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**Thang Deih Lian @ Davidlianno**

Torch Trinity Graduate University

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Thang Deih Lian  
(ID # 2014586006)  
(PhD, Intercultural Studies)

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## TERMINOLOGY

Buddhistendom	The term in this paper refers to the promotion of political Buddhist world particularly in Myanmar since the Pagan Dynasty in 11 <sup>th</sup> century under the Burmese king Anawrahta.
Christness	A person is experiencing <i>newness</i> in Christ by being transformed from the influence of his own cultural and traditional <i>Dogma</i> to the Christ's ones.
Jewishness	The term refers to a Jew constantly adhering into his Jewish culture.
<i>Missio-Christologia</i>	Jesus as the sacrificial lamb and Christ as the ruling King; and individual decision as the overriding mandate for personal salvation.
Mission	Capital letter for Mission in this paper refers the grand Mission of the <i>Missio Dei</i> .
Re-Creation Mission	It refers to the re-creation of the <i>Fallen</i> mankind in Christ.
The grand Mission	It is man's ultimate mission "to make God known." The ultimate purpose of the creation of man is that man acknowledges who God is and what He has done, and glorify Him.
The Great Co-mission	It refers to Kingdom Partnership in Mission and Missions.
The Great Kingdom Mandate	It is the mandate to achieve the grand Mission of God through of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.
The Genesis Mandate	It refers to the Creation mandate and Cultural mandate in Genesis.

# HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF MISSION

## Introduction

God is a missionary God and His grand Mission is “to make Himself known or that He is to be acknowledged by who He is and what He has done.” This Mission originated neither at Genesis 1:1 nor the aftermath of the *Fall* (Genesis 3). God displayed His love in the creation of man—even when the man diluted the grand Mission, the *re-creation* of man became the proceeding mission in the grand Mission. Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of this *re-creation Mission*. For this cause the *Missio Dei* initiated the grand narrative—the *re-creation Mission*—thru partnering with the Jew as His Kingdom of priest and a holy nation, the agent of His Mission. The Church is the chosen people in the Kingdom of God on earth and its environment is Heaven itself. The mission of the Church in the Old Testament failed to perform the grand Mission of God. Hence, Christ found the perfect missional Church that will accomplish the grand Mission. The Holy Spirit implemented that Church with power; and this Church after the Pentecost is named Christian. Their message is Christ centered Gospel. Since the Pentecost, their movements or the Christianity have moved across different cultures, languages, and histories and found its centers across geographical territories. This paper will assess the contributions of historic Christianities where the Gospel in new territories encountered missiological, theological, historical and cultural challenges by “understanding the process and the nature of the gospel in history suggests missiological implications, namely, what it means to be a World Christian...”<sup>1</sup>

## Missional Nature of the Incarnation

The mission of God historically personifies the incarnation of Christ, which is the self-disclosure of God to mankind. Missiologist Ralph Winter’s article, “*The Kingdom*

*Strikes Back: Ten Epochs of Redemptive History,*” pictured how God is being disclosed in the course of history. As for the Apostle John, God disclosed himself by taking the missional nature of man, incarnation. God—the I am that I am (Exodus 3:14) became Jesus Christ. John indeed professed that the eternal Word became human or flesh (John 1:14) not a Jewish though Christ chose a particular Jewish setting. Then, what exactly is incarnation? The incarnation is not that one simply becomes a Jew or Korean or American etc. Instead, one chooses a Sacred Medium for communicating the Kingdom message. One must not miss the actual intention of the Apostle Paul in 1Corinthians 9:19-23. For instance, should one essentially forsake God to win the one who forsakes God? Of course not! The apostle Paul was cultivating the concept fulfillment or the Sacred Medium to communicate the Gospel effectively. However, in reality as the Gospel travels cross-historically and cross-culturally, the missional challenges arose. Concerning that LaTourette illustrated the journey of the Gospel as the Tidal Movement that depicts the *advance* and *recession* of the history of mission.

For Missiologist Lamin Sanneh, mission is translation. Similarly, for Andrew Walls, incarnation is translation in which divinity was translated into humanity. For instance the early church in Antioch presented the Jew’s Messiah to the Greek as “*Kyrios,*” Lord.<sup>2</sup> This incarnation or translation is the vital vehicle of the *Missio Dei* in the history of man and “the universal God himself became particular in the incarnation of the Son,”<sup>3</sup> who embodied the Jewish context. Moreover, the incarnation of Christ is unique; it revealed the missional character of God. It became an ideal model for the Christian missions. It also is the historical fact that missionaries have praised the incarnational model for its effectiveness in missions.

Nevertheless incarnation or translation is not the ultimate mandate of the mission, but conversion and comprehensive transformation is. “Conversion is the turning, re-orientation, of every aspect of humanity—culture-specific humanity—to God.”<sup>4</sup> And this is the ultimate

object of a missionary in pursuing building the Kingdom of God and the early church fathers revealed the incarnational model as an effective methodology for fulfilling the Great Commission.

The Great Commission is the great advancing-command of the Trinitarian missionary God in the missional incarnation of Jesus Christ. It is the mandate to discipline the nations. As “various nations are to be made Disciples of Christ.”<sup>5</sup> Matthew 28:19-20 defines “What” the Great Commission is, Acts 1:8 explores “Where” to do it, and Luke 10:27 exhorts “How” to do it. And all the followers of Christ have the mandate to obey. Many Churches fail to do this mandate not of lacking resources and ideas, but of lacking the missional nature of the incarnation. Likewise contextualization has been learned yet not applied incarnationally. Timothy Tenent declares “The Church must reflect the Incarnation as an ongoing expression of the unfolding drama of God’s mission in the world.”<sup>6</sup>

Evangelism is the goal neither of mission nor of the church, but it is a unique tool for mission. It is one organ in the body of mission. Churches do evangelism. The goal is winning souls. Moreover, mission is not all about doing evangelism. Evangelism is generally proclaiming the Gospel; and mission is both the proclamation and the manifestation of the Kingdom Gospel. “The mission of Jesus was not only to proclaim the Kingdom of God, but also was to embody the presence of the Kingdom of God in his own person”<sup>7</sup> or his own incarnation.

Accordingly, the churches of Christ exist for the “Great Kingdom Mandates—the Commission and Commandment.” These Mandates call all believers for the Great Commissions under the Lordship of Christ. William Carey in his booklet entitled “*An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*” inquired, particularly in SECT I, that all Christians are obligated to obey the Great Commission.<sup>8</sup> And the epicenter of this Great Commandment is: Love—truthful incarnation

is impossible without love. The apostles and early church fathers in the first century obeyed the Mandates incarnationally. As a result, they became the models for the later historic missionary movements.

### Pentecost for Missionary Movement

At the Pentecost (Acts 2), the coming of the Holy Spirit resulted the birth of the Missional Church and this Missional Church exemplified a new dramatic missionary movement. Later the first Missional Church, Antioch (Acts 13) sanctioned and sent out her first missionaries. Stephen Neill in his book, *A History of Christian Missions (Penguin History of the Church)*, archived all-inclusive extension of missional movements from the Pentecost to the cross-historical missional events. He highlighted the significant movements of each period and regions in the missional history. Accordingly what Bishop Lesslie Newbigin called mission “an overflow from Pentecost”<sup>9</sup> is true whilst this Pentecost became historic that reveals the missionary movement presenting multi-cultures and multi-languages. It is “the major factor in bringing about the cultural and demographic transformation of Christianity...”<sup>10</sup>

The early church fathers modeled the Holy Spirit as the prime power and the Senior Partner in missions. This is the chief credence of Pentecostalism. The epistemological term Pentecostal or Pentecostalism resulted from the Pentecost event in Jerusalem where the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. They were the first historic Pentecostal missionaries. Pentecost is indeed significant as it served the fulfillment of the Genesis-mandate (creation mandate or cultural mandate) and birthed out the missionary movement of the *Missio Dei*. It empowered dynamic missionary movements across histories, geographical barriers and cultural activities. It is dynamic because the missional movements spread across the nations in the midst of numerous persecutions and oppositions. Personal encounter with the Holy

Spirit through numerous events, sometimes-supernatural activities thrust out the Pentecostal devotees toward flaming and prevailing for world evangelism. In the early 1900s Pentecostalism appeared and was "... originally a product of black Christian activity and has generally remained marginal to church life... then later became a worldwide phenomenon."<sup>11</sup>

One major milestone of the Pentecostalism was the Azusa Street revival. "Within Pentecostalism's first twenty years, Azusa Street missionaries had developed churches in China, India, Japan, Egypt, Liberia, Angola, Brazil, and Mexico... Pentecostal missionaries were in fifty nations by 1908."<sup>12</sup> It empowerment upon the marginal grassroots, socially and ecclesiastically affects the missional activities, hence efficacious especially amongst the majority world. Successively in general Pentecostalism envisions global Christianity. Allan Anderson, in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, lists six contributions of Pentecostalism to the contemporary movement. He summarized the journal that "Pentecostals proclaim a pragmatic Gospel and seek to address practical needs like sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery."<sup>13</sup>

#### Cross-cultural Movement of Christianity

A professor in Torch Trinity Graduate University, Hyung Jin Park, rightly specified "the journey of the gospel refers to the global history of Christianity where the gospel journeyed not only geographically but also cross-culturally."<sup>14</sup> The Gospel encountered both the oppositions and opportunities across differential-challenges-count cultural phases. This cross-cultural movement of the Gospel or Christianity is seen as the story of barriers breaking down and, further, "transition, translation, and the transformation of Christianity."<sup>15</sup> According to Professor Park, the dynamic nature of the Gospel exercises its force as a captivating and corrective power while every Christian is God's choice, the agent, and

pathway in God's missional work.<sup>16</sup> There are different cultural phases of Christianity from the birth of the Missional Church at the Pentecost to the present world Christianity.

### *Judaic Christianity*

The 1<sup>st</sup> century Christianity originated as a Jewish sect in the Roman Empire (John 4:22). The Synoptic Gospels noted Jesus and his Disciples were Jewish. The early church members were generally Jews with some Gentile converts. The object of their mission was to recognize and declare Jesus as “the Messiah,” the prophetic fulfillment. Matthew documented the question by asserting “*Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to Him, ‘Are you the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?’*” (Matthew 11:2-3). The coming of Messiah with sign was expected and waited (Matthew 12:38, 1 Corinthians 1:22), especially the Jewish Diaspora under the dominant political oppressions have waited for their ultimate liberation. However, when the Messiah has actually come, the Jews did not acknowledge the Sign, his incarnation (John 1:14).

The Gospel of John in his writing exposed Jewishness from the narrative of Jesus Christ and the Samaritan woman (John 4). Jews practiced “ethnocentrism” and were exclusivists. Basically for the Jew, if one is not a (pure) Jew, he or she is an outsider. For the reason that, they did not associate with the Samaritans. Moreover, any follower of religions other than the Jewishness—being born of a Jew, believing in One God (monotheism), obeying the written Jewish Canon and practicing Jewish rituals—is a Gentile. Thus, the “Judaizers” in Galatians’ Church required Christ *plus* Jewishness. Regardless of the Jewish exclusiveness, for John, the expected Messiah was for everyone, including for the outsiders—the Samaritans and the Gentiles. John clarified how the Messiah intentionally sought out for the outsiders into His Kingdom.

The Holy Spirit at the Pentecost transformed the Jewishness into Christness. This *newness* in Christ became a turning point for their present situations. Along with this *newness* from the inception of Christianity, they encountered new missional mechanisms in four ways: 1) missional power from above, 2) the birth of a missional community (fellowship), 3) the Gentiles' conversion, and 4) a fresh cross-cultural exposure. Initially, the *newness* experience of the Gentiles was unacceptable for the Judaic Christians who were constantly adhered to Jewish culture. For instance "Circumcision was not mere ritual—it was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant."<sup>17</sup> I assert that the Jewish Christians tried to compel Gentile converts under the Jewish sect. But as far as the conflict between the Judaic and Gentile Christians is concerned, the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) empowered the two groups in Christ toward mutual respect and tolerance for missional potency. Later the Apostle Paul bridged Judaic Christianity as a world religion. He further upheld Christianity as and created a new sense of identity.

For another interesting factor, the 1<sup>st</sup> century heresies hampered the Orthodoxies and Praxis of the Christianity. Missional challenges in this era were in general doctrinal and theological rather than cultural. Christology and Trinitarian controversies were the prime dialogue among the early church fathers. Different confessions upon Christ's *nature* awaited an open-discussion. Christ faithful followers are hated and often persecuted. However, as Norman Thomas presents Christianity brought vitality, grace and love to a hateful world.<sup>18</sup> This Christianity soon after diffused from Jerusalem to Antioch, Hellenistic Roman where the Judaic Messiah was translated as "the Lord" for the Gentiles audiences (Acts 11:20).

### *Hellenistic Christianity*

History has shown that God used the Hellenistic civilization as a preparation for the expansion of the Gospel. The Hellenistic Roman (70-500 CE) provided valuable historical

information concerning the spread of the Gospel which succeeded the development of Christendom. It also provided insight into the Hellenistic “thought” and “civilization” that has made the missional movements in a solo socio-political entity under the Roman Empire. The forming of Christianity in this period, “one of the most permeative for the future was that of orthodoxy, of a canon of right belief, capable of being stated in a series of propositions arrived at by a process of logical argument.”<sup>19</sup>

Apostle Paul asked the believers in Rome that “*Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too*” (Romans 3:29). The transmission of the Gospel for the Gentile hearers was instigated as a means of truth encounter. The Apostle Paul’s encountering the Greek Philosophers in Athens was an insightful missional contextualization (Acts 16:16-21). Additionally, setting the central question— *who is Jesus*—for the Greek philosophers who seek wisdom (1Corinthians 1:22), Professor Hyung Jin Park, quoted from Lamin Sanneh, asserted “Jesus was rendered into the concept of *logos*, the divine reason, the controlling principle of the universe.”<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the Hellenistic Christianity formed two altered focus on Christ: the crucified Christ as the King of the Romans and Jesus as the resurrected *logos* for the Greek.

Polytheism was the mainstream of Hellenistic religiosity and this Greco-Roman culture was very complex. The challenge for the Hellenistic Christians was to avoid syncretism—compromising one’s own cultural systems to bridge the Gospel. The great differences between the Jewish religio-cultural identity and the Greco-Roman systematic orders developed difficulty in presenting the authentic Gospel effectively. The truth is “Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants...the real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own...how one’s own system works”<sup>21</sup> in favor of overcoming syncretistic Christo-paganism.

Similar to Judaic Christianity, the early church fathers, successors of the Apostles, the evangelists and theologians such as Eusebius, Justin Martyrs, Tertullian, Clement, Irenaeus, and Origen etc. defended the Christian faith under the influence of Paganic-Greco-Roman, which led them to formulate “the orthodoxy, a codified system of belief that is distinctively Hellenistic-Roman.”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, regardless of oppositions, the Gospel was “possessed by a burning faith conviction...witnessed to the power of the risen Christ. Many, like the apostles, became itinerant charismatic evangelists. Threats of persecution did not dissuade them from their passion to spread the Gospel.”<sup>23</sup> They condemned apostasies and ventured for the unity of the church. Particularly for Origen “his famous *against Celsus* was significant for missions in that speaks repeatedly of the widespread growth of the church from its humble beginning.”<sup>24</sup> Additionally, his letter to Gregory Thaumaturgus was one of the first Christian documents to deal with indigenous principles and problem of contextualization in mission methodology.”<sup>25</sup>

Christianity was spread through the system of *Pax Romana* during the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great. However, the mission under Christendom was just a marginal movement. Christian mission was as a means of advancing uniformity rather than diversity solely through territorial expansion. It also is known in general as the first historic Christianization. The shift from “anti-Christians” to “Christendom” or “Christian civilization” unified the Church and State; further “the Church gradually became a defining institution of the Empire.”<sup>26</sup> The Church allied with the socio-political government with the secular Roman administrations. In fact Christendom is neither the authentic Christianity nor the Kingdom of God. It is rather a mixture of Christian religion and sociocultural that pursued political power. Later the causes of internal conflicts such as differences in the Church such as hierarchy, doctrinal disputes, ecclesiastical discrepancies and personal ambitions within

the churches in Roman Emperor split the Western Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Greek Orthodox Church into two cultural traditions in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century.

Monasticism was an essential vehicle in this era where in general the monks or church fathers were the missionaries, Apologetics and theologians. Christology, Church Dogmatic and Trinitarian controversies were the prime debates amongst the Hellenistic Christianity and the heresies such as Montanism, Marcionism, Gnosticism, and Arianism etc. As a result, Church Creeds or Church Councils were convoked under the sanction of the Emperor and religious leaders. The first ecumenical council was held at Nicaea in 325 CE. In fact along with the other Church Councils, “The Council of Nicaea did not invent the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Rather, the Council of Nicaea affirmed the apostles’ teaching of who Christ is—the one true God and the Second Person of the Trinity, with the Father and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>27</sup> Finally, this Hellenistic missional movement marks a significant transition for the future that of orthodoxy in the making of global Christianity.

#### *Syriac or Persian Christianity and Nestorian Mission*

The apostle Matthew recorded that “*The news about Him (Jesus) spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them*” (Matthew 4:24). The first Judaic Church was established in Jerusalem, and later the converts among the Armenians and other gentile origins founded the Syrian Orthodox Church in Antioch.<sup>28</sup> Edessa was the primitive Christian center where the Syrian Christians gathered for religious services. The Syriac Orthodox Church belongs to the Oriental Orthodoxy. “The early literature of Syriac Christianity includes the Diatessaron of Tatian; the Curetonian Gospels and the Syriac Sinaiticus; the Peshitta Bible; the Doctrine of Addai and the writings of Aphrahat; and the hymns of Ephrem the Syrian.”<sup>29</sup>

“With a history going back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, *the Christianity spread across and beyond the Eastern the Roman Empire* and in modern times Syriac Christianity is represented by denominations primarily in the Middle East, Asia Minor and in Kerala, India.”<sup>30</sup>

Especially the missional work of the apostle Thomas in India was a great success in the making of the Syrian Churches in India. Syriac Christian shared similarity in understanding of God with Judaism— *monotheism*. Bardaisan, a pioneer Syriac Christian and philosopher, noted “What shall we say of the new race of Christians whom the Messiah has caused to arise in every place and in all climates by his coming? For lo, wherever we may be, we are all called Christians after the one name of the Messiah.”<sup>31</sup>

Particularly under the king Shapur II of the Sasanian Empire (339-379), Christians were marginalized as being taken as disloyal to the Zoroastrian regime. They were persecuted and “tragedies, including massacres and repeated transfer of the See of the Patriarchate from one locality to another due to political and other developments until it settled in Damascus-Syria. Historians declare that the survival of this Church was nothing short of a miracle.”<sup>32</sup> Moreover, conflicts between Greco-Roman and Syro-Persian emerged in history, such as war, politics, philosophy, etc. Also, these two cultures interacted and intermingled with each other through the centuries since ancient times.<sup>33</sup> While facing varied religio-political oppositions, the Syriac Christianity mobilized many zealous missionaries.

The Nestorian church also known as the Assyrian Church of the East traced its theological tradition from Nestorius of Antioch. Cyril of Alexandria rejected Nestorius idea of “Dyophysite Christology;” and it was also condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Regardless of doctrinal distinctions within the Church, their missional zeal for the unreached were to be praised. “Missionaries of the Assyrian Church of the East spread Nestorianism throughout Persia and Central and East Asia. ‘Nestorian’ Christianity reached China by 635, and penetrated Mongolia and Korea. Its relics can still be seen in Chinese cities such as

Xi'an.”<sup>34</sup> Marco Polo was one of the first Europeans to travel the Silk Road to China, and his tales, documented in Ptolemaic dynasty, and opened Western eyes to some of the customs of the Far East. Numerous Christian missionaries to the East had preceded him.<sup>35</sup>

*Pax Mongolia* under Genghis Khan as well as the rumors of Prester John aided the significant effectiveness of Nestorian missions. However, the two great missed-opportunities for missions occurred. First, “There is an evidence within the *hadith* that Muhammad had contact with Nestorian Christians. Particularly of interest are the similarities between Muslim *raka'ah* (ritual prayer) and the genuflections performed by Nestorians during Lent.”<sup>36</sup> What if the Muhammad was evangelized and converted to Christianity, the history of the “nine rooms in the house of Islam”<sup>37</sup> would have been known as Christian territories. Global inhuman religious persecutions might have been far lesser. Second, the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan (1215-1294), the founder of Yuan Dynasty requested 100 European missionaries through Marco Polo (a Venetian merchant traveler) to plant the Christian seed in the Mongolian soil in 1266 A.D. But this an official request was rejected by the Pope Gregory X and as a result the Mongols embraced Tibetan Buddhism. What if the request was granted? As Ireland had one missionary St. Patrick, the Mongol would have 100 missionaries specifically supported by the king himself. And what might they would have done was very predictable. It was such a great missed-opportunities in Christian missions.

Nevertheless the Nestorian Mission was fruitful. There are six missionary forces for Nestorian expansion and contributions. And they are: 1) lay Christian's working in business as missions (work and witness), for instance, trading goods, building churches, running educational systems, organizing free medical treatments etc., 2) Monasticism, 3) an effective cultural adaptation, 4) the translation of the Nestorian *Sutras* into Chinese, 5) applying the three Self's principles and 6) occasional persecutions.

### *Celtic Christianity*

Celtic Christianity during the Early Middle Ages originated from Polytheism. The Celts were pagans, bloodthirsty, and also known as “barbarians.” A well-known missionary “St. Patrick’s mission established Christianity in Ireland in the fifth century A.D. and over the next two centuries, the Irish sent out their own missionaries to Iona, Lindisfarne, Switzerland, and northern Italy.”<sup>38</sup> “Later, others spread from Ireland to Britain with the Irish missions of Saint Columba. The histories of the Irish, Welsh, Scots, Breton, Cornish, and many Churches diverge significantly after the eighth century (resulting in a great difference between even rival Irish traditions).”<sup>39</sup> On the other hands, the Celtic Christianity was continually influenced by its former pagan spirituality. As seen similarities between the two religions, some pagan images were erected at Christian sites. The risk for the believers to avoid “Syncretism” was vital and critical, for one instance, observing the memorial services for the dead.

Another type of Christendom was the mass conversion of Celtic and Germanic peoples of Europe. “Celtic practice of Christianity is especially distinctive, for its emphasis on two aspects of Christianity: monastic asceticism, influenced by the Egyptian tradition; and a strongly antihierarchical individualism reminiscent of Perpetua... they resonated with Celtic cultures.”<sup>40</sup> The role of a Christian wife— Clotilda advised by the Gregory of Tours to evangelize the king Clovis— was significant in the making of Frankish Christianity as well as fleeing from the Arianism. The role of monks and monasticism particularly in this period was training, disciplining and sending out missionaries. The missional movement of an Irish missionary Saint Columbanus served the farther extension of the Gospel toward the European continent.

*Barbarian Christianity and Viking Christianity*

Particularly from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Roman Christendom gradually bewildered its influences and the threat of the Christianized Gothic Barbarians grew in Europe. Many of the Germanic Christians had migrated into Roman civilization and were “known as the destroyers of Christian civilization”<sup>41</sup> because, for instance, Christian customs and practices were erected along with some of the barbaric elements in the Christian sites. This Germanic Christianity, later, “... developed into a form of national, territorial Christendom. Christianity was identified with a communal custom... The security of a community demanded common values and collectivism. Christ was represented as a ruler and a judge.”<sup>42</sup>

Missional contributions in this era were: 1) *Monasticism or Monastic-centered Mission*— it helped the survival and spread of missionary works. E.g., the Rule of Saint Benedict. 2) *Christianization*— Charlemagne, the founder Holy Roman Emperor, used his leadership to Christianized the Saxons. 3) *Translating the Bible*— Arian missionary Ulfila to the Goths translated the Bible into the Gothic language. The Greek missionaries Methodius and Cyril in Slavic developed the Slavic alphabet and wrote the Slavic Bible. 4) *The Conversion of Kings*— the conversion of the Frankish king Clovis I resulted more than three thousand pagan worshippers coming to Christ and in his account the missional role of women modeled the conversion of pagan rulers. The conversion of king Edwin produced mass revival in Northumbria. The greatest impact of king Charlemagne explicitly in mission perspective was spreading his Christian faith across Europe. 5) *Power Encountered*— an apostle to France, Saint Martin’s escaped from a falling pine tree brought the heathens to Christ; and Saint Boniface, Anglo-Saxon missionary to Germany, upheld the powerlessness of the pagan god at the cutting down of the giant sacred tree which turned a “truth-encountered” for the people of Hessen in German. 6) *Mass Conversion*— “Mass conversion that had been common in the Germanic or barbarian cultures happened here as well in part

because of the tribal makeup—and group decision-making process—of Viking cultures.”<sup>43</sup> 7) *The Written Epic Poem Heliand*— It leads the Gospel message to be conveyed in the common tongue and understood by the masses. Martin Luther had a copy of the Heliand and used it as justification for the translation of Scripture.<sup>44</sup> 8) *Forming the Liturgical Worship System*— it is in general the missionaries’ enterprise throughout the historic missional movements. Particularly in this age as an example, Constantine and Methodius after five years of working among the Slavs, they established Christian liturgical worship according to the forms and language of the Moravian people.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, this Germanic Christians failed, did not concerned, its mission to the north, the Vikings. Nevertheless the Vikings, the destroyer of the Christian sacred places and properties, were converted into Christianity through their captured monks and salves girls. Especially the monks were the missionaries of this age. “Conversion was accomplished as a community affair by a kind of mass movement.”<sup>46</sup>

#### *Western Christianity and Non-Western Christianity*

“Western Christianity consists of the Latin Church of the Catholic Church, a variety of Protestant denominations, and other groups originating in the Western world.”<sup>47</sup> At the rise of Islamic power, the Crusades broke out, which wounded the Muslims and caused further damages to Christianity and its missions. On the other hands, Francis of Assisi, a mission mobilizer, joined the Crusades for evangelistic purpose. At the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, “Friars mobile mission orders” were organized; Jesuit missions were “the most important events in the missionary history of the Roman Catholic Church.”<sup>48</sup> The missionaries in this period were traveling evangelists, Monarchs and Friars. Raymond Lull was known as, humble, zealous, ready to be martyred, the first missionary to Muslim. The Christian missions further moved into Asia (Mongols, India, China etc.); and yet a major paradigm shift at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup>

century emerged that the Gospel was being “abandoned” in Europe and people started turning into other solutions such as science and humanism etc. Gradually, the church started to decentralize.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the previous historic Christianities, this Western Christianity developed “a particular consciousness of the individual as a monad, independent of kin-related identity.”<sup>50</sup> The chief *Misso-Christologia* was that Jesus as the sacrificial lamb and Christ as the ruling King; and individual decision as the overriding mandate for personal salvation.

Furthermore, the year 1492, Christopher Columbus’s first landing in America, was a new missionary era for the Catholics also called as the age of discovery, and “... inaugurated a major effort to spread Christianity in the New World. In the Americas and other colonies in Asia and Africa, most missions were run by religious orders such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, and Jesuits.”<sup>51</sup> The reformation in 1517, in missional perspective, produced two different faces on the same coin— it renovated missionary zeal but in the form of Christendom. To the Protestants, for its oversea missional inactiveness, earned a name “apostate,” was setting a mission paradigm for its doctrinal foundation. The Catholics were active in overseas missions while the Protestant concentrated on translating the Bible and teaching the Word of God. On the other hands, Christianity in general expanded through “Colonization or Western Civilization or Western imperialism.” Missionary activities that were done within Western imperialism have greatly shaped the upcoming world Christianity.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Christianity again encountered a new paradigm shift in missions. The missionary zeal of the Pioneers, such as the Puritans, the Pietists and the revivalists, ministered the Great Awakenings. The prominent leaders were John Eliot, Ziegenbalg, Zinzendorf, Jonathan Edwards, and David Brainerd etc.<sup>52</sup> Remarkably, every revival ensued missions awareness and the necessity of prayer movement. For instance, “Moravians began their missions to North American Indians, South Africa, Abyssinia, Labrador, Sri Lanka, Arctic people in 1730, sending over 2000 members officially to

missions overseas.”<sup>53</sup> Similar to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the Great Revivals particularly from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries have birthed out the Protestant missionary movements as well as other Protestant denominations. Missionaries were sent out globally and cross-culturally. Later missionary societies, agencies, and universities were established for world missions. Along with the reformer Martin Luther and many of the Pioneer revivalists graduated from the University of Halle (founded in 1691), Yale University (1701), William College (1793) etc. The College of New Jersey (1746) that became Princeton University was founded for missions. Baptist Missionary Society was founded on 1792 and William Carey was the first missionary; and other news agencies were later established. “In 1806 William Carey proposed an intercontinental meeting of missionaries.”<sup>54</sup> But the actual World Missionary Conference was held in 1910 at Edinburgh. A century later “the first evangelical institution in North America to have official degree programs in ‘missiology’ was the School of World Mission at the Fuller Theological Seminary, beginning in September, 1965.”<sup>55</sup> The history on missions particularly the 18<sup>th</sup> century was also known as the Great Century of mission. Missionary activities were done for the fulfillment of the Great Commission under the Western Civilization. People responded the Gospel for liberation and prosperity. The Gospel agents were Evangelical preachers and ministers, devoted missionaries, volunteer Christian societies, lay people, Women, and the Natives etc.<sup>56</sup>

### *Christianity: A Shift from Global North to South*

Christendom has failed; it produced nominal Christians and fostered secularism. Secularism hindered the radical growth of the Gospel. The Christendom’s legacy, the “Western Christianity,” was either the agents or victims of secularism. On the other hand, the Gospel, utilizing its power, journeyed cross-geographical territories and initiated its potential Christian centers. “Mission is not a memorial Legacy but an active force. When Movement

becomes a monument, mission transfers.”<sup>57</sup> Sam Pascoe stated that “Christianity started out in Palestine as a fellowship; it moved to Greece and became a philosophy; it moved to Italy and became an institution; it moved to Europe and became a culture; it came to America and became an enterprise (Business).”<sup>58</sup>

Generally from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “Christianity has experienced a profound southern shift in its geographical center of gravity. Whereas in 1900, over 80% of all Christians lived in Europe and Northern America, by 2005 this proportion had fallen to under 40%.”<sup>59</sup> The Gospel in the South encountered new dynamic challenges of theological and cultural awareness for missions; for instance, people in this majority world were poorer and less-civilized. Diversity in cultures necessitated incarnational missions (contextualization) for ministerial effectiveness. Additionally, Colonization has weakened the mentalities of the Southerners toward the Western Christianity.

However, the Gospel as source of blessings found it’s another home. The prosperity Gospel became the people’s foundational confession and message; and the spiritual dynamic, healings and deliverances, motivated the mass to respond the Kingdom Gospel. Today the major world Christians resided in the Global South. And yet, the Southern Christianity inherited its ministerial activities in general from the Christendom. The prime materials and resources in ministries and supporters are from the West. Another challenge was “Travel became restricted in 1920s. Visas and Passports became mandatory. Political divides created new barriers for missions, necessitating more organizational support for protection of missionaries.”<sup>60</sup> In many countries, foreign missionaries were forced to leave. Therefore, the indigenous Christian leaders and churches in the majority world have started cultivating their own contextual teachings and theologies, ministerial strategies and resources.

## Conclusion

This paper has developed a way of understanding the nature of the Gospel and how it had spread throughout the history of missions. The ankle of the Gospel is the *re-creation* of the fallen man in Christ for the grand Mission. In view of that, the *Missio Dei* initiated, for instance, Adam, Noah, Abraham, the Israelites and the Church in a different time and space for the sake of the nations in world missions. The Christian history has unveiled that the Gospel in different time and space associated with the local contextual philosophies; it was translated into different historic phases in responding the central question of the Gospel—*who Jesus Christ is*. For instance, Jesus is the *Messiah* for the Jews, the *Logos* of the Greek and the *liberator* from the *samsara* of the Burmese Buddhist. Moreover, across different historic boundaries, the Gospel encountered theological and missiological challenges. Nevertheless of the challenges, when the Holy Spirit implemented the missional Church at the Pentecost within the Jewish community in general; He has already assured the fulfillment of the Great Commission; and this Judaic Apostles and Christians, enduring persecutions and oppositions, enforced Christ-centered mission.

The history of missions has disclosed that the incarnational model purposely sought opportunities about the formation of Christianity in each distinct cultural setting for the emerging world Christian environment. The forming of Christianity has been difficult, particularly in the soil of Myanmar whilst the Buddhism became an official state religion in 1962. Actually the seed of Buddhistdom in Myanmar was already planted since the 11<sup>th</sup> Century under the king Anawrahta, the founder of Pagan Dynasty. Hence, it is authentic to state that Buddhism in Myanmar is more than a religion. It is the national and cultural identity. The member of Buddhism in Myanmar has a slogan that goes “to be a Burmese is to be a Buddhist.” Hence, the missionary incarnational approach among the Buddhists in Myanmar has been somewhat unique and effective. Nevertheless, the contextual Praxis of the

incarnational mission, as to the ministerial effectiveness, is still challenging for foreign missionary.

The missionaries, in the making of global Christianity from the fourth to the early twenty century, were as of the different backgrounds—the monks, nomads, friars, slave girls, the kings, wives, theologians, reformers and the revivalists. The Christianity spread as a result of obeying the Great Kingdom Mandates as explained in the above, persecutions, power encountered, and promoting political Christian world (Christendom) just as the Roman Christendom and the Christian Civilization in medieval period have its territories across Europe; it farther advanced into other continents, however, territorial expansion was the chief object of the Gospel. As a result, it produced nominal Christians—lacking radical conversion—who fostered secularism. Nevertheless, the radical Christians spread the message of a theocratic Kingdom—that God’s grand Mission be announced over all of creation. Moreover, when the Western Civilization developed its power, the missionaries accommodated the Western Imperialism (Colonization) for their missional engagements mainly in the majority world. Consequently, it produced a negative impact to the host, the receiver of the Gospel such as the Burmese in Myanmar, and weakened their mentalities toward the Western Christianity. Christians in Myanmar in the past were named “the betrayer of the national religion” which is Buddhism. For the Burmese, Christianity is of the white-man religion. Moreover, the detrimental impact of Colonialism has weakened the Christian values in Myanmar soil. However, the Western Civilization also has transformed the world for the better by educating or providing holistic solutions for a certain practices, for one example, “often enough missionaries encountered severe poverty, illiteracy and traditional practices such as slavery, widow burning, or killing of twins that could not be ignored.”<sup>61</sup> The Christian as a missionary is to engage the missional nature of the biblical incarnation, realize

the power factor (Acts 1:8) and learn from the missional history to distinguish the Christians values from the Western civilization for ministerial effectiveness.

Finally, the Gospel is a free traveler. It is not to be systematized or institutionalized under any political or cultural highway. It should not be the private property of any culture. It is not the “white man or foreign” religion. The true Gospel of God is for all nations; it represents the nature of the Kingdom, unlikely of the Christendom. The Christendom’s legacy—Christian civilization, enlightenment and secularism— produced spiritual decline in the Western world; the Christianity gradually loosened its geographical center of gravity in the Global North. As a result, particularly from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Christianity has shifted to the majority world. This is the lesson, for the historic Christianity, a must learn not to repeat. And Christianity today, under the influence of secularism and consumerism, in many parts of the world has experienced similar spiritual declined. The churches have lost their Gospel core and their Mission. The missional harvest is still plentiful, but the worker is still few. Regretfully, the historic Christian nations and the missionary sending countries have turned into the mission fields today. As the same time, the Christianity in the majority world also is poisoned by the overdose of “prosperity Gospel, retribution theology, power seeking and dependency on foreign aid.” Thus, every Christian has the Mission for every pre-Christian in spite of geographical and cultural differences. Since the harvest is great and plentiful, the Great Kingdom Mandates call all believers for the Great Co-missions under the Lordship of Christ. This is the time for an individual Christian to join the Mission of God for the fulfillment of the grand Mission.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>4</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 28.
- <sup>5</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 27.
- <sup>6</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: a Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century (Invitation to Theological Studies Series)*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2010), 82.
- <sup>7</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *the Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 40.
- <sup>8</sup> William Carey, "An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens," William Carey University, 7-13, accessed on July 7, 2016, <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf>.
- <sup>9</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, "Cross-currents in Ecumenical and Evangelical Understandings of Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 6, (1982): 148. (146-151)
- <sup>10</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), ix.
- <sup>11</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 46. Arlene Sanchez Walsh assumes Pentecostalism that there is a supernatural connection to God who acts through dreams, visions, healing, and other divine interventions. Unlike some other Christian missions that discredited African supernaturalism, Pentecostalism took it seriously. See further at: Arlene Sanchez Walsh, "Missions and Expansion," Patheos Library: Hosting the Conversion of Faith, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://www.patheos.com/Library/Pentecostal/Historical-Development/Missions-Spread-Changes-Regional-adaptations>.
- <sup>12</sup> Arlene Sanchez Walsh, "Holiness and Pentecostal: Missions and Expansion," Patheos Library: Hosting the Conversion of Faith, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://www.patheos.com/Library/Pentecostal/Historical-Development/Missions-Spread-Changes-Regional-adaptations>
- <sup>13</sup> Allan Anderson, "Towards a Pentecostal Missiology for the Majority World", *AJPS* 8 no. 1 (2005): 28-47.
- <sup>14</sup> Park, "The Journey of the Gospel," *Torch Trinity Journal*, 83-84.
- <sup>15</sup> Park, "The Journey of the Gospel," *Torch Trinity Journal*, 86.
- <sup>16</sup> Park, "The Journey of the Gospel," *Torch Trinity Journal*, 97-98.
- <sup>17</sup> Bob Deffinbaugh, "The Jerusalem Council: The Gospel Defined and Defended (Acts 15:1-35)," Bible.org, Accessed July 21, 2016, <https://bible.org/seriespage/23-jerusalem-council-gospel-defined-and-defended-acts-151-35>.
- <sup>18</sup> Norman E. Thomas, *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 5. The author, in this chapter, discussed the "Letter to Diognetus"...Christianity as of divine initiative, in contrast to the Jewish and Gentile faiths of human creation. He further discussed the exemplary nature of the Christians or the Church in the world.
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- <sup>20</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: the Missionary Impact On Culture* (American Society of Missiology), 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 61; and Park, "The Journey of the Gospel," *Torch Trinity Journal*, 86-87.
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- <sup>22</sup> Park, "The Journey of the Gospel," *Torch Trinity Journal*, 87; and Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 18-19.
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- <sup>26</sup> William Mitchell Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire Before A.d. 170, Part 170* (Lexington: Ulan Press, 2012), xx.

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- <sup>39</sup> Patrick Wormald, "Bede and the 'Church of the English'", in *The Times of Bede*, ed. Stephen Baxter (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 223–224.
- <sup>40</sup> Karen Louise Jolly, *Tradition and Diversity: Christianity in a World Context to 1500* (Armonk, NY: Routledge, 1997), 186.
- <sup>41</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 19.
- <sup>42</sup> Park, "The Journey of the Gospel," *Torch Trinity Journal*, 87.
- <sup>43</sup> "Christian missions history: Conversion of the Vikings, 800-1200 AD," Southern Nazarene University, accessed July 21, 2016, <https://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/800.htm>.
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