

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY

WILLIAM CAREY'S CONCEPT OF MISSION  
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

BY

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A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School  
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**Student's Declaration**

**WILLIAM CAREY'S CONCEPT OF MISSION AND ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed)



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Kenneth Odhiambo

June, 2000

## ABSTRACT

This was a literary research that sought to investigate William Carey's concept of mission and to draw out possible areas of application for the missionary enterprise in contemporary Africa. The research was mainly conducted at the Tony Wilmot Memorial Library at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and also at the libraries of the Nairobi International School of Theology and Daystar University. Books and articles from various magazine and journal articles touching mainly on William Carey and various aspects of his life and ministry were studied.

After a brief overview of his life, the study then focused on seven particular aspects of his wide-ranging ministry. These were first of all, his theology of missions and its grounding in the Bible. Second, his extensive work in Bible translation and the place of Bible translation in Africa today. Third, his emphasis on the necessity of Unity and partnership in mission. Fourth, his active cultivation of national churches and indigenous leaders. Fifth, his integrated approach to mission. Sixth his conception of the missionary society and its relation to the church. Finally his attitude towards culture and the missionary's handling of cultural issues. The relevant literature touching on all these issues was critically examined particularly in so far as they may apply to pertinent missiological issues that affect the continent of Africa today.

The study revealed that though his life and work may seem to be far removed from Africa in terms of space and time, the church today can generally benefit by following his example particularly in relation to the seven afore-mentioned aspects.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Undereducated, underfunded and underestimated, William Carey (1761-1884) overcame overwhelming obstacles in India and inspired what the great historian Kenneth Scott Latourette has described as the “great century of Protestant missions”(Galli 1992, 1). The modern missionary movement which he fathered, further led to an astonishing and unprecedented expansion of the church. This man who was sneered at as low-born and low-bred made all nations his beneficiaries (McLean 1912, 64).

Just to give one statistic, in 1792, when Carey went to India, only 7 in every 1000 Protestants was an African or an Asian, but by 1992, this had risen to 580 in every 1,000 (Johnstone 1998, 27). And as another renowned missions historian, Ruth Tucker puts it: “More than any other individual in modern history, Carey showed what could and should be done to bring the lost world to Christ” (Tucker 1983, 114).

Though the centre of gravity of Christianity is rapidly shifting to the TwoThirds world including Africa, and though the number of African missionaries and agencies is also multiplying, the missionary enterprise in Africa still faces grave problems. As it was with the church during Carey’s day, so it is today in Africa that most churches are still ignorant of and indifferent to the missionary task. “Most Africans think missionary work to be the job of Europeans” (Johnstone 1993, 39). With at least 1,094 people groups in Africa to be reached by the gospel of Jesus Christ and with Africa remaining as the greatest challenge for Bible Translation, there is a great need for better and more appropriate models of mission.

As church leaders and missiologists in Africa strive to formulate suitable strategies and tactics for reaching the African continent for Christ, one man that many believe cannot be ignored in this endeavour is none other than William Carey. Mark Shaw for instance believes that “Carey’s concept of mission is one of the greatest breakthroughs in church history” (Shaw 1997, 153). Making a strong case for Carey’s contemporary relevance, Shaw argues that now as then, his principles if



prayerfully and prudently applied can make all the difference for the missionary task, the main goal being to root the word of God in all human cultures. He goes on to delineate seven core principles which are integral to Carey's concept of mission and essential to any effective mission strategy. Thus effective mission:

1. is based on a biblical theology that produces both prayer and action.
2. is facilitated by parachurch agencies committed to the word of God.
3. must focus on the translation and dissemination of the word of God.
4. is furthered by visible unity among believers in the word of God.
5. depends on national churches and indigenous leaders disciplined in the word of God.
6. must display cultural sensitivity consistent with the word of God.
7. flows out of a lifestyle modeled on the incarnate word of God (Shaw 1997, 153).

Carey's conviction that these principles were critical to the success of the missionary enterprise, his success in India and the success of missions whenever these principles have been followed throughout the world argues for their relevance today. Carey's Enquiry into the obligation of Christians to use means for the conversion of the Heathens is widely regarded as the charter of the modern missionary movement and has significantly catalyzed the cause of missions worldwide. One of Carey's greatest contributions in this document is his advocacy of 'means' for the outworking of his concept of mission, chief among which is the formation of missionary societies. And herein lies a problem.

It is very important to note that Carey did not develop his concept of 'means' from scripture but rather from the commercial world, specifically from the international commercial firms of his day e.g. the British East India Company. "So even the concept of mission and mission agencies still carries the aura of commercialism, colonialism, and exporting paternalistic civilization. We have the legacy of this in the commonly used modern term of the parachurch. The whole idea of mission then appears para-biblical and not part of the true Body of Christ" (Johnstone 1998, 154). Thus the very rootedness of Carey's concept in a distant and alien social, cultural and economic milieu calls to question its relevance and validity in a vastly different 20th Century African context. The matter is further aggravated when one recalls Carey's description of the unevangelized people of his day in his

'Enquiry': "Four hundred and twenty millions...are still in pagan darkness...they have no written language and are led by the most childish customs and traditions...they are in general poor, barbarous, naked pagans, as destitute of civilization as they are of true religion"(Carey,62-63).

Commenting on this and without seeking to denigrate Carey's stature and achievements, the renowned African theologian Tite Tienou has this to say: "Carey and other 18th and 19th Century visionaries of missions set the tone for recruiting missionaries on the basis of pity for the poor savages living in situations of material, moral and spiritual decay. As hard as it may seem to believe, the foregoing ideas are still being propagated by some missiologists today, especially in regard to Africa" (Tienou 1992, 258).

To this researcher, it is very significant, timely and fitting that during the NEGST 'mission week' of September 1999, the very question of appropriate mission models for contemporary Africa was a major theme. In a series of messages on the same subject, the main speaker, Pastor Oscar Muriu of the Nairobi Chapel, acknowledged the relevance, usefulness and positive contributions of Western mission models, agencies and ministries within their own peculiar contexts. He however called to question their relevance to Africa. "...the assumption of course is that because these programs have worked in the West, they should be exported all around the world." Which brings us back to the main problem at hand. How, if at all, can William Carey's concept of mission, which was forged out of a distant and alien context, be made to work in the unique and peculiar circumstances of Africa today? There is need to settle this critical question.

### **Problem Statement**

The challenge of missions in Africa today is great. The search for suitable and appropriate missiological models and strategies to meet this challenge, is a critical need. The main focus of this research is whether and how William Carey's principles and practice of mission can be made to work in Africa today.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to investigate William Carey's concept of mission and to draw out possible areas of application to the missionary enterprise in Africa today.

### **Research Questions**

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, the research will address the following questions:

What is the biblical basis of Carey's concept of mission?

How does Carey's concept of the parachurch mission agency fit into the African context?

How does Carey's concept of Bible translation contribute to the development of the African church?

How do the churches and mission agencies in Africa work together in line with Carey's concept ?

How does Carey's concept stimulate and motivate national churches and leaders to send missionaries ?

How does Carey's concept and practice of social action and evangelism be fused into the African missionary cause?

Is Carey's overall missiological basis valid for Africa today or is it merely Westernization in the name of Christianity ?

### **Significance of the Study**

This thesis proposes to study seven facets of William Carey's concept of mission and relate them to the contemporary African church. This will necessitate a critical look into the historical setting in which his concept of mission evolved. Against the background of the contemporary African context, this study will seek to establish the sound validity or otherwise of Carey's missiological principles.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Carey's Career

*"William Carey, Born August 17th, 1761, Died June 9th 1834,  
A Wretched poor and helpless worm. On thy kind arms I fall"*

Were he to rise up today from under the tomb, on which the above words are inscribed, multitudes of people would quickly gather to welcome him back to earth and William Carey would most likely be warmly greeted by the popular and widely acclaimed title of "Father and founder of modern missions" And more likely than not, he in his characteristic down-to-earth humility, would be struck with wonder, for as missions historian Christopher Smith, asserts: "Carey and his colleagues were quite sure that they did not merit being decked with garlands or halos. Each was persuaded that it would be enough to be remembered simply as one who had sought to do his duty as a servant of Christ" (Smith 1994, 246).

Yet in spite of his intense self-distrust coupled with his very humble background, his missiological achievements are so massive and momentous that it is no wonder that that famous and unique title has persistently stuck on him for almost two hundred years and in the voluminous pages of over fifty biographies and hundreds of other books and articles that have featured him.

Born in Northamptonshire, England on August 17, 1761, he was apprenticed to a shoemaker at the age of fourteen on account of the poverty of this family. The humble shoemaker's shop was the birthplace of modern missions. Following his conversion at the age of eighteen, he left the church of England to join a group of dissenters and immediately began preaching in nearby churches (Kane 1979, 84). Later he joined the Baptists and was formally ordained at the age of twenty six. Meanwhile he mended shoes on weekdays and preached on Sundays. Strange as it may seem, it was the reading of Captain James Cook's *The last Voyage of Captain Cook* that led Carey to think of the nations and stirred up in him an interest in missions.

As he worked at his bench he thought of these nations and resolved to do something for the betterment of their condition. By 1792, he eventually prevailed on his brethren to start a missionary society. With their support he wrote a booklet which has been widely hailed as “the charter of modern missions,” namely *An Enquiry into the obligation of Christians, to use means for the conversion of the Heathens*. Its advocacy of missions and bold practical suggestions contributed substantially to the formation in October 1792, of “The Particular Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the Heathen,” the prototype of the modern day missionary society.

William and his very reluctant wife Dorothy and their four sons arrived in Calcutta, India on November 11, 1793, as illegal aliens. Any European wishing to live in British India needed a licence from the East India Company, which refused to grant licences for missionary work. For five years the only way in which he could escape arrest and find means to maintain his family was to take service as manager of an Indigo plantation in Bengal. Here little missionary work was possible but Carey was able to lay the foundations of his splendid knowledge of the Bengali language (Hedland 1992, 1).

In 1799, Carey was joined by Joshua Marshman, a teacher, and William Ward, a printer, who together came to be dubbed the “Serampore trio,” who complemented and supplemented the work of one another for several decades. “Indeed, very few people ever realized how dependent Carey was on his partners for insight on a wide range of initiatives. This in itself should alert us to the great need there is to refrain from assuming that Carey should be given the limelight while his lesser known colleagues fade into the background” (Smith 1994, 246).

No one sensed his inadequacies for the tasks before him more than Carey. Early in his ministry he wrote to his father: “I see more and more of my own insufficiency for the great work I am called to. The truths of God are amazingly profound, the souls of men infinitely precious, my own ignorance very great and all that I do is for God who knows my motives and my ends” (Beals 1992, 46). Later he said to Eustace Carey, his nephew: “Eustace, if after my removal, any one should think it worthwhile to write my life, I will give you a criterion by which you may judge of its correctness. If he give me credit for

being a plodder, he will describe me justly. Anything beyond this will be too much. I can plod. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything" (ibid, 46).

In 1807, Dorothy, his first wife died in a state of mental insanity and six months later he married Charlotte Rumohr, a well-to-do Danish lady with whom he lived and worked for 13 years before she died. In 1823, he married yet another help-mate, Grace Hughes, a British widow, who was to survive him.

Carey's linguistic abilities were truly astounding and his outstanding role and achievement was that of translator. He learned Greek and Hebrew without a teacher. Within seven years he read the Bible in six or seven languages. His linguistic progress is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that it was only his spare hours that he devoted to language study. He compiled and published grammars in Sanskrit, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, and Sikh, and dictionaries in Bengali and Marathi. He personally supervised the translation and publication of the scriptures in forty languages. During his lifetime, Carey and his colleagues founded twenty six churches and 126 schools with a total enrolment of over ten thousand (Kane 1979, 111).

No memoir of Carey would be complete which did not record his benevolent endeavors to improve the social conditions of the people of India. In fact, the India Church Growth Quarterly (July-September 1993) records that in recognition and appreciation of his massive and incredibly varied contributions, the government of India issued a new postal stamp in January 1993 to mark the bicentenary of his arrival in India. The first reform he helped to effect was the prohibition of the sacrifice of children at the great annual festival at Gungar Sangor. For twenty five years he labored tirelessly for the abolition of *Suttee* (or *Sati*) the Hindu practice of burning widows alive on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. Eventually the evil practice was abolished on December 5, 1829 (Creegan 1895, 55). It was also a common practice for lepers to be burned alive. Carey relentlessly campaigned against the practice through the first newspaper ever published in an Indian vernacular - *Samachar Darpan* (Mirror of the News) and *Friend of India*. "Carey never rested till a leper hospital was established in Calcutta" (Watts 1993, 336). He was also a trailblazer in other areas, with many other firsts to his credit. Apart from the first vernacular newspaper in Bengali, he introduced the first printing press, paper

mill, and steam engine ever seen in India; the first school for Indian girls; the first seminary to train Indian ministers; the first medical mission; the first people's savings bank; the first translations into English of the Sanskrit epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (Kane 1979, 111).

Moreover, he was a founding member of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Bengal which continues to flourish to this day. He planted a botanical garden in Serampore which was judged to be one of the finest in the East. With Marshman, he introduced the teaching of Chemistry to Serampore College. They did not find any basic problem in combining the study of science and Christianity (Watts 1993, 332).

But according to Mark Galli, perhaps Carey's most impressive achievement was his single-minded perseverance (Galli 1992, 17). The church generally, at that time, had no vision for world evangelism and social obstacles were immense (much like in contemporary Africa). Yet, Carey held fast to and plodded on relentlessly, for nearly 41 years without a furlough, toward his vision. Even in the face of poverty, disease, culture shock and deaths of family members, and six long agonizing years before he got his first convert, he never gave up. The heart of his theology is summed up in the words he whispered to fellow missionary, Alexander Duff as he lay dying on June 9, 1834: "Mr Duff, you have been speaking about Dr. Carey, Dr. Carey: When I am gone say nothing about Dr. Carey. Speak only about Dr. Carey's saviour" (Carey 1934, 428). Thus as Christopher Smith cautions, we should be wary of idolizing his person for a wealth of primary missiological evidence seems to suggest that he was in actual fact not exactly the larger-than-life mythical figure that he has often been made out to be. He himself was too conscious of personal and corporate failure to entertain eulogies. (Smith 1993, 293).

The poor quality of his family life, for instance, is no secret. In an article entitled "William Carey's Less- than- Perfect Family Life," Ruth Tucker notes that the model missionary did not have a model home (Tucker 1992, 27). Be that as it may, the almost unanimous and universal verdict of historians, theologians and missiologists still seems to confirm his status as the father of the modern Protestant missionary era (Reapsome 1999, 391). Really, what can such a man who lived and served two hundred years ago



contribute to those of us who live and serve in the post-modern and pluralistic 21st Century? Much in every way (Beals 1992, 46).

### **Biblical Theology**

William Carey was not exactly a profound systematic theologian. Evidently, his deep involvement in evangelism, church planting, language learning, translation work and institutional building left him little time for theological reflection. Yet his theological understanding grew out of his implicit trust in the scriptures and their direct application to life and mission (Nicholls 1993, 292 & 369). The Bible, which was the common manifesto of the 18th Century Evangelical Awakening which impacted Carey, became the controlling factor in his life. For Carey the Bible was the word of God to be loved and obeyed.

His challenge to the church to take missions seriously was based firmly on the scriptures. His very first chapter in the Enquiry was “an Enquiry whether the commandment given by our Lord to His disciples be not still binding on us” The heart of his argument was centred on the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) and was intended to counteract the popular view that it was restricted to the Apostles alone (Goerner 1979, 159).

David Bosch also notes that Carey “based his entire case on the argument that the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20) was as valid in his day (1792) as it had been in the days of the Apostle” (Bosch 1993, 175). On this basis Carey stressed the obligation of Christians to proclaim the gospel worldwide and to use every means possible for the conversion of those who heard it.

However, as Lindsell argues, although William Carey, like many of his evangelical predecessors, referred to the Great Commission as the final ground for the missionary motive and imperative, the Great Commission by itself is not final. It rests upon another pillar which for the Christian is the ultimate ground on which the case for missionary endeavour rests. The Great commission is found in the word of God, the Bible. This brings us logically to the biblical and theological basis of missions (Lindsell 1955, 29).

In the final analysis missionary endeavour is grounded in the word of God. When we speak of the Great Commission, it is found in the word of God.

But as important as the Great Commission is, there is the danger of giving it too prominent a place at the expense of other commandments that the Lord Jesus has given us. This is the view of John Stott who is concerned that we should not regard it as the only instruction which Jesus left us. "The Great Commission neither explains, nor exhausts, nor supersedes the Great Commandment - to love God with all our being. What it does is to add to the requirement of neighbour-love and neighbour service a new and urgent Christian dimension. If we truly love our neighbor we shall without doubt share with him the good news of Jesus. Equally, however, if we truly love our neighbour we shall not stop with evangelism. Our neighbour is not a bodiless soul that we should love only his soul, nor a soulless body that we should care for its welfare alone" (Stott 1977, 29). As will be evident later, Carey's missionary practice was actually the very antithesis of just such a distorted and dualistic theology of missions, which Stott decries. The missionary movement did not start in the brain or heart of men like William Carey or Hudson Taylor...not even of the great Apostle Paul. Contrary to popular belief it does not even start with the Great Commission for if this is so then what are we to do with the teaching of the Old Testament. "The Old Testament is somewhat useless, if mission starts with the Great Commission passages. We have to look back before the utterance of the Great Commission for the beginning point of mission. The Bible reveals that mission begins with and is the very heart and character of God. This is no afterthought but a matter of utmost importance with God" (Westing 1977, 42-43).

John Piper underlines the tremendous importance of a solid biblical hope which provides the basis for prayer and world missions ( Piper 1993, 51). This was what gripped the puritan mind and eventually gave birth to the modern missionary movement in 1793. William Carey was nourished on this tradition, as was David Brainerd, Adoniram Judson and David Livingstone and a host of others who gave their lives to reach the unreached people of the world. In his article 'Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission' the eminent missiologist David Bosch states:

There can be little doubt that what has traditionally been referred to as the 'biblical foundations of missions' will be as important in the 21st century as it has been in the past. In fact, if we want the missionary enterprise to be authentic and our reflections on missions to be relevant, we will have to pay even more serious attention to this branch of theology than we used to. At least since the days of William Carey, two centuries ago, Protestant missionary advocates have argued that they were defending and propagating an enterprise that had its roots in Scripture (Bosch 1993, 175).

Tom Wells in his book, *A Vision for Mission*, asserts that prayer is our first work in mission precisely because the harvest belongs to God. "William Carey and his circle of friends are our models here. They prayed before they did anything else. Later they did much more. And so must we" (Wells 1985, 140).

### **Bible Translation**

The present-day evangelical missionary enterprise is motivated by the conviction that the unreached are eternally lost without the gospel. All peoples from all nations must hear and believe the gospel of Christ. It was this same conviction that gave William Carey a consuming passion to translate the scriptures into as many languages as possible, throughout his forty years of missionary service in India. Carey saw Bible translation as so important in laying the foundation for strong churches that it became the main thrust of his mission work (Johnstone 1998, 230). Together with his associates, he translated the Bible into some 40 languages and dialects of India and the East. Carey himself was responsible for translating the entire Bible into Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Hindi, Asanamese, and Sanskrit, as well as portions of it into 29 other languages. By translating the Bible into vernacular, he provided a potent weapon to new converts (George, 1992, 39).

One of the saddest episodes in the history of African Christianity is the surprising disappearance of one of the strongest churches of all times - the North African Church - between the coming of Islam in 698 and the 12th Century. As is now widely acknowledged, the lack of scriptures for the Berber languages was a significant contributory factor. The same applies to the Nubian peoples of the Upper Nile. Despite being Christian for 1,500 years, the Bible was never translated into

their Nubian languages. No wonder, they eventually succumbed to Islam (Johnstone 1998, 230). Kwame Bediako, the esteemed African theologian states that:

There is probably no more important single explanation for the massive presence of Christianity on the African continent than the availability of the Scriptures in many African languages. By rejecting the notion of a sacred language for the Bible, Christianity makes every translation of the scriptures substantially and equally the word of God. Thus the existence of vernacular Bibles not only facilitates access to the particular communities speaking those languages, but also creates the likelihood that the hearers of the word in their own languages will make their own response to it in their own terms. Probably no where else in the history of the expansion of Christianity has this occurred quite as widely as in modern Africa” (Bediako 1995, 62). The expansion of Coptic Christianity, for example “received a strong boost from the translation of the scriptures into Coptic, beginning in the fourth century (Sanneh 1983, 8).

John Mbiti, in his book, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*, underlines the impact of Bible Translation on the African church as follows: “The wisdom of the overseas missionary has its place, the faithfulness of the African catechist and pastor (priest) has its place, a theological degree has its place, conferences have their place. But none of these agents can exert or has exerted as great an impact upon the church as the Bible in the local language” (Mbiti 1986, 128).

Lamin Sanneh notes that “the churches in the Third World today are strong or weak in proportion to the depth of their vernacular roots, roots that mission had nurtured through attention to scriptural translation” (Sanneh 1993, 84). And as Sanneh further points out, no other act of the missionary empowers people and dignifies their culture more than Bible translation. It takes people seriously and says to them that God speaks their language.

The impact of the translation of the Bible is also shown by the pioneer work of the London Missionary Society in Madagascar. The LMS made it a high priority to translate the New Testament into Malagasy. Soon after terrible persecution broke out under Queen Ranavalona. The missionaries were expelled, but the church survived and even multiplied (Johnstone 1998,230).

### **Unity and Partnership in Mission**

In 1806, William Carey made what the celebrated historian of the ecumenical movement, Ruth Rouse has described as “the most startling missionary proposal of all time” (Rouse 1993, 381). He proposed to Andrew Fuller, secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society that they should convene ‘a meeting of all denominations of Christians at the Cape of Good Hope somewhere about 1810’ to be followed by another such conference every ten years. This was a bold concept indeed considering the fact that by then, local and national mission conferences let alone international and interdenominational ones, were practically unheard of. Like the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, it was to be a gathering of missionaries, missionary experts and missionary society officials to deliberate and solve common problems. Said Carey: “We should understand each other better in two days than in two years of correspondence” (Rouse 1993, 381). But Andrew Fuller rejected the project, dismissing it as one of ‘Brother Carey’s pleasing dreams.’ Fuller’s reaction was typical of the widely held belief that it is impossible for Christians of various denominations to work together, let alone sit down together in a conference.

Winter underlines the crucial importance of group ministry, noting the scarcity of examples of individual missionaries in both biblical and secular history. “Even William Carey was flanked by outstanding, consecrated people. The idea that you can go out on an individual pursuit of a career in missions without coming to terms with the need for long-term, very-difficult-to-achieve, harmonious relationships with other human beings as crotchety as you are is really a very limited idea of reality” (Winter 1987, 126).

Lamin Sanneh argues that the gospel is not the monopoly of any one culture or nation or organization. “The reality of the worldwide fellowship of the church should prevent the absolute domestication of the gospel lest it become nothing more than a national ideology. It is important to build networks of understanding and partnership in recognition of who and whose we are. The only responsible way forward is to accept the consequences of the history of our interrelatedness and to proceed on the basis of mutual support and interest (Sanneh 1993, 85).

In relation to this, Jim Reapsome, veteran editor of ‘World Pulse’ and the ‘Evangelical Missions Quarterly,’ asks the following pointed questions:

Consider the mission agency, for example. Does it focus primarily on its own evangelism, leadership development, schools and media work? Does the Board consider other players and teams as equally valid and important in God's kingdom? Does my Board start churches where other churches already exist? Do we rejoice and praise God when other outfits grow faster and plant more churches than we do? All we members of the body of Christ are in one worldwide team, regardless of our denominational or organizational affiliations. We must strategize, work and pray with all our teammates here and around the world. If some other team is already working in a city, tribe, or neighbourhood, we must work somewhere else. We can look for places without churches, not places where there are none of our kind (Reapsome 1999, 8).

David Barrett and James Reapsome identify lack of cooperation and collaboration between Christian organizations as the major hindrance to world evangelization. "The absence of any network is catastrophic. It is probably the major single cause of the fiasco of today's unevangelized world" (Barrett & Reapsome 1988, 49). In "*An open letter to the North American mission community*," Tokunboh Adeyemo states, "Like the army of Gideon, the church worldwide must confront the remaining task as one. We need the West and the West needs us. We need one another" (Adeyemo 1993, 41). The partnership in the training of African missionaries between the African Inland Church (AIC) and the African Inland Mission (AIM) is a compelling case in point. The African Inland Church Mission Board (AICMB) has for the past several years been increasingly active in sending missionaries to the unreached peoples of East Africa. In the process the need for training African missionaries in mission strategy and methods has intensified. "Bible school and seminary training did not prepare missionaries for the challenges of cross cultural and church-planting ministries. Yet the AICMB did not have trained and experienced teachers to run such a school. So it turned to its parent organization, the African Inland Mission, to partner in establishing a missionary training school. The school remains under the leadership and control of the AICMB, but AIM missionary teachers help staff it (Bush 1990, 118). As more and more African missionaries volunteer to serve crossculturally, creative training partnerships will have to develop in order to avoid sending inexperienced and untrained missionaries to repeat the same mistakes earlier Western missionaries made.

The work of Ralph Winter at the US center for World Mission in founding the William Carey Library has been a major factor in enabling relatively unknown and underfunded missionary researchers from all over the world to publish their results. But as Bush notes, missions research today is an expensive, sophisticated and exacting job and this is one area where Western agencies can avail their expertise and equipment to the church in the two thirds world, Africa included (Bush 1990, 119).

### **National Churches and Indigenous Leaders**

Carey the dissenter was committed to the centrality of the local church. The first act of Carey and his colleagues when they arrived in Serampore in 1800 was to constitute themselves as a church. Carey gave high priority to the training of local evangelists and pastors, hence the establishment of Serampore college in 1818 which was instituted because the "Serampore Trio" (Carey, Marshman and Ward) recognized the need for more complete formation of "native evangelists and schoolmasters whose defect had long been severely felt." He and his colleagues worked hard to ensure that Serampore Mission and the other churches should be self supporting and he believed that evangelism should be the work of the native evangelists (Nicholls, 1993, 291).

In their own words: "We have availed ourselves of the help of native brethren ever since we had one who dared to speak in the name of Christ, and their exertions have chiefly been the immediate means by which our church has been increased" (Missions Frontiers Bulletin Sept-Dec 1992, 50). Indeed Krishna Pal, their first convert and others after him, proved to be faithful proclaimers of the gospel among their own people.

As Kane also notes, some of the great pioneer missionaries had perceived that the non-Christian peoples of the world could never be adequately evangelized by the efforts of Western missionaries no matter how numerous they were or how hard they worked. Moreover, the task of missions is not to reproduce churches that are mere copies of Western varieties. Cross-culturally prepared missionaries will encourage the establishment and creative nurture of truly indigenous churches led by nationals and making use of local resources (Lyman 1985, 185).

The Lausanne Covenant acknowledges as a fact of missionary history that some of our missions have been too slow to equip and encourage national leaders to assume their rightful responsibilities. "The transition from a mission situation to a church situation has too often been marred by a reluctance to hand over the leadership to nationals." As Stott notes, in his commentary on the same covenant, the Apostle Paul, who may be described as the greatest missionary of all time, was a firm believer in national leadership (Stott 1975, 28). It was his practice from the first missionary journey onwards to appoint local leaders as elders in every church (Acts 14:23). Indeed Kato suggests that the principle of indigenization should begin the day the first missionary steps on indigenous soil so as to inculcate in the nationals a sense of 'ownership.' Otherwise where programs have been started by missionaries as theirs without involving the locals, problems have multiplied in the transition days (Kato 1972, 198-199).

The spectacle of local ministry being carried on or directed by foreign denominations or mission organizations based in distant and foreign places is ridiculous, according to Robert Linthcum of World Vision. "The key question is what would happen to such a ministry if for some reason the denomination or mission organization was forced to leave the country? The answer to that question reveals both the vulnerability of an outside organization and the inherent weakness of having a ministry centered in anyone other than the local people. Consequently, the essential task of any foreign mission organization is to equip local leadership. Anything other than that is Christian Colonialism" (Linthcum 1991, 39).

While acknowledging that missionaries should serve under the national church, if this is required, Hodges notes however that this procedure can sometimes be counterproductive and can breed problems and frustrations, pervaded as it can be by an air of artificiality (Hodges 1978, 21). For example, this can occur in a place or situation where the leaders of a given local church do not share the missionary's vision for church planting and growth. In such a case the missionary may be frustrated and his ministry hindered.

On the other hand, Smalley argues that the now commonplace criteria of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating are not necessarily indicative of an



indigenous church. It may be very easy to have a self-governing church which is not indigenous. Many presently self-governing churches are not (Smalley 1974, 148).

We now live in a new dispensation where ethnocentric attitudes should be dispensed with. Missionaries who can appreciate and strengthen their national brethren and build bridges of mutual support will be much needed in the coming years. All nations are equal partners in the great task of bringing all cultures under the lordship of Jesus Christ (Lyman 1985, 184).

We need to note that one of the greatest Christological passages informs us that Christ took upon himself the form of a servant. Paul too tells us, "we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake(2 Cor 4:5). To render service and to be a servant is not natural to man. Neither is it natural to the missionary. Our recent emphases and training programs have not lessened this natural problem. We like to think of ourselves as advisers, counselors, administrators, leaders, experts, specialists, teachers, etc. ( Peters 1971,141). In characteristic realistic style, Stott admits that: "It must be frankly acknowledged that foreign missionaries have sometimes stayed on too long in leadership roles in the national church, and consequently have impeded the development of the church's own leaders" (Stott 1975, 24).

The missionary basic role is church planting and this includes the training of national workers and leaders. The missionary is a temporary factor in any local area, and he should build the church in such a way that it will be able to continue after he has gone. He should center the work on the church and not on himself. Moreover, if there is a position that a national can fill he should rather step down. If nationals are not left to take charge, the task of establishing indigenous churches will be futile (Hodges 1976,126). The church must be a church of India, of Africa and not a mere branch of a church in America (Hedlund 1976, 229). However, the African church still needs gifted ministers from the West, for example in theological institutions, where crosspollination of ideas and a global perspective are vital. If Westerners stop going, interest and passion for missions in the West will eventually dry up. The Bible doesn't say "send money"; it says "Go" (Telford and Shaw 1998, 136).

### **Integrated Approach**

It should be noted that Carey and his colleagues became doctors, teachers, translators, printers, and agriculturalists. Even non-evangelistic activities such as these, Carey believed, could be “means for the conversion of the heathens” For the most part, they harnessed and adapted others’ ideas, inventions, and procedures for use in an integrated missionary enterprise (Smith 1994, 245).

Carey engaged in the production of Indigo. In so doing the attitude of his supporters at home was that physical labour would divert them from the ministry, but Carey himself engaged in this business enterprise for reasons that satisfied him. He wanted a place of employment for those who might lose caste by embracing the gospel. He also wanted to become self-supporting in the field, feeling that this was good missionary policy.

Carey’s position at Serampore College could hardly spare him from criticism that he was engaging in non-missionary endeavour. But in his day and with his situation in view Carey used his connections with the college to further missionary endeavour. He came into close contact with Bengal’s most learned Europeans and with many of the ablest Indian pundits of the diverse vernaculars of that land. His vision was to employ this array of multilingual Indian scholars for the purpose of aiding him in translating the Bible into the major languages of India. Ward was only a printer but printing was never an end in itself but only a means to promote the main objective. All of Carey’s translation work would have come to nought without a printing press (Lindsell 1955, 164-165). The integral model of missions involved more than just keeping busy on a variety of fronts. It also included the character and Christlikeness of the missionary. “The integral approach to mission bridged the gap not only between evangelism and social action but between being and doing” (Shaw 1997, 167).

Carey also developed his five-acre garden into one of the finest botanical collections in Asia, presented papers on agricultural problems to the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, and was instrumental in founding the Horticultural and Agricultural Society there. He edited several important botanical works published at the Serampore Press he

had helped establish. He was also made member of various scientific societies in England as well as elected President of the Agricultural Society of India (Smalley - 1991, 41).

When Carey went to India, he found that lepers were rejected by their families and society and sometimes either aided in committing suicide or murdered. Through the Serampore journal, *Friend of India*, he and his fellow missionaries publicized the pathetic plight of lepers. Moreover they provided medicine as well as preaching to many lepers. Missionary wife Ann Grant wrote in 1803, "This morning 34 poor people met before our door, many with the leprosy; some with the ends of their fingers, some with their toes eaten off, by the leprosy, many of them receive two-pence a week. Bro. Carey gives them medicine for their bodies and the best medicine for their poor souls" (Rajkumar 1992, 37).

But the social practice that Carey hated the most was *Sati*, the custom of burning widows alive on the same funeral pyres that consumed their husbands. For twenty-five long years, Carey worked against this inhumane suffering until it was outlawed on December 4, 1829. It was a Sunday morning and Carey was due to preach in church but when a copy of the regulation reached him, he opted to stay at home and translate the law into Bengali (Beals 1992, 51). It may well be asked, did not Carey's part in the abolition of *Sati* represent a deviation from primary missionary obligations? (Lindsell 1955, 165).

It can be argued that Carey had not come to India to abolish *Sati*, and that while he was largely responsible for its abolition, his efforts did not impair nor hamper his major objectives and that his excursions into moral and political problems were in the main confined only to major ones. His campaign against *Sati* was secondary to his major work but his enlightened social conscience caused him to speak out against pressing social ills which he felt were condemned by the word of God. Carey was careful to keep the preaching, teaching and translation of the word uppermost in his ministry.

Hiebert affirms that

Nothing has hindered the modern missionary movement more than modern dualism that separates body from spirit, science from religion, and natural from supernatural. This dualism has led some to equate the Christian mission with an evangelism that seeks to save lost souls from eternal damnation, and leave ministries dealing with earthly human needs to secular agencies. Yet we fail in our mission if we improve the lives of people but do not lead them to eternal life” (Hiebert 1993, 2).

### **Missionary Societies**

It is difficult to exaggerate the influence of William Carey on the modern missionary movement. As the noted missions historian, Herbert Kane, notes it was largely through the labours and letters of Carey that several missionary societies came into existence, such as the Baptist Missionary Society (1792), the London Missionary Society (1795), the Scottish and Glasgow Missionary societies (1796), the Netherlands Missionary societies (1797), the Church Missionary Society (1799) (Kane 1979, 86).

The formation of the Baptist Missionary Society is one of the most significant organizational developments in the Protestant tradition. It set off a rush to the use of ‘means’ and we find in the next few years a number of societies forming along similar lines (Nelson 1976, 81). Consequently, what we now know as the Western voluntary missionary society came into being. Many denominational diehards in Africa today seem unaware of the fact that many African denominations were born through the efforts of interdenominational mission societies. For instance, the AIC, one of the biggest churches in Kenya today is a child of the Africa Inland Mission. Other examples are the Africa Gospel Church (AGC) and the Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA).

Hitherto, for almost 300 years the Protestants had no mechanism for missions until Carey proposed the ‘use of means for the conversion of the heathen.’ His key word *means* refers specifically to what Ralph Winter has termed as sodalities, for the organized missions initiatives. Carey’s proposal was a significant factor in the beginning of the Protestant missionary movement. The *use of means* applies to Third World Mission Agencies today (Nelson 1976, 106). If the African church is going to get far in fulfilling its missionary responsibilities, the validity and efficacy of mission

societies cannot be ignored and hence meaningful church-mission relationships will have to be worked out.

“Local churches are not expected by God, nor do they have the structural capability, to meet the missionary mandate by themselves. The church in local form is only partially able to fulfill the Great Commission. This is the clear pattern of the New Testament and the overwhelming verdict of history” (Metcalf 1993, 147).

One of the most encouraging developments in missions in the last half of the 20th Century has been the formation of missionary societies in Africa and the sending out of cross-cultural missionaries, with Nigeria on the lead. The Evangelical Missionary Society, which was started in 1949, as the African Missionary Society, is probably the oldest mission originating in Nigeria. It was the missionaries of the SIM (Sudan Interior Mission) who encouraged and helped their converts to establish it (Fuller 1988, 79).

The Lausanne Covenant states that God’s “appointed means of spreading the gospel” is the church, yet the existence of parachurch agencies is valid. These do not (or should not) work in competition with churches, but rather being mostly interdenominational in personnel and specialist in function, enable the church to diversify its outreach. Among the important activities through which they seek to extend the church are: evangelism and missions, theological education, church renewal, Bible translation and distribution, and the mass media. So we should thank God for them.

In 1971, Winter wrote a provocative and influential article in the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, entitled *Churches need missions because modalities need sodalities*, where he convincingly pointed out that the church is more than local churches. He powerfully argued the case for the church having both modalities (structured churches) and sodalities (societies, fellowships, mission agencies). Commenting on Winter’s argument, Johnstone states that “Whenever one swallows up the other - whether at home (get rid of mission agencies) or overseas (absorb the mission into the indigenous church) the cause of world evangelization suffers and the vision dies” (Johnstone 1998, 178).

Had Carey waited for his Baptist Church’s endorsement, he would never have embarked on his epoch-making journey, which sparked off the modern missionary

movement. Thereafter, almost all mission initiatives and efforts, whether sponsored by interdenominational or denominational boards, were largely independent of the ecclesiastical structures to which they were related.

Fuller notes that Church-centric self-interest has often stifled missionary concern. The SIM, at one time the largest single Protestant missionary organization, was founded precisely because the churches at that time flatly refused to allow missionary outreach. The SIM founders asked their churches for endorsement in vain (Fuller 1980, 76). Eventually in 1893, after failing to secure the support of any church or mission, Rowland Bingham and his colleagues set out for Africa. Today, SIM, now known as the Society for International Ministries has 1,800 missionaries from 33 different countries and more than 50 denominations working in 43 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. About 15,000 local churches, with 10 million members have been founded by SIM (Plueddeman 1999, 156).

Viewed historically, mission agencies have contributed significantly to the establishing of churches in virtually every nation on the face of the earth. George Peters concurs with this viewpoint in his book, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*: “There is no question in mind that our times and culture demand mission organization and mission societies. God has set His seal of approval upon mission societies thus far” (Peters 1972, 228-29). He goes on to state that the advantage of belonging to a missionary society are so numerous and evident that he strongly urges young people to associate themselves with a missionary sending agency (224).

Niringiye observes that though the parachurch organization resembles the voluntary society they are not exactly the same. “While the missionary society sees its task as evangelizing and planting churches, the parachurch organization seeks to serve existing churches with a narrower focus or need. For example the former Student Volunteer Movement mobilized students for world evangelization. Parachurch organizations proliferate worldwide. Some work with children or students. Others do evangelism, Bible study, and relief and development” (Niringiye 1995, 56). He however hastens to caution that some of the models outlined above do not serve the churches of Africa. For example we do not have the resources to service the Western-style missionary society. Therefore we need to develop relevant, contextualized models of missionary organizations. Kaleli also argues that such

structures are reflective of a western cultural worldview which is individualistic in nature. “The idea of committed **individuals** banding together for a given mission sells better in an individually-oriented society. However in a community-oriented society, it is the group which has credibility. It is for this reason that I recommend denominational (modality) mission structures” (Kaleli 1987, 45).

Apart from these we have national organizations, better known as Third World or Two Thirds World agencies, whose structures vary widely but some of which follow the Western voluntary society model. The crucial question for Africans is what model will best harness the vast missionary potential of our churches. We cannot just reproduce Western models. Precisely because they are man-made and culturally determined, all missionary structures should be subjected to continuous and rigorous sociological and theological analysis. This is the conviction of Howard Synder in his Laussane address, “The Church as God’s Agent in Evangelism”: “We should not hesitate to make the most exacting sociological studies of mission agencies, evangelistic movements, denominational structures, and so forth. History teaches us that many such structures will eventually succumb to institutionalism and become hindrances rather than helps to the church. The fact that God has raised up a movement is no warranty against eventual infidelity ” (Synder 1983, 97).

### Cultural Sensitivity

Timothy George author of one of the finest of biographies on Carey, *Faithful Witness*, argues that Carey was a pioneer in cross-cultural communications. His willingness to translate the Bible into the vernacular and to translate Hindu writings into English showed remarkable respect for Indian culture. In addition, he established indigenous churches, trained native pastors, and cultivated “Bible women” to work among female hearers (George 1992, 38). Carey held no belief in the religious superiority of Europeans and of those who bear the Christian name (Bediako 1995, 194).

In his book, *Founding an African Faith*, John Karanja argues for the vital importance of cultural sensitivity. Rigid church leaders who attempt to implement missionary policies without regard to local conditions are in danger of not only clashing with local Christians but also of widening the rift between missionaries and

incorporate many elements of African culture into the establishment of indigenous churches ( Anchak 1975, 6-7).

In his book entitled *Christian Missions*, Mahatma Gandhi narrates how he turned away from Christianity as a high school student: “I developed a sort of dislike for it (Christianity). And for a reason. In those days Christian missionaries used to stand in a corner near the high school and hold forth, pouring abuse on Hindus and their gods. I could not endure this. I must have stood there to hear them once only, but that was enough to dissuade me from repeating the experiment” (Gandhi 1941, 3).

But it would be unfair to condemn all missionaries wholesale. Like Carey, many missionaries came without any feelings of superiority, as humble servants of God. Indeed it was their conviction that the local people were not inferior and their treatment of them as co-equals that earned them the wrath of their respective Western governments and commercial companies ( Fuller 1980, 195). Frontal attacks on the beliefs and gods of other religions only arouses resentment in the minds of the hearers and builds up prejudice against the Christian faith. Furthermore such an approach is completely unnecessary, for we do not have to tear down another man’s religion in order to build up the Christian faith. The gospel can stand on its own merits (Seamands 1981, 77). Seamands goes on to cite the good example of the Apostle Paul in this regard. During his preaching mission in Ephesus, a man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made shrines from the goddess Diana, stirred up the whole populace by accusing Paul of denouncing the gods made with hands and turning followers away from the worship of the mighty Diana. When it appeared that a riot would ensue, the town clerk arrived on the scene, quieted the mob, and said to the people:

“You have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess” (Acts 19: 37). Thus, though he fearlessly proclaimed Christ, the Apostle Paul did not attack the gods or beliefs of his listeners.

Paul Hiebert argues that ignorance of anthropological issues can cripple missionary work:



Paul Hiebert argues that ignorance of anthropological issues can cripple missionary work:

Past missionaries often understood the scriptures well , but not the people they served. Consequently their message was often not understood by the people... Missionaries brought with them not only the gospel but also Western cultures, and often they failed to differentiate between the two. Many rejected Christ because they rejected the foreignness of the missionary message - not because of the offense of the gospel. In missions we must study the scriptures and also the sociocultural context of the people we serve, so that we can communicate the gospel to them in ways they understand (Hiebert 1994, 10).

Along the same lines, a basic background in cultural anthropology will enable the missionary to be sensitive and culturally aware of other people and their needs and values. Since the missionary works with people, he must seek to understand them and their cultural milieu (Lyman 1985, 28).

## CHAPTER THREE

### FINDINGS

#### **William Carey was called by God**

As has often been remarked, Carey did not have the necessary qualifications that are required by most mission boards today and many would have rejected him, due to his disadvantaged background. But the Sovereign God who initiated missions, in the first place, can choose and use whomsoever He wishes to accomplish His purposes. The incredible sufferings, hardships, and obstacles, that Carey had to face are legendary. His single-minded perseverance in the face of poverty, disease, grief, culture shock and loneliness, is remarkable. He lived and worked in India for 41 years and never took a furlough from missionary service. During the first six years, he produced not a single convert. But in the manner and words of Winston Churchill, he never, never gave up. What is it that kept him going through it all? The call of God. Though not a product of any Bible school, he excelled in diligent and faithful service in his local church before going out to India. Even though it was not his local church that actually sent him to India, the local church is still the best entity to authenticate a person's missionary call. We see a good model of this with the church at Antioch in Acts 13 with respect to the call of Paul and Barnabas to the mission field. Both were already well known to the church but even then, when God called them, the church had to fast and pray to ascertain that it was really God calling them before sending them out. What a good model for the African church as well as the many lone-rangers and 'freelancers' of Africa.

The harvest is plentiful in Africa but the Lord bids us to pray so that He may send workers to the harvest fields (Matt 9:37-38). Prayer is the supernatural way of multiplying and sending our missionaries into the unreached regions of Africa and the world. "Jesus did not tell the disciples to go all-out and round up as many Christian workers as possible or to raise a million dollars for mission. Instead he said that prayer to

the one who owns the harvest was the priority. God can call, equip and send those workers who will best be able to reap the harvest” (Robb 1994, 117). We should never forget that it was through earnest prayer that ‘the father of modern missions’ was called and sent to India.

### **Carey did not do it alone**

A cursory reading of many written sources would tend to convey the impression that Carey was singularly responsible for many of the prolific achievements that he has been popularly credited with. But emerging evidence from within the inner circle of the Serampore mission operation suggests otherwise. The ‘Serampore trio’ of Carey, William Ward and Joshua Marshman, were a remarkably close-knit team who for decades complemented one another. “Historical integrity requires us to recognize that too much has been attributed to Carey at the others’ expense - as if he were a great solitary figure who towered above his contemporaries” (Smith 1993, 295). Carey valued partnership. One of the most challenging aspects of life in the church and in the mission field is maintaining inter-personal relationships among missionaries. Many inter-personal and church-mission relationships are in disarray. Carey and his colleagues were not angels in this regard and they devised a unique way of dealing with this. Every week, he met with all his colleagues whereby any misunderstandings and grudges could be ventilated and thrashed out. This went a long way in keeping the fellowship healthy and strong for years.

### **Carey was called, but what about Dorothy ?**

The universally acclaimed ‘father of modern missions’ cannot be described as the ideal earthly father. Carey’s performance as a family man, particularly his first marriage to the illiterate Dorothy, who was five years older than himself, has tended to mar his image. They had little in common and she did not share with him the same spiritual concerns that moved his heart. His autocratic decision to go to India, against her wish may be typical of a traditional African husband ! “It was Carey’s decision, and his decision alone, to leave everything behind for a lifelong commitment to India. Dolly’s resistance was natural for a

mother of three little ones, expecting a fourth. Nevertheless she is the one who has suffered at the hands of biographers” (Tucker 1992, 36).

Their four children grew up in very difficult circumstances. At one time, the mentally-ill mother tried to kill their father. She suffered from delusions, particularly that her husband was having affairs with other women. Consumed by his missionary work, he had little time left for the children, so that, according to a colleague, the boys “were left in great measure without control” (ibid, 28). To be sure, his family was important to him but the ministry came first. Dorothy’s pathetic story raises some important questions relevant to mission today. Evidently, she had no call for missions. But what constitutes a call to cross-cultural ministry? Does God give a call to one partner only, without giving evidence to the other? Is it ever justified, as in Carey’s case, for one partner to go to the mission field, even if the other has no call? (Ross 1992, 364). These are vital considerations, for the following reasons. The often untold or ignored story of missions in Africa and the world at large, is the fact of missionary attrition, that is, the alarmingly large number of missionaries who have over the years, been forced to leave the mission field due to one reason or other, including the lack of a call. So serious is this issue, that the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) Missions Commission has launched a venture called ReMAP (Reducing Missionary Attrition Project) to research the problem with a view to combating it. Indeed in 1994-1996, extensive studies were conducted in 14 of the world’s most prominent missionary sending countries, including Nigeria and Ghana. One prominent factor that emerges is precisely this: the missionary call (Giron 1997, 28). Missionary work can be very stressful and demanding. Both partners in a marriage need to be certain of their calling and God’s will for them in missions.

In much of modern African, it is common to find men leaving their wives and families in the rural areas, while they earn a living in towns and cities. This phenomenon is also prevalent in the mission field, where you find many male missionaries doing the same. In the first place, it is mostly the men who enroll and get trained in theological and missionary training schools, such that it is the wife who is usually disadvantaged, if and when a given couple eventually decide to go together to the mission field. She is afraid of and ill-prepared for the trauma of crossing cultural barriers and sometimes does not feel

the same call as her husband. Because of this, the leaders of the AIC Missionary Training College made it a rule right from the outset that all married students must bring their wives and children ( Hildebrandt 1991, 98).

### **Carey did not ignore Human and Social Needs**

Carey did not shy away from socio-political involvement, or to use a popular African phrase, 'leave politics to the politicians'. Unlike most of his British countrymen, he sympathized with the American colonists during the American war of independence. He also boycotted sugar from the West Indies because he opposed slavery intensely (Hedland 1992, 1). No dichotomy between evangelism and social action was found in him. By word and deed, he proclaimed the gospel. He deemed the social imperative as inseparable from preaching, church planting and disseminating the gospel. He would not keep quiet until the social evils of wife-burning, infanticide and slavery were banished from the land.

In stark contrast, it is noteworthy that many evangelical leaders in Africa have tended to toe the party line and shut their mouths in the face of social, political and economic abuses - some to save their skins, others to line their pockets.

For most evangelical Christians in Africa, faith is a privatized matter and the focus is on the individual Christian life and the local church. "Evangelicals and evangelism have always been bracketed. So much so that the adjectives 'evangelical' and 'evangelistic' have often been identified in the popular mind. It is not at all surprising therefore that whenever evangelicals have become concerned about social issues, some eyebrows have been raised, and questions asked whether the cause of the gospel is not about to be betrayed" (Stott 1982, 5). The following case is illustrative.

In 1992, Kwabena Darko, a leading member of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMI) and Elder of the Assemblies of God Church decided to contest the presidency of Ghana. Almost immediately, the FGBMI dissociated itself from his political aspirations. Mrs. Darko was also penalized by being stripped of her position as leader of the women's ministry of the Assemblies of God Church (Gyadu 1998, 56-57). Of course the church should avoid being partisan but to discourage leading Christians who feel so divinely led to seek leadership positions in politics, is untenable. "If politics are

dirty, that in itself becomes the reason why Christians should enter politics. One of the real answers to Africa's problems is taking the morally upright Christians and planting them into Africa's political process. Politics are not dirty, but some people that hold political power are" (Mumba 1997, 30).

### **Carey held a High View of the Bible**

William Carey was, in fact, one of the very first to spell out a biblical foundation for the Church's missionary mandate (Bosch 1993, 438). As his ministry so clearly shows, it is from the Bible that missions receives its motivation, direction, and staying power. Therefore, the church in Africa will not go far in missions without a basic and growing understanding of God's nature and will, as revealed in the Scriptures. Contrary to widespread belief, mission flows out, not so much out of a missionary command (Matt 28:19-20), but from a proper understanding of the ministry of Christ. To be true to the text, what has become known as the Great Commission, is not even a missionary command in the first place but simply takes it for granted that Christ's disciples will go out into all the world (Bosch 1993, 449).

Many well-meaning Christians and local churches in Africa argue that they have yet to finish evangelizing their 'Jerusalem' (localities) first, before they can think of cross-cultural missions. Leave alone the faulty hermeneutics, had everyone in Palestine become a Christian when the Apostle Paul left Palestine for Europe? Had everyone in England and Europe become a Christian when William Carey left for India? World missions is the responsibility of every local church in Africa and ministry at home, however demanding, is no excuse for neglecting our responsibilities towards the rest of the world.

In this era of religious pluralism and the 'African Renaissance', and particularly in many universities in Africa, professing Christians and theologians are advocating for a return to African traditional religions. For instance, Dr.J Mugambi, a prominent African theologian and academic, and former head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi, believes that salvation is accessible through religious traditions other than Christianity. He states that "The Christian approach to history and human destiny is only one among others and need not be presented as though it were the only

correct view” (Mugambi 1989, 141). Another leading theologian Andre Karamaga, who is also the current President of the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda, asserts that “Religious tolerance is one of the values that the African traditional religionist brings to the unity of faith. It would be a mistake to exchange that value of tolerance for a fanatic adherence to a modern missionary religion” (Karamaga 1993, 7).

One dreads that we are treading on perilous ground here, for if “with our Christian conversion, we are not introduced to a new God unrelated to the traditions of our past” (Bediako 1993, 55), why bother to proclaim ‘Africa for Jesus’ No wonder, though Christianity’s centre of gravity is increasingly shifting to Africa, inadequate and superficial discipling coupled with syncretism is a grave problem. In this scenario, a truly biblical theology which undergirds missions will sooner or later be undermined.

### **Carey practised Unity and Partnership**

Carey proposed a world missionary conference to be held at the Cape of Good hope in 1810, a radical idea at that time, which was eventually realised in 1910 at the epoch-making World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. Since then, such gatherings have become a matter of course. The first ever national consultation on the 22 unreached people groups of Kenya was held from 15th - 19th April 1998 at the Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Valley Road. It brought together Christian workers and leaders from various denominations and mission societies, who have a burden to start churches among all of these peoples (ARA Newsletter, April 1998, 2). Interestingly, this particular consultation was conceived far away from Kenya, in 1997 in Pretoria, South Africa during the Global Consultation on World Evangelization (GCOWE '97). In the course of the meeting, the more than 80 church leaders from various churches and mission societies in Kenya, were challenged by reports from many countries, which have gone far ahead in united effort towards reaching the unreached for Christ. “It was a joy to hear these reports of unity and partnership in the body of Christ, but we had to ask ourselves, ‘What about Kenya’” (Kabacia 1998, 1).

Consultations between segments of the church in Africa consisting of various denominations and mission societies will continue to be necessary from time to

time. The renowned missiologist, David Bosch, firmly believed that the evangelical and ecumenical streams of the world missionary movement had been impoverished by ignoring the concerns of the other. Consequently both had failed to develop a genuinely integral theology of mission for our era. As in the rest of the world, the evangelical-ecumenical tension in Africa is a hindrance to the life and health of the church. The Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) and the All Africa Conference of churches respectively, have often been unfairly straightjacketed into the Evangelical - Ecumenical dichotomy. But as John Stott aptly observes, this can be misleading "because you cannot divide evangelicals and ecumenicals. There are a number of evangelicals in the ecumenical movement. Indeed I think the great problem that underlies the topic is the wide spectrum of opinions in both the evangelical and ecumenical constituencies" (Stott 1978, 246).

### **The Need for Mission Societies**

Throughout much of Africa, many churches have yet to think of, let alone do anything about cross-cultural missions. "Instead church leaders are preoccupied with maintenance and survival" (Schwartz 1993, 128). This situation closely resembles Carey's day. In 1796 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed the following resolution: "To spread the knowledge of the Gospel amongst barbarous and heathen nations, seems to be highly preposterous" (Smith 1959, 101).

As in Carey's case, Christian mission, out of frustration with established structures, has almost always been renewed from the periphery. "Virtually all mission agencies began on the periphery of the larger churchly structures and were led by visionaries often rejected by the larger church. If we remember this history, it may help us to avoid becoming too bureaucratic, to encourage new initiatives in our organizations, and to communicate a sense of creativity and excitement" (Pierson 1998, 150).

The dynamic nature of the church is evidenced by the proliferation in various generations of mission history of varied organized expressions of Christian concern which have functioned through non-traditional structures. This has been particularly true in the areas of missionary, evangelistic and social outreach. In all fairness, it should be stated that by and large, these organizations have sought not to supplant the institutional expression of



the church but rather to complement it, especially by the meeting of needs not otherwise cared for. World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization founded in 1950, is perhaps the biggest and most prominent of such organizations and has over the years, partnered with the church in ministering to the needs of the surrounding communities and specifically in running such projects as child sponsorship, emergency aid, leadership training and assisting people to be self-supporting. According to the July 1998 issue of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* in 1997 the ministry raised \$350 million to support its work in 100 countries of the world. Overall, flexibility must be allowed in determining the exact nature of Church/Mission relationships for there are no biblical absolutes that definitely delineate their exact form. "The problem arises when a certain pattern is tenaciously held to because of its supposed biblical basis, while at the same time the Biblical and experiential imperatives of love, joy, peace and unity are being tragically disregarded in the church/mission relationship" (Graton 1974, 357).

Looking into the New Testament, we can hardly see mission agencies, in their present form and manifestations, apart from the local church. It was the church which recognized God's call on individuals for the work and sent them out. Hence, many have argued that we should go back to the New Testament way where local congregations sent out and supported missionaries. But the problem here is that, as in Carey's early days in England, most local churches in Africa are too localized and self-absorbed in their own programs that to even envision World missions. But within them, there are multitudes, who like Carey, feel called by God to go out as missionaries to other nations. What are they to do? Just sit, and pray and wait for their churches to send them? As the history of missions bears out, many of them may have to wait forever! For in most cases, the entire church or congregations have not felt a call to missions. And this is where mission societies have come into being. Contrary to popular belief, mission societies and ministries are not out to harm or disarm the church but rather to act as an arm of the church. As Donald Jacobs, former bishop of the Mennonite Church of Tanzania states: "I have found that the most successful missions programs are run by a few chosen people who give themselves to this ministry. The normal church leadership should give their blessing to

missions and should make sure that it is being done correctly but they should delegate the actual running of mission to a special group or committee” (Jacobs 1997, 6).

### **Carey lived a Simple and Incarnational Lifestyle**

In both word and deed, William Carey exemplified the preeminent Christian virtue of humility. “He strove to live in close proximity with the people with minimum social gap” (David 1993, 301). Though we may think and feel that our culture and way of life is superior to others the history of missions shows that such an attitude will more often than not ultimately invalidate and cripple our missionary efforts.

Carey’s remarkable talent for languages and profound understanding of Hindu culture and beliefs certainly greatly aided his close interaction with Indians from many walks of life but there was more to it than that. For as the ‘missionary version’ of the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, puts it : “I may be able to speak fluently in the language of my chosen field and even understand its culture...I may have the gift of contextualizing God’s word and I may have all the knowledge about their customs, but if I have no love, I am nothing”(McCracken 1979, 151). Indeed it was Carey’s love for God and for the people of India that made all the difference. Richmond Chiundiza, The national director of the Glad Tidings Churches in Zimbabwe, underlines the same point. “I know missionaries who have never become fluent in the national language. But they’re doing a great job because they’ve taken time to know the lives of the people, to identify with their lives” (Chiundiza 1993, 169).

In essence, missions has to do more with people than programs and that is why effective missions is done through personal relationships, based on mutual respect and trust. Of course, anthropological studies are definitely essential in missionary preparation but only in so far as the formation of the right attitudes takes precedence over the mere accumulation of facts and information about a given target group. “Who you are - your character and spiritual formation as a disciple of Jesus Christ - is essential to the role you will play and to what you do in missions” (Taylor and Hoke 1991, 1).

### **Carey worked for his Needs and for the Gospel's Sake**

Before going to India, Carey worked as a shoe repairman to support his preaching ministry. Later on in India he labored at an indigo plantation. He was not afraid of soiling his hands when the need arose. He advocated that missionaries ought to be willing to work with their own hands to support their work economically (Pothen 1993, 299). Yet “as Africans our attitude towards work leaves much to be desired. In fact many Africans think that the society or government owes them a living” (Adeyemo 1997, 121).

Adeyemo cites an open letter to Mr. Harold Wackman, the World Bank Chief in Kenya, by Pete Ondeng, which underscores this point. “When we went to school, we were all promised nice jobs, and we all dreamed of driving nice cars and living in nice big houses. But nobody told us that we would have to work for it. That’s where the problem is. When you see some people getting rich without ever breaking a sweat, it is only natural that we look for short-cuts ourselves. We don’t have many role models to show us how to grow through work” (Ondeng, 1996).

The church in Africa is full of believers who are skilled in a wide array of trades and professions. With all the monotonous moaning about the lack of money for missions, some of these people are the very ones who can be commissioned and sent out as missionaries to needy mission fields, where they can continue practicing their professions as they preach the gospel. In fact today, in most restricted countries, that is the only way you will be allowed to enter. In April, 2000, a small group of students from NEGST went to Egypt for a mission trip. On arrival back, they narrated how some of them who had the title of ‘pastor’ or ‘preacher’ on their passports, were almost turned back at Cairo Airport, for that very reason. “Today the global environment in which Christian mission operates includes increased resistance to missionaries who represent old models and who have ‘missionary’ as their visa identity. Clearly, new models of ‘missionary’ are demanded” (Ward 1999, 150).

As is also becoming increasingly evident, African students who are resident in various western, American, European and Asian countries, are a potent yet largely unused missionary force. The example of Sammy Adalja, a Nigerian student in the former Soviet Union, is an exciting case in point. After studying journalism at Minsk, he worked for

some time for a T.V. Station in Kiev, Ukraine in 1993. Meanwhile, he started a small church of ten people - the Word of Faith - which has now grown to 4000, and has seven branches. The church is already in the process of sending missionaries to Ethiopia, Siberia, and China (World Pulse 1998, 3).

### **Carey had a High View of Culture**

“Almost two hundred years ago the ‘Serampore trio’ (Carey, Marshman and Ward) were misunderstood because of their efforts to understand the culture and religion of India. In fact, they devoted so much attention to this that some of their supporters back in England accusingly reminded them that they had been sent to convert the heathen, not to be converted by them” (Hesselgrave 1988, 151). But Carey and his colleagues knew that if their presentation of the gospel to Indians was going to be fruitful then they were obligated to learn as much as possible about Indians and their culture. Unlike many other missionaries, Carey did not confuse Christ with culture.

As is now widely acknowledged, Christianity has often been rejected in Africa as in other parts of the world, “not because it was judged to be false but because it was perceived to be alien. One does not have to be a cross-cultural messenger to make the same mistake. We are all creatures of culture, and seldom realize how much our outlook and therefore our teaching are conditioned by the background of our race, nationality and class” (Stott 1993, 89). Indeed, we must ensure that our gospel is biblical and not cultural if our evangelism and missions are going to be authentic. The insistence by most missions that Africans must renounce their names and adopt Western ones before being baptized is a prominent case in point. Hence, the problem of nominalism, where we have multitudes of deluded people throughout Africa who believe that they are Christians just because they bear a so-called Christian name. Carey refused to adopt the common missionary practice of renaming converts.

We must not reject culture wholesale. As Donald Jacobs, a former bishop of the Mennonite Church of Tanzania notes: “there is a tendency among first generation Christians to radically confront their pre-christian culture. They reject many aspects and objects of their own culture and all too often uncritically incorporate many of the symbols

and rituals brought by foreign missionaries. Thus, for instance even the use of drums for worship is curtailed apparently due to their association with pre-Christian rituals.

Effectively, this only serves to widen the gap between themselves and their fellow nationals and society as a whole (Jacobs 1983, 77). Therefore, We must be open to a culture-affirming approach to Christian mission. "Because man is God's creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he is fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic" (Lausanne Covenant, para. 10).

It is important to note that the Western missionary worldview as a whole had been heavily influenced by the Enlightenment of the 18th Century, which disregarded such invisible and scientifically unverifiable phenomena as spirits, magic and witchcraft, as imaginary fictions. The introduction of Christianity led to a considerable amount of misunderstanding between the missionaries and Africans. For instance, the first Mennonite missionary among the Luo, Elam Stauffer, whose ministry began in 1934, attributes the problem of the missionary's inability to relate Christianity to African cultures which were deemed primitive and backward. Africans who wanted to become Christians were forced to reject their own culturally authentic lifestyles. Many missionaries opposed the incorporation of most of the traditional cultural elements into the African church's environment. In an interview conducted on May 28, 1971, Stauffer regretfully admits that they as Westerners saw little value in the African culture which could be applied to the new Christian culture (Anchak 1975, 59).

### **The Gospel and Culture**

One of the oldest missiological issues is the relationship between faith and culture. Wherever they have gone, missionaries have collided 'head on' with and called into question certain social practices of the indigenous culture which they have deemed unbiblical. When William Carey, the great advocate of enculturation, arrived in India, he was horrified by the burning of widows alive, the killing of female infants and caste untouchability (Downs 1993, 322). While few would question Carey's concerted campaigns to rid India of such cruel practices an important question still lingers. As Downs wonders, are cultures wholes that will be destroyed if any important element

within them is removed? In any event, there is no way that the problem of social change can be avoided even under the pretext that our main concern should be the preaching of the 'pure' gospel alone.

Wherever the gospel has taken root in Africa, as throughout the world, social changes have invariably and inevitably followed. Carey did not believe that Christianizing a culture means leaving it 'intact'. Certain elements in the Indian culture of his day were, in his view, not compatible with the gospel. Thus while converts could keep caste names and dress, they could not practice caste exclusiveness in their relations with each other. Contrary to tradition, he insisted that all should eat together on social occasions as well as at Holy Communion and also encouraged inter-caste marriage. Thus, in the communion service following the baptism of Krishna Prasad, a Brahmin (high caste Hindu), he took the cup after Krishna Pal, who came from a lower caste, had drunk from it. Significantly, single communion cups were used by Baptists then, a very powerful symbol in India where inter-caste dining was and even today is thought by the orthodox to be polluting (Downs 1993, 327). Later on Prasad married the daughter of Pal.

In Africa today, one of the most perplexing questions is where to draw the line between biblical absolutes and relative cultural norms. For instance, polygamy remains one of the most controversial and persistent cultural problems. Is monogamy a Christian or simply a western cultural norm? What should be done if a person with several spouses wishes to become a Christian? If one argues like most missionaries have done, that polygamy is incompatible with Christianity what happens to the wives of a convert? If he must choose one wife and put aside the others, what next?

It is not always easy to know where the values of our culture end and the values of the gospel of Jesus Christ begin. But it is necessary to make the effort. If you alienate people from their culture you may destroy their identity and their sense of self-worth. Under the circumstances, it will be very difficult to establish a strong, witnessing church. The church may also become the victim of its culture and is unprepared to see the gospel as in one sense a liberator from cultural bondage. Culture is dynamic and not static. It stagnates and dies when change no longer takes place in it. The important question we should be asking is not whether change can take place without destroying a culture but

rather how the change should take place. If it is imposed on a people from outside, it is likely to be destructive. However, if it takes place from inside, as something embraced and promoted by the people themselves, it is likely to strengthen, not weaken a culture. This is the role that Christianity has played in its best moments. It brings God as revealed in Jesus Christ within a culture, helping people to see a new, liberating possibility for them.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the biggest challenges facing the church in Africa today is the search for the right missiological models and strategies. The main focus of this study has been to investigate William Carey's concept of mission and to find out how far and in what ways, the church today can benefit from this man who lived and served Christ two hundred years ago, in a context that is so far removed from Africa. In summing up, the researcher shall focus on some selected points under which some specific recommendations will be made.

In the first place, **we need to know about and appreciate our predecessors.** If he were to be alive today, William Carey would be the last man to accept his universally acclaimed place in history as 'the father of modern protestant missions'. Demonstrating considerable knowledge of his missionary predecessors, he was all too conscious of the fact that he was only entering into the labors of and standing on the shoulders of others. In section II of the 'enquiry' he traces the progress of the gospel from Pentecost to the moravians and Wesley (Beals 1992, 47). "What a treasure, what a harvest must await such characters as Paul, and Eliot and Brainerd, and others, who have given themselves wholly to the work of the Lord... surely it is worthwhile to lay ourselves out with all our might, in promoting the cause of the kingdom of Christ." As the church in Africa continues to draw ever-increasing acclaim as one of the world's leaders in missions, she will do well not to be absorbed in her self-importance.

Second, **we need to firmly root our theology of missions in the Bible.** No missionary methodology can be built without a solid biblical theology of mission as a basis. Therefore the church in Africa and particularly missionaries and all those involved in missions, must get back to the Bible and be firmly grounded in sound Biblical theology and keep growing in it. The reality, supremacy, finality and adequacy of Christ must be



emphasized in our evangelism. Otherwise those who become Christians in Africa will subconsciously assume that what they need is Christ plus their ancestral spirits. If Christ is to be real and supreme he must be seen, through us, to have greater love and concern for people's total welfare than the ancestral spirits do. As we continue going out to all the nations with the gospel of Christ, the point of departure in all of our teaching, preaching, and discipling, must never be African traditional religion but the Bible.

Third, **we need to appreciate and strive to work with our contemporaries** in the body of Christ. Africa is not an Island and Africans are an integral part of the global hermeneutical and missiological community. In this respect, the Missions Department of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, must be commended for striving over the years to train students with both a heart for the whole of Africa and beyond.

The reality of the worldwide fellowship of the church should prevent the absolute domestication of the gospel lest it become nothing more than a national ideology. It is important to build networks of understanding and partnership into the exigencies of history and nation in recognition of who, and whose we are. We live in a unique time of challenge and opportunity, and our inclination to exclude outsiders from our affairs is untrue to the genius of the gospel and to the pressures of a world community. In isolation our wounds become only ours, unable to be shared. As such they separate and defy mediatory intervention. Exclusiveness is inimical to reconciliation and hope (Sanneh 1993, 91).

Many Africans tend to think that they owe no one anything, theologically and doctrinally speaking. We are not adequately aware as we should of the significant contributions of other missionaries and missiologists in other parts of the world, who have preceded us and even of the contemporary enriching diversity of evangelicalism. Such an 'Ahistorical faith' that is so rampant in Africa (Tienou 1982, 2), and which exhibits a lack of awareness and appreciation of the history of the Christian church cannot be of any help to the task of missions.

Fourth, **We need one another.** In a keynote address, at Nyayo Stadium Nairobi, in August 1999, during the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya, which the researcher was privileged to attend, the General Overseer, Dr. Stephen Kiguru made the following significant remarks:

Time is far gone when you thought that your local church is the only church that Jesus recognizes and for that reason you could not consider others as important. Time has come that we stop thinking that we are the only candidates of heaven. There are many others who are going to heaven with us and we are going to meet them in heaven and rejoice there. For that matter we need to start exercising right here on earth. The commission that we have been given is not ours alone. God has other people and we need to know them and to see them too. We need to cooperate with them. We need to ask them where they are going. If they tell us they are carrying the name of Jesus to the unreached people of this country and beyond, we shall tell them we are going in the same direction, can we go together? Can we do it together (Kiguru 1999, 6).

We will do well to pay heed to those words. We need both the church and mission societies and local churches and mission societies need one another. Congregations, denominations and mission societies should consider one another as structures (or to use Carey's term, 'means'), which are meant to fulfil God's divine purposes. "There is a danger when local churches assume that they can do everything needed : screening , equipping, sending, supporting, strategizing and shepherding, on or off the field. Very few churches can pull all these things off successfully" (Taylor 1997, 348).

There is trouble when either the denomination or the mission says, "We alone are doing the real work. We have no need of you." Churches and mission societies cannot disregard one another. It is harmful for a missionary to develop a strong independence without a proper sense of accountability to the church, either in one's own country or in another culture. Even after his mission board back in England ceased to be helpful, and even became antagonistic to his endeavors, Carey still willingly held himself accountable to them.

To be sure, not everyone in Africa has been called to go out to the nations as a missionary. But "Those who go and those who serve as senders are like two units on the same cross-cultural outreach team. Both are equally important. Both are vitally involved in the Great Commission." (Pirollo 1991, 15).

Fifth, because God needs all peoples from all nations in His kingdom, **We need The Word of God in all of our Tongues.** Carey firmly believed that the translation of the Bible was the most effective way of advancing Christianity. But the sad truth is that many of Africa's people groups have no part of the Bible in their own

language and are waiting for it. Moreover, many of the older translations are now archaic and in need of thorough revision.

It is encouraging to note that key theological institutions like NEGST and Pan African Christian College, both located in Nairobi, have established Translation departments to cope with Africa's vast needs in this area. These departments should be further strengthened and expanded. But it is disconcerting that the African church and missions have apparently neglected preparation for this crucial ministry. The churches of Africa should encourage and financially support those who desire to pursue training as Bible translators, rather than leave the whole burden to western donors. Bible translation is a vital part of the Great Commission of Christ in its indispensable contribution to God's purpose for a global church made up of people from every tribe, language and nation (Rev.7:9).

Sixth, just as God used information about the then unreached world to inspire Carey to step out, He will more often than not also do so today. So, **We need to be informed.** A pioneer in missionary research, Carey's 87-page 'enquiry' - a masterpiece of factual accuracy and global comprehensiveness - vitally catalyzed subsequent global missions outreach. Even today, the Church in Africa needs accurate and up-to-date information which will help fuel missionary activity. Information results in inspiration. Lack of proper facts will result in faulty decision-making, misdirection, wastage and duplication of human and material resources. There is great need for people who will obtain, maintain and communicate the necessary information concerning unreached people groups in Africa. National and international research centers should be established, developed and supported jointly by churches and mission organizations. Research results should be disseminated to national churches and agencies to encourage thinking, stimulate prayer and develop mission strategies. National and international meetings should be held from time to time to share information and ideas.

At another level, just because Carey had not much opportunity for formal education, does not mean that he remain uninformed. He borrowed books and studied much on his own. His very writing of the 'enquiry' is evidence enough of a well-read mind. But there are many who rightly argue that, like Carey, God can use you without the

benefit of much education and that therefore education is not necessary for missionary work, as if ignorance itself is a virtue. If training is necessary in all other vital professions, how much more in this all-important one. Because of family and communal obligations and the the current unfavorable social and economic conditions throughout much of Africa, the traditional, prolonged residential-based theological and mission training models will remain an unwelcome option for the majority. Therefore new and innovative educational systems, particularly field-based models will have to be devised. The phenomenal growth of the Internet is certainly a providential cost-effective means of enhancing the exchange of much-needed information and resources across the international missionary community. The networking of missionary training through the International Missionary Training Fellowship under the auspices of the World Evangelical Missions Commission, is a big step in the right direction.

Most Africans have never heard their pastors preach or teach about world missions. Many missionaries received their call not in church but in a missions conference or youth camp, where mission-related teaching is often given. Is it any wonder then that many interested missionary candidates will first search for sending structures outside the church? They know only too well that their local church pastors and elders may not give them the necessary support. It is instructive that it was the disinterest of his local church in missions that led Carey and his colleagues to form a missions society. "If candidates hear about missions and are well taught in the local church about the challenges mission work offers, the natural consequence will be to involve their community in the process of preparing for the mission field" (Ekstrom 1997, 190).

Encouraging church leaders and members not only to pray for but also to go on short mission trips to other African nations and even overseas, will go a long way towards enhancing a world Christian mentality. "In our Sunday schools, church services and home meetings, let us use every opportunity to point out the many verses that speak of God's concern for people of all languages and nations" (Maswanganyi 1996, 89).

Seventh, because God is concerned about the total welfare of all peoples, **we need to be holistic in our approach to ministry and missions.** With few exceptions, Christianity in Africa, is generally characterized by three main tendencies,

each of which is, on the face of it, antithetical to the others. The evangelicals tend to emphasize proclamation of the 'pure' gospel. The liberals focus on social services and actions. The Charismatics highlight signs, miracles and wonders in their preaching. But going back to the Bible and particularly the life and ministry of Jesus, we see a synthesis of all the three dimensions of the gospel. And it is just such an approach that Carey took. This combined approach is the best because it embraces the totality of human experience: spiritual, social and physical. All three dimensions of the human being should be addressed by our presentation of the gospel. The integrative approach to evangelism is relevant to the African context where, there is no false dichotomy of priority between sacred and secular, religious and non-religious, spiritual and material (Thabi 1998, 3).

At this point, the researcher recalls a recent thought-provoking incident, where a well-meaning and sternly-faced church elder confronted him while he was engaged in some manual work. Almost incredulously and accusingly the elder remarked, "I thought that you were supposed to be in full-time ministry!" By implication - and this happens to be the view of many Africans, manual work cannot be full-time ministry. Such a limited, restrictive and pietistic conception of 'full-time' ministry that is so common in, cannot be of much service to Africa. Going into 'full time' ministry need not imply leaving whatever vocation one may be involved in and become a 'full time' pastor, evangelist, missionary etc. To use John Stott's words, "we are often given the impression that if a young Christian man is really keen for Christ he will undoubtedly become a foreign missionary, that if he is not quite as keen as that he will stay at home and become a pastor, he will no doubt serve as a doctor or a teacher, while those who end up in the media or (worst of all) politics are not far removed from serious backsliding! It seems to me urgent that to gain a true perspective in this matter of vocation. Jesus Christ calls all of us to 'ministry,' that is, to service" (Stott 1977, 31).

Christian workers must be trained to promote and practice holistic ministry, thus healing the divorce between the secular and the sacred - the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. The Kingdom and the King must become our complete message. In particular we should pay special attention to the poor for God has a special regard for them.

**Eighth, We need to side with the poor, the weak and the rejected.**

If mission in Africa is to be a credible gospel witness, it must begin with the experience of the poor, the weak and the marginalized. The poor and the outcasts have the most reason to disbelieve the good news. Like the leper in new testament times and during Carey's time in India, AIDS victims are probably the most neglected and ostracized group in Africa today. "When this pandemic broke out, the church did not think it needed to struggle with the problem. Some thought that AIDS was God's judgement upon sinners, and the church shouldn't get involved. Others thought that good people do not get AIDS" (Dortzbach, 1996, 2). Sub-saharan Africa is the most severely affected region and has more than two thirds of the people in the world who have AIDS, with 3000 new infections daily. Over the next decade, more than 40 million children will be orphaned. AIDS has now overtaken war and malaria as the leading killer in the continent. The world can only offer condoms to unfaithful people but the church can offer a message of real hope. Without access to expensive drugs, AIDS victims in Africa are left hopeless, ashamed, guilty and fearful of being rejected by family, friends and society. And herein lies the Church's opportunity and responsibility. Just as Carey did with the rejected lepers of India, the Church can by reaching out to and caring for these 'modern day lepers' make a difference. Above all, our Lord Jesus Christ has already shown us the way, in his compassionate reaching out to the outcasts.

Ninth, whereas we should always remain true to the world of God, **We need to redirect rather than totally reject our culture.** As E. Maswanganyi of South Africa says, "A Christian should not swallow everything from his culture nor should he reject everything because in every culture there is the good that should be retained and the bad that should be rejected by the Christian. The Bible is the guide in what to accept and what to reject" (Maswanganyi 1981, 23). Culture must be judged by the Bible and we must never bend the Bible to suit our culture.

In the past many an African was not accepted as a true Christian unless he agreed to abandon as much of his own culture as possible and adopt European culture. Today many supposedly Christian customs are actually European and have nothing to do with Christianity at all, e.g. wedding rings, bridesmaids. There are definitely certain non-

essential elements of the application of the Christian faith that we can change or adapt to suit the African context without compromising our faith. These are things like prayer books, hymn books, church building forms, 'Christian' names, western wedding styles, etc. But the essential elements of the Christian faith, like the centrality of the Bible and the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ... these we cannot change or modify, if we are to remain authentic African Christians (Thabi 1998, 2). In a lecture at the University of Swaziland, Dr. B. Makhathini asked, "Must we African Christians follow the customs brought by Europeans?" (Britten 1997, 32). Then he gave the following illuminating answer: "We know that Christianity is the bread of life for all races. When Europeans received this bread, they added a plastic bag (their own customs) along with the bread. The plastic belongs to them but the bread belongs to all of us. We can remove the plastic, and enjoy the bread!"

Tenth, **We need to let go**. The fact that Jesus actually entrusted the task of World mission to weak and feeble disciples should sober us. All of us have naturally tend to be selfish and ethnocentric. No wonder letting go of mission-founded churches and institutions to locals and nationals is something that many missions and missionaries have not found easy. A case in point is the African Inland Mission (AIM) and its 'daughter' church the African Inland Church. During much of the 1960's there was a lot of tension, recriminations and bitterness between the two owing to the former holding on "too much too long" (Gration 1974, 352).

Lest we heap all the blame on Westerners, it is interesting to note that many African missions and missionaries are today committing the very same mistake by overstaying in certain mission fields. In the early 70's, the African Inland Church (AIC) sent ten Kamba missionaries to the largely unreached Giriama tribe. About a decade later, after several of their own leaders had been trained at the Pwani Bible College in Mombasa, the Giriama felt that it was high time that the Kamba missionaries give way to their own local leaders. But the missionaries were not ready to let go. Just as the AIM had done in the early 60s, in relation to the national leaders of the AIC, the older Wakamba missionaries questioned the maturity of these Giriama graduates and wondered whether they could trust them with leadership (Anderson 1994, 326).

**Lastly, We never need to give up.**

When all is said and done, we need to remember that Mission is God's mission (*Missio Dei*) and that without God we can do nothing. As Carey demonstrated in word and deed, no matter how carefully we carry out all of Carey's methods and principles, without prayer and total dependence upon God, all of our clever plans and strategies will ultimately miscarry.

The words of his friend John Newton, written some five years before Carey's departure for India, are as timely today as they were then: "When God has a work to accomplish and his time has come, however inadequate and weak the means he employs may seem to a carnal eye, the success is infallibly secured: for all things serve him, and are in his hands as clay in the hands of a potter" (George 1992, 39).

Like much of Africa today, Carey was undereducated, underfunded and underestimated. But in the name and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, Carey still expected, attempted, and achieved great things for God. The very same God is with us today. And He whose ways are higher than our ways, and who does not see as men see, will see us through and do even greater works through us. Only let us trust and obey - and never give up.



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