be involved in world evangelization and transformation, and turn every church into a missionary training center, as Christians turn their homes and offices into “house[s] of prayer for all the nations” (Mark 11:17). As we realize the priesthood of every believer (a major Reformation distinctive!) in our churches, we can equip all of them to make converts and disciples effectively wherever they live and work.

Whole World: truly contextual

Third, in recent decades the kingdom of God has been advancing throughout the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. Asian countries like South Korea, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, and Mongolia have seen tremendous church growth as the gospel has been shared boldly and sacrificially (mainly by nationals) in grace and truth. God has generally used not the highly educated or famous, but the humble farmers and fishermen, just like Jesus did two millennia ago. Around the world, there are still more than 6,000 people groups who have yet to hear the name Jesus Christ; and Asia still remains the least evangelized continent, with vast populations who are perishing and with no access to the gospel. Asia with its large populations (China, India, Indonesia, Japan, etc.) is still the most challenging continent and the world’s biggest mission field.

At the same time, the world has shrunk and become flat. We now live in a global village, so it is now proper to claim literally, “The whole world is my parish.” With a computer—and now with just a smart phone—we...
can minister cross-culturally without national boundaries. Global issues like climate change, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and religious extremism impinge on us all. The global village shows us overwhelming challenges: cultural diversity, massive poverty with growing gap between the poor and the rich, globalized materialism in “consumer societies,” and religious resurgence and conflicts.

How has this affected the Reformed churches, most of which are located in Christian-majority or post-Christian regions of the world? Most of our Reformed constituencies live among populations that are nominally Christian. Yet most church members are numbered among the nominal and secularized. Much has to be done to regain those who have lapsed in the North, and in the South we must also do saturation evangelization and community transformation, to be known as responsible citizens who care to rid society of massive poverty, corruption, and other systemic evils. Because of these limited efforts, we have to humbly admit that in spite of our holistic understanding of missio dei, the name of Christ is not being honored enough in many Reformed circles today.

Can we turn this around, so that Christ’s name is indeed glorified? Can Reformed churches contribute significantly to turning all nations and peoples to become more than nominally Christian nations (like the USA and the Philippines), so that their main national festivals include Christmas and Holy Week / Easter, celebrating them more meaningfully than we have done so far?

Reformed missionology should lead to a contextual mission strategy that accounts for these challenges. This may be the distinct, and perhaps the unique, approach by which Reformed missionaries will lead global Christianity in fulfilling the Great Commission, best expressed in the verb sharing! This may not be so difficult for us to do. It should be quite natural for us—in fact it is one of the most distinct Christian traits molded by our centuries-old Christian heritage.

Most Reformed Christians are known to be friendly and generous, well-known for our hospitality, helpfulness or neighborliness, interpersonal skills, and financial generosity—not just in our local communities, but also in cross-cultural situations. Yet some of us from the South have felt that the North has been remiss in using this mission paradigm in their witnessing cross-culturally, mainly due to the dominant aggressive (often Western) models of evangelism and discipleship that have prevailed since the colonial era. The sharing approach works best through the two major marks of a witnessing lifestyle: our sense of calling, and our character and integrity. Both emphasize the importance of our life-testimony for credibility as ambassadors of the kingdom of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is most important in God’s mission for his workers to go and live as servants, not masters; as partners, not crusaders; as learners, not teachers; and as friends, not superiors. As the Lausanne Covenant states, “A church which preaches the cross must itself be marked by the cross,” lest we become a stumbling block to our evangelism (art. 6).

The sharing framework is supported by an incarnational missionology in the way we evangelize and disciple the nations, including our own. This is perhaps best expressed in Bavinck’s concept of possessio: God’s grace permeating and taking over each culture uniquely. This approach contrasts with the past colonial and paternalistic approaches (perhaps unintentional) that failed to develop indigenous truly self-governing, self-supporting, self-theologizing, and self-propagating churches. Through them our mission must be more world-affirming and less world-denying so that we can see the rise of faith cultures that are truly transformative and reflective of each people’s culture. This has become more urgent as the world moves toward greater religious and ideological conflicts (especially in Christian-Muslim relations), which some have hinted may even lead to clashes of civilizations.

I highly recommend the latest mission strategy, popularly called “church-planting movements” or “insider movements,” which most enlightened mission agencies worldwide are now trying to master in order to share the whole gospel with the whole world effectively and contextually. For example, in a world of increasing climactic and systemic challenges, our churches have to be equipped to respond to the perennial attacks of natural evils (like typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions) and structural evils (like malnutrition, poverty, corruption, and violence) through the participative or dialogic approach that most Christian development organizations, including the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), have developed in recent years. Christians can lead the way in empowering people to tackle and overcome their local problems assertively yet non-violently, for God’s peace, justice and righteousness to be established in caring and sharing communities contextually in all societies throughout the world.

**Whole World: truly transformational**

As we enter the 21st century, we face a great unstoppable avalanche: globalization through the market economy, mass media, and computer technology. This is the place to which the modernization process of the 20th century has brought us globally, with both positive and negative effects. As those concerned for public justice, we should discern which benefits should be retained and which evils should be rejected.
standards in this discerning process should be God’s kingdom values, like moral righteousness, justice for the poor, and concern for human rights, all of which affect the well-being of God’s people and his creation (cf. Isa. 65:17–25). To have a truly transformative impact in this world, our mission must affect the three main pillars, the most influential sectors, of today’s global societies: the political, economic, and academic sectors.

**Political.** Our Reformed churches must continue to lead in the political democratization of the world. It was the Protestants in the USA who first developed the separation of church and state. Part of the motivation seems to have been theological (the desire for true individual conversions), while the other part seems to have been pragmatic (a compromise caused by the diversity of religious institutions). So many groups existed in the USA that no one group could effectively dominate the others. Calvinists and revivalistic groups were important to this transformation, although religious nonconformists like Quakers and Baptists played the most active role in joining with Enlightenment liberals like Thomas Jefferson to establish the separation of church and state in the US Constitution.

The global idea about church-state separation was also enhanced by the groups that fought the state church to expand religious toleration. Societies with multiple religious traditions thus seem to have a harder time establishing a state religion, although the exact threshold of religious competition that forces toleration varies from place to place. With Islam, once Muslims reach a majority, there is often pressure for imposing Sharia law (e.g., Sudan, Pakistan, Malaysia, Nigeria). Religious law is at the heart of Islam, and to ignore it is to cut at the heart of the religious authority of the Koran, the traditions, and the example of Muhammad. Muslim societies do have secular states, but the process of separation is much more contentious than in Buddhist or Hindu societies, which do not have a codified religious law for society at the heart of their tradition. This argument should not be construed to mean that all or most Muslim leaders want a strong connection between church and state. Like all religious traditions, Islam is multivocal, and different leaders emphasize different parts of the tradition to argue for or against state enforcement of religious law. Moreover, prominent Muslim leaders in Turkey and Indonesia have argued consistently for religious toleration. However, it seems that arguing against imposing Sharia law or reinterpreting Sharia in a more democratic way will be a difficult cultural problem in Muslim-based societies for some time. Hence our Reformed mission in this century must include the advocacy for the clear separation of church and state.

Regarding regulating state power, Calvinism has retained the “just war / revolution” ethos. The Reformation released a revolutionary spirit that undermined the state. Calvinists called the state to account, and non-conformists opted out of the state church. Rulers could choose between state religions (weakening the church), but individuals could choose to leave the state church and fight for religious toleration (weakening the power of the state to control people through the state church). As a lawyer, Calvin saw an active role for the church, and thus Calvinism had a much more pronounced influence on the state. Although church and state were distinct, the church had an active role to call the state to account. All society, including the state, had to be brought under the lordship of Christ, as Kuyper brilliantly advocated in the past century.

The presbyterian structure of Reformed groups helped consolidate the rise of modern forms of representative democracy. Perpetuating this organizational tradition can foster skills for participating in the bureaucratic forms of governance (which are almost universal at the national level) while also lessening allegiance to hereditary or charismatic leaders, as is prevalent in most of the South. When we model more congregational and subcongregational, especially cellular, structures, we may thwart personalistic and clientalistic patterns that do not build consensus among equals at local, national, and global levels. The logic of democratization is to become participative democracies, where decision-making powers are devolved as much as possible to the smallest units of society (similar to the Roman Catholic principle of subsidiarity) in a decentralized system that maximizes each individual’s contribution to society.

Historically it has been very hard for political and ethnic majorities to share power with minorities. We need not only to help peoples to organize and develop their own local communities, but also, wherever possible, to help those who feel marginalized and oppressed to gain more freedom and autonomy, if not independence, in the global community of nations.

Public justice requires that those who have more should care and share with compassion toward those who need help. This can best happen when social policy making and services, like in education, health, and poverty alleviation, are devoted to local government units. Our churches should participate in their local development councils and be involved in local governance, like lobbying for better ordinances and watchdogging the program implementation of government agencies (police, legislature, judiciary, etc.). We should also encourage qualified Christians to run for political office, and campaign for righteous and competent candidates
(endorsing them on a personal capacity and avoiding the use of religious language) on both local and national levels.

Recognizing the Reformed roots of participatory democracy should help our churches to become more confident and visible in working with others for the rule of law, the provision of human rights, and the insistence on bureaucratic transparency, along with our moral pronouncements against political abuses and business monopolies. We should support all efforts in civil societies to develop democratic skills, mobilize political advocacies, or resist authoritarian excesses. The spirit of volunteerism in our churches must be extended to other social movement activities for "public justice" (or Roman Catholic "common good") to prevail.

Internationally, countries must be willing to cross national boundaries to evolve equitable development for all. Each nation does not exist in isolation, but in an increasingly interdependent globalized milieu. Churches from the more developed countries should encourage their governments to use their wealth as a means to move the world toward social justice and communal responsibility. For instance, the major economies should commit to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. We also need to be ready to send in community rebuilding teams whenever a disaster strikes (like after the Holocaust, floods, earthquakes, famines) to grow Christian communities out of the surviving population.

Enhancing this societal form of the priesthood of all believers can have transformative effects, like that of the Quakers historically. Though relatively fewer in number, they were highly represented in the leadership of the movements for abolition, temperance, women's rights, peace, native rights, etc.—in North America and beyond. They were involved in the founding of global social movement organizations, including Greenpeace, Oxfam, and Amnesty International. May Reformed churches live up to this political challenge, especially as democracy will constantly struggle against totalitarian and authoritarian tendencies worldwide in the years to come!

Economic. There is also a strong correlation between democratization and economic development. Some scholars have argued that Protestantism, specifically Calvinism, has facilitated both economic development and the size of the middle class. The best contemporary evidence comes from Latin America, where Protestants seem more likely to move out of poverty and into the middle class. This is because Protestant converts stop drinking and smoking, have fewer ostentatious displays of wealth, focus more attention on education and supporting their family, save more money, and are more open to new agricultural technology, etc. Scholars make similar arguments about Seventh Day Adventists in New Guinea and about Calvinist Koro tribespeople in Indonesia. However, the relationship between Protestantism and economic uplift is not universal; for instance, African Americans are generally Protestant but are still disproportionately poor relative to US Catholics.

Nor is the relationship between Protestantism and economic development exclusive. For example, some scholars suggest a causal relationship between Judaism, Confucianism, or Mahayana Buddhism and economic development. Thus, if religious tradition influences economic development, it does so in a complex way. Jews, Ishmaelis, Parsis in India, Armenians in the Middle East, Indians and Lebanese in Africa, and Chinese in North America and Southeast Asia all have done disproportionately well economically and vary greatly in the exact content of their religious beliefs. If there is an association between religion and economic change, it probably has less to do with predestination or some other specifically Reformation belief, and more to do with tightly knit communities that encourage hard work, saving, and education, and have important bridging ties outside the local community (something not limited to Protestantism and Calvinism).

Economic growth through free-market economy now prevails in most parts of the world, even in Communist countries like China and Vietnam. Most socialist states fell in the late 1980s, while the surviving ones took a rapid turn to capitalism. Hence the latter is the only economic system propagated by globalization. On the international level, privatization and liberalization, especially the cutting of tariff rates, are supposed to make prices of products and services go down and create more jobs. In most cases, quality of life has improved and the number of middle-class participants has increased. But the United Nations Development Program has reported that over the last thirty years, the rich (countries and families) have actually gotten richer, while many of the poor remained poor! The gap between the rich and the poor has widened, although the recent financial crisis in the North has helped decrease this. The prevalence of massive poverty in many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, could lead to greater societal deterioration and religious fanaticism or fundamentalism, as modern media enhance rising expectations.

On the individual level, economic growth has enhanced individualism and nuclear families (over the traditional communalism and extended families) that are susceptible to materialism in the modern form of consumerism. Marketing techniques seduce us to think that we will find fulfillment through the accumulation of more gadgets and property. Even modern Christianity has "contextualized" (better: syncretized) through the popularization of the prosperity gospel that proclaims a God who
is no longer Lord but servant to bless his children with their requests for more affluent lifestyles and healthier bodies. Other Christians have turned to various versions of Liberation Theology to give hope and practical help to the poor.

It seems best that we should join cause-oriented groups in slowing down globalization’s overpowering obtrusion. Such delaying tactics can buy time for us to help people cope and thrive in such a world—spiritually, mentally, and structurally. We do this with the full understanding that without globalization, any nation’s growth will be hindered, and we will fail to keep pace with our fast-changing and fast-progressing world. Such a slowdown would also provide time to enhance each nation’s capacity to come out a winner: after all, we know the obvious solution (and best counterforce) is to work on community development and fair trade for true people empowerment and just economic growth.

Reformed Christians can also join the many who are now working for a new economic order called Solidarity Economy, following the principles of Jubilee in Leviticus 25. The bottom line for businesses must now be fourfold: not just profit, but also planet, people, and prayer (financial, ecological, social, and spiritual), as stated in the Lausanne Forum 2004 paper “Business as Mission.” Many Christian development organizations like the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee have been doing livelihood training and microenterprise development. These efforts must be combined with the organization of people-owned and self-managing community organizations and social enterprises, like cooperatives, mutual insurance firms, and credit unions. The wealth generated by the poor will lead to a “lifting” of their individual families, who otherwise would often move elsewhere, thereby hardly helping their community. The best way for any locality to gain wealth is to provide for both local food sufficiency and appropriate technologization and industrialization. Thus we need to set up cooperatives to help keep the wealth in place while also generating more wealth in the local community.

Academic. Lastly, the emergence of developed societies and the rise of the middle class had to do with the Protestant and Reformed emphasis on lay education. As governments and other religious traditions increasingly adopt mass education policies, more of the direct association between Protestantism and societal development has declined. Yet following Calvin, who set up the Akademie in Geneva, the Reformed tradition must continue to value and invest in both mass and higher education in order to gain strategic influence for social transformation among present and future generations.

Most religious traditions have fostered education, but none has had as powerful an influence on education as Reformed Protestantism. Our forebears led in setting up an extensive system of schools, which also focused on higher education, women’s education, and peasant literacy. Until recently, they played the biggest role in spreading mass education to promote Biblical literacy. During the Reformation, Protestant leaders reacted against perceived abuses of Catholic Church authority and thus tried to base religious authority on Scripture alone (sola Scriptura). Tradition and the rulings of clerics were all to be subjected to the test of Scripture. The Reformation emphasized Scripture over both tradition and interpretation by clergy, and the trend in practice was toward individual interpretation of Scripture. In the process, reading the Bible for oneself (and thus literacy) became a key distinctive of Protestantism.

Though all Protestants emphasized education, Calvinists took it up with the greatest fervor (i.e., Puritans/Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and the various Reformed churches). Reformed groups spread in Eastern Europe, where one of their leaders, Comenius, is considered the father of modern education. Scotland adopted Calvinism and was transformed from one of the least educated areas in Europe to one of the most educated areas. The English Puritans also emphasized education. Thus, many years after they fled to the New World in the 1600s, New England became the area with the highest proportion of college graduates anywhere in the world. There, the Puritans almost immediately began setting up schools and universities (e.g., Harvard, Brown, Yale, and Dartmouth). They not only had been concerned about elite education but also thought that ordinary people should read the Bible for themselves as well.

This pattern was not only true in the West. The Protestant mission movement that developed out of the Second Great Awakening followed this approach wherever it spread. Missionary introduction of education has fostered, and continues to encourage, democratization in several ways. First, broad education fosters new elites. When people who are not part of the traditional elite gain education, their struggle for representation in government is facilitated. Second, education increases the size of the middle class. As the middle class becomes larger, it becomes harder for a small group to form an oligarchy. Many people’s interests have to be accounted for. Members of the middle class generally have enough economic independence from the state and the upper class that they can risk political action. They also are more likely to be moderate than members of the lower class because they have more at stake in the current system and have enough power to express their interests in politics before they build up to the stage of violence. Third, education enhances democratiza-
tion by increasing people's knowledge about political options (e.g., how democracy is practiced elsewhere). Finally, education fosters democracy by increasing literacy and the ability of elites to communicate with broad groups of people more directly.

Although states have recently taken over much of the educational system from religious groups, the older tradition of religious and private education is important for several reasons. First, a high-quality educational system takes several generations to develop. Modern governments may try to rapidly expand their education system, but they need a supply of qualified teachers to do this. If education has not developed gradually over multiple generations, many of the teachers may be unqualified and the quality of what they teach students may be questionable. Second, part of the impact of education may be to foster a broader middle class. Developing a middle class does not happen automatically with education. It takes time and requires that the education be useful for economic productivity. And third, the impact of education in fostering democratic attitudes and conceptions of oneself may also take generations, and those attitudes and conceptions depend on what people are taught.

Hence investing in Christian educational institutions and programs remains one of the best strategies for world missions today. One alternative priority that requires less financial outlay is to develop effective campus ministries in the education (and other) departments of universities, so that a pool of Christian intellectuals and educators may be recruited and mobilized to develop biblical thinkers, professors, materials, and curricula in the global academe. The other alternative is to support the programs of the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education (IAPCHE) and its sister organization, the International Council of Higher Education (ICHE), so that the work of distinctly Christian higher education institutions is enhanced. Reformed missions could lead the global church to establish a quality Christian university for every 10,000,000 population segment.

**CONCLUSION**

Let's praise God that Reformed missions have been a significant part of the global mission community, not just in the West but globally. Up to the present they have produced some of the most holistic, contextual, and transformational models of Christian missions. As we launch into the future of globalized missions, may Reformed missions that have been mainly funded from the North lead in the flat, decentralized, and humble “sharing” partnership (or “incarnational”) paradigm of doing missions! The global church must be producing tens of thousands of believers (if not all) to go humbly and bless the nations for God's bountiful harvest. Together with the Back to Jerusalem and the Church Multiplication (or Insider) Movements of the churches in the South, especially from China, India, Brazil, Nigeria, and the Philippines, there are many opportunities.

For this to be realized, Reformed missionaries can take the lead in holding two- or three-day consultations in each village, town, city, and region, so that the Christian leaders in each locality can prayerfully formulate joint strategic plans on how to work together for the evangelization and transformation of their respective areas, especially in the political, economic, and academic sectors. Just like in all previous revivals, we can encourage, equip, and mobilize all believers to form prayer and Bible-reflection cells in each social structure and professional association, wherever they live and work.

Reformed missions can also take the lead in reaching all unreached people groups cross-culturally. There are still 6,000 unreached peoples in the world. If we will think and act holistically, ecumenically, and contextually, we can unleash the multitudes in our churches to reach the whole world for Christ! May we follow the example of our brethren in the Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC) in northeast India. Politically following twenty years of rebellion spearheaded by the Mizo Liberation Front, church leaders approved of Mizoram becoming India's twenty-third state in February 1987. They interpreted their political subservience to a predominantly Hindu nation as God's way of bringing the gospel to India, since they would no longer need passports nor visas to freely evangelize in the subcontinent. May we see more of such missionary spirit that can cast out the demons of nationalism to which humans have been so susceptible!

In 2004-2005, the Mizoram Presbyterian Synod Mission Board (SMB) had some 1,355 fully supported missionaries, financially supported by the 445,500-member-strong MPC, which comprises almost the entire Mizo population. Given the state's annual per capita income of approximately 6,000 rupees (US $132), how did such a small, relatively poor church provide for so many missionaries? The answer is that the entire church is "missional": they considered the task of proclaiming the gospel as their responsibility to their nation. In 2003, they gave Rs 154,120,823 (US $3.4 million) to mission work.

Since 1953, in a practice known as *buhfai tham*, women have been setting aside a handful of rice when they prepare morning and evening meals. This rice is regularly collected from each household and sold at an auction, with proceeds going to the SMB. In 2003, the "handful of rice" offerings raised almost US $1 million for missions. Similarly, sticks of fire-
wood are set aside from each load that is delivered to a home, and children are encouraged to forage for firewood. The wood is then contributed to the “mission firewood pile” on Sunday mornings. Churches in rural areas dedicate entire gardens, farms, and teak plantations to missions, while their urban counterparts open small shops and tea stalls. The time and effort necessary to run such enterprises is provided by volunteers, with all profits going to support missions. Some churches construct buildings, with rental revenues going entirely to the mission fund. Several women practice imaginary field visits, praying for and collecting the amount of money that it would take to actually travel to the selected mission field, with resulting monies going to SMB funds. Many churches have sacrificed their lavish Christmas feasts, celebrating the joy of diverting the money toward missions. Many church members, especially women, miss one meal a week, donating the value of that meal to the mission fund. And, finally, most members practice tithing, giving a minimum of 10 percent of their monthly income to the church; tithers designate their offerings for one of four options, two of which are mission related.

May we do missions creatively and sacrificially like them, if not better than them.

“Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in all the earth” (Ps. 46:10). May all peoples (including post-Christian Europeans, Muslim Iraqis and Afghans, Buddhist Tibetans, Jews and Palestinians, etc.) become Christ-loving peoples! May we be faithful and effective in contextually sharing our Lord Jesus cross-culturally, so that he will be worshiped and glorified among all the peoples in the world!