

CORE VALUES OF MISSION ORGANIZATION IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

In this first issue of the multilingual online journal www.GlobalMissiology.org of 2009, it is fitting to reflect on the topic, "Core values of mission organization in the cultural context of the 21st Century."

Dr. David Hesselgrave's piece "Challenges to Church and Mission in the 21st Century—the cultural landscape" in the "Featured Article" section is helpful to understand the new context of Christian missions of our time. It is also informative to review the list of ten major trends facing the Church provided by Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon though as follows:^[1]

1. From regional churches to world Church.
2. From scattered growth to broad revival.
3. From Communist China to Christian China.
4. From institutional tradition to kingdom theology.
5. From clergy/laity to community of ministers.
6. From male leadership to male-female partnership.
7. From secularization to religious relativism.
8. From nuclear family to family diversity.
9. From church/state separation to Christian political activism.
10. From safe planet to threatened planet.

CORE VALUES OF SELECTED MISSION ORGANIZATIONS AND DENOMINATIONS

Several mission organizations and denominations are randomly chosen to provide illustrations of institutional core values in the cultural context of the 21st Century.

The Mission Exchange

We begin with “The Mission Exchange” and their core values are found at

http://themissionexchange.org/get_connectedME_values.php and quoted below:

Service: Embracing the model of Jesus who came not to be served but to serve, we seek to honor God by giving our best in the service of others.

Learning: Pursuing an attitude of humility, we affirm the importance of learning from each other on a journey of continuous improvement in the pursuit of excellence.

Relationships: Understanding true disciples of Jesus are known by their love for one another, we affirm the priority of body-life and the sharpening that comes from mutual edification.

Synergy: Recognizing what cannot be accomplished individually can be done in collaboration with others, we affirm the priority of multiplied results through intentional partnerships.

Diversity: Believing in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, we affirm the importance of theological and racial diversity in our membership within the evangelical community.

Effectiveness: Bearing fruit that lasts goes beyond spiritual activity, we affirm the priority of integrity and increasing capacity as a foundation for productivity.

Crossing Cultures: Realizing the message of the gospel transcends culture, we affirm the priority of incarnational ministry in the pursuit of indigenous church movements among all peoples.

IMB – “International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention

Next, we will have an overview of the core values of IMB (“International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, for details, see www.imb.org) which is the largest denominational mission sending agency in the US with over 5,550 full-time funded residential missionaries.

Quoted below is a recent statement from the Rev. Jerry Rankin, President of the International Mission Board:

“We have a number of documents but are in the process of changing our vision and mission as well as stated core values. In fact, these have been approved by our board of trustees. We are clearly a vision-driven organization. For the last 12 years our vision has been "To lead Southern Baptists to be on mission with God to bring all the peoples of the world to saving faith in Jesus Christ." Although that is not yet fulfilled, we wanted statements that are more relevant and biblical expressions of what we do.” (person communication from the Rev. Jerry Rankin, <jar@imb.org> President of the International Mission Board, Mon, Dec 29, 2008)

In the same communication, the Rev. Jerry Rankin listed out for *Global Missiology* the most recent articulation of the core values of IMB:

IMB VISION

Our vision is a multitude from every language, people, tribe and nations knowing and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ.

IMB MISSION

Our mission is to make disciples of all peoples in fulfillment of the Great Commission.

IMB CORE VALUES

1. We commit to obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to God's inerrant Word.
2. We believe Jesus Christ is God's only provision for salvation and all people without personal faith in Him are lost and will spend eternity in hell.
3. We seek to provide all people an opportunity to hear, understand and respond to the gospel in their own cultural context.
4. We evangelize through proclamation, discipling, equipping and ministry that results in indigenous reproducing Baptist churches.
5. We serve churches to facilitate their involvement in the Great Commission and the sending of missionaries to bring all peoples to faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We partner with Baptists and other Christians around the world in accordance with IMB guidelines.
7. We understand and fulfill God's mission through God's Word, prayer and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

OMF (Overseas Missionary Fellowship)

The following are the seven core values of OMF (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) as listed at http://www.omf.org/omf/us/about_omf/core_values:

1. We TRUST in God
2. We are a FELLOWSHIP
3. We are Passionate to reach the UNREACHED
4. We Practice INCARNATIONAL ministry
5. We PARTNER in ministry
6. We LEAD from the MINISTRY context
7. We Celebrate DIVERSTIY IN UNITY

Assemblies of God – USA

AGWM (Assemblies of God World Missions) is the agency of the denomination engaging in “missionary endeavor in many lands in pursuit of the original, audacious commitment of the Assemblies of God to unprecedented world evangelism.” The core values are summarized into “four biblical pillars”:

Reaching, Planting, Touching, Training (<http://worldmissions.ag.org/about.cfm>)

Other

The C&MA (Christian & Missionary Alliance) has organized their core values into two major categories: “Personal Lives” and “Kingdom Work” (see http://www.cmalliance.org/im/core_values.jsp). The “missions” of “e3 Partners Ministries” is “to help establish a church within walking distance of every community on the planet” and their core values are: (www.e3partners.org)

- Equip God's people
- Evangelize the lost

- Establish new churches

“Together in Missions: core beliefs, values and commitments of Mennonite Mission Network” is a very informative document that outlines the core beliefs, values and commitments of **Mennonite** in response to the changing socio-cultural context of our time. For those interested in it or would like to be informed by it can download the 18-page publication at the following link:

http://www.mennonitemission.net/resources/Publications/MissioDei/Downloads/MissioDei_V10.pdf There are helpful sections within the document, such as “sources that have shaped our vision,” “questions for reflection and discussion” and a bibliography “for further reading.”

FORMULATING YOUR OWN STATEMENTS OF MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

In response to the changing socio-cultural context of the 21st Century, all mission organizations and Christian denominations are to formulate their own statements of mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals accordingly. Helpful resources are listed below for your reference:

- Article:- **“Christian Missions: The Challenge of the Twenty-First Century”**
by **James D. Chancellor** at
http://www.sbts.edu/pdf/sbjt/SBJT_1999Spring6.pdf
- “A visionary management model” by Hubert K Rampersad.
[The TQM Magazine](#), Volume 13, Number 4, 2001 , pp. 211-223(13).
[Emerald Group Publishing Limited](#)
- Website: <http://yourcorevalues.com/>

For decades, I have been using the grid in Figure 1 for research and publication. It is a helpful instrument for evangelicals to use an interdisciplinary approach to integrate Scripture and theology to formulate theoretically coherent, culturally relevant

and practically applicable outcome. And in the case of this study, the outcome may be statements of mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals.

.The five-step approach of Figure 1 is a systematic and sequential process; but the acronym “STARS” may be used in reference to the key elements for easy memory.

Figure 1 – “WAN’S WAY OF INTEGRATIVE RESEARCH”^[2] (“STARS”)

CRITERIA	*	EXPLANATION
1. Scripturally sound ^[3]	S	Not proof-text; but the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27)
2. Theologically Supported	S	Not just pragmatism/expedience; but sound theology
3. Theoretically coherent	T	Not to be self-contradictory; but to be coherent
4. contextually Relevant	R	Not to be out of place; but fitting for the context
5. practically Applicable	A	Not only good in theory; but can be put into practice

Simple explanation of the items in Figure 1 is provided first, followed by illustration of the importance of being systematic and sequential.

1. Scripturally sound
As evangelical, Scripture is to be the basis and guide of Christian faith and practice. It is axiomatic for evangelical Protestant based on the conviction of “sola scriptura.”
2. Theologically supported
Just based on pragmatism/expedience is insufficient; but sound theology is essential and required.
3. Theoretically coherent
Not to be self-contradictory; but to be both consistent and coherent
4. Contextually relevant
Not to be out of place; but it is to be required to be fitting for the context.
5. Practically applicable
It is good to have scriptural/theological support with coherent theory and cultural relevance; but can be put into practice in reality.

In the relevant literature, the word “biblical” and “scriptural” are usually used interchangeably; but not in the present study. The two words are being distinguished carefully and being used technically as shown in the Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 -- COMPARISONS BETWEEN “BIBLICAL” & “SCRIPTURAL”^[4]

#	BIBLICAL	SCRIPTURAL
1	Descriptive: Recorded/reported in the Bible	Prescriptive: Prescribed by the Incarnate & enscriptured Word
2	Precedent in the Bible	Principle of “the whole counsel of God”
3	particular: time and place specific	Universal: transcending time & space
4	culturally & contextually specific	Neither culturally nor contextually specific

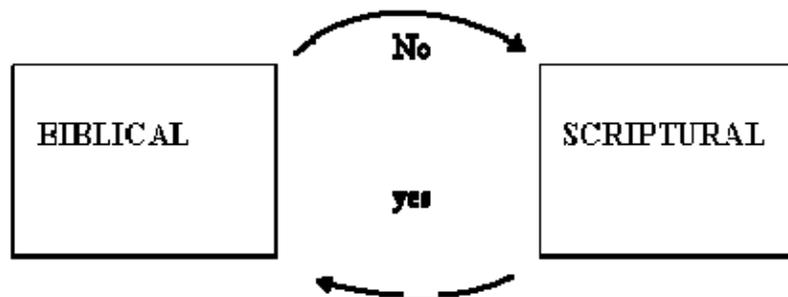
The Bible is full of “description” (#1 in Figure 2) of behavior and practice of major figures in biblical times; but not “prescription” for us nowadays. For example, the Bible recorded/reported patriarch Abraham and King David as polygamist; but is prescriptive for us to be monogamist by the teaching of Jesus (Mt 19; Mk 10; Lk 16) and consistent teaching (Gen 1:14; Deut 24:13; Mal 2:15).

Let us use another example to illustrate this point. The selection of an substitute for Judas after his suicide was by “casting lots” (Acts 1) so this way of selecting leader is merely “biblical” (#2 in Figure 2). Should the Christian church follow that manner in identification and selection of leaders nowadays? In other word, casting lot as a form of decision-making as recorded/reported in Acts 1 is “biblically accurate” but not “scripturally binding” for us to follow today.

There is a popular Christian hymn based on Ps 51:10-11, the psalm of confession written by King David after his adultery relationship with Beersheba. However, though the hymn is “biblical” (based on Ps 51:10-11), it is theologically incorrect and inapplicable to us. The reason is that David’s confession is “particular” and being “time and place specific” (#3 of Figure 2); but is not “universally” applicable to us because Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit will “be with you forever” (Jn 14:16). King David’s confession and the hymn based on Ps 51 though being “biblical” but is not “scriptural.”

The ceremonial law and sacrificial system of the OT is “biblical” as revealed by God in the OT and taught in the Pentateuch. The writer of Hebrews expounded the “scriptural meaning” of the old covenant and related Jewish traditions (#4 of Figure 2) for us – the NT Christians. The “scriptural teaching” of Hebrew is binding for all people at all times.

**Figure 3 – DIRECTIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF
“BIBLICAL” AND “SCRIPTURAL”**



Note: -Not all men are husband; but within the context of “traditional Christian marriage,” all husbands are men. -

Likewise, whatever is “biblical” is not necessarily “scriptural;” but whatever is “scriptural” should also be “biblical.”

Not only “biblical” and “scriptural” are different in meaning and usage, the proper order and the correct direction are also important. For example, when Jesus was tempted, Satan quoted verses from the OT so he is no doubt being “biblical.”

However, his use of the Scripture is not “scriptural” at all. Jesus responded to Satan also by quoting verses from the OT (being “biblical”); but his usage is very different from that of Satan because He is both “biblical” and “scriptural” at the same time.

To illustrate the significance and importance of the sequential order of the five elements in “Wan’s Way of integrative research,” the mistake of reversing the order will be explained first, followed by the example of the proper sequential order.

The use of terrorist means by “Jihad Muslims” to propagate their faith may be practically effective and expediently feasible (point #5 in Figure 1). However, the “terrorist way” cannot be used as evangelical Christians in their statements of mission,

vision, core values, and strategic goals. It cannot be an option for evangelical Christians for several reasons:

- The message of their gospel is “God so love the world” according to the Scripture – point #1 in Figure 1;
- The God they proclaim is the “God of love” theologically – point #2;
- The Christian faith and practice is to be consistently and coherently characterized by “love” – the Great Commandment of “love God” and “love thy neighbor” – point #3 in Figure 1.

The “Gospel of wealth and health” and “the positive thinking” approach are popular these days because of “cultural relevance” of our time (point #4 in Figure 1) and expedient/practical (point #5 in Figure 1) with desirable outcomes quantitatively. However, evangelical Christians cannot ignore the importance of the points #1, #2 and #3 in Figure 1 and should not “conform to this world” (Ro 12: 1-2). No statements of mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals of evangelical Christians should be embraced if they only measure up to points #4 and #5 but failed in #1, #2 and #3 of in Figure 1.

Now let us turn from negative illustrations to positive illustrations by discussing “scriptural teaching of spirituality” as shown in Figure 4 on “Sino-spirituality”^[5] The seven aspects of “spirituality” has “primary” and “secondary” dimension for each.

Any of the 3 options below is only “biblical” -

- “primary” only
- “secondary” only
- both but in wrong order: first “secondary” then “primary”

There is only one option that is “scriptural” and that is

- having both “primary” and “secondary”
- in the proper order of “primary” first; but without “secondary”

Figure 4 - Principle and Practice of Spirituality^[6]

#	ASPECT	SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLE
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		Primary	Secondary
1	Origin	Grace	Gifts
2	Nature	Life Quality	Ministry Productivity
3	Criterion	Faithfulness	Fruitfulness
4	Worker	Character	Career
5	Attitude	Servanthood	Leadership
6.	Primacy	Solidarity	Individuality
7	Focus	People-Oriented	Program-Oriented

Spirituality in accordance with Scripture and within the context of Chinese culture, as shown in Figure 4, is to integrate the two dimensions in each of the above seven aspects and yet maintain the proper order of “scriptural principle” (with primary and secondary principles). Otherwise it is fragmented, faulty, contradictory to Scriptural teachings and consequently unchristian.

The compartmentalization of the two dimensions and the dialectical/dichotomist orientation of the generalized Western perspective of spirituality can be misleading. For the full version of this paper is posted by invitation at

http://www.christianityinchina.org/Common/Admin/showNews_auto.jsp?Nid=303&Charset=big5

CONCLUSION

Being responsive to the changing cultural context of the 21st Century is necessary and imperative. However, merely “biblical” in one’s attempt to be culturally relevant for pragmatic/productive outcomes quantitatively are not an option for evangelical Christian individually and institutionally. We are to be “scriptural” as well. “Wan’s way of integrative research” has been proposed, explained and illustrated in this brief study.

^[1] “Foresight: 10 Major Trends that will dramatically affect the future of Christians and the Church,” by Howard Synder with Daniel V. Aunyon, Nelson. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, v11 no 2 April 1987, p 67-70.

^[2] For the proposed interdisciplinary research methodology, please refer to the two papers below:

- Enoch Wan, “The Paradigm & Pressing Issues of Inter-disciplinary Research Methodology.” Published in *Global Missiology*, January 2005, www.globalmissiology.net
- “Rethinking Missiological Research Methodology: Exploring a New Direction” Published in *Global Missiology*, Oct. 2003, www.globalmissiology.net

^[3] See Enoch Wan "Ethnohermeneutics: It's Necessity and Difficulty for all Christians of all Times," An unpublished paper presented at the 46th Annual Meeting of ETS on November 17-19, 1994, Chicago, IL., 1994:12

^[4] Enoch Wan "A critique of Charles Kraft's use / misuse of communication and social science in biblical interpretation and missiological formulation," In *Missiology and the social sciences: contributions, cautions and conclusions*. Edited by Edward Rommen and Gary Orwin, 1996, p.121-164, Pasadena: William Carey Library.

^[5] See Enoch Wan, “Sino-Spirituality: A Case Study of Trinitarian Paradigm,” Published in *Global Missiology*, Oct. 2003, www.globalmissiology.net

^[6] Enoch Wan, “Sino-Spirituality: A Case Study of Trinitarian Paradigm,” *The First Evangelical Church Association Bulletin, Alhambra, CA, January 1998*.

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http://www.christianityinchina.org/Common/Admin/showNews_auto.jsp?Nid=303&Charset=big5