

Dancing to the Rhythms of the Big Drum
Growing in Authentic Mutual Relationships with all God's People

Brother Fred Dimado, Impact 2021

“Through all the ages to come... the Indian church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labors of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor; you have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us friends.” – V.S. Azariah, Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference

The infant churches of that time were not asking for more laborers, finances or resources. They desired relationships.

Testimonies & Trends – What do we see God doing?

What do we hear God communicating on His big drum? How do we need to respond in our dance and bring it in line with what God is communicating? Just as Jesus said that the Son does only what He sees the Father doing (John 5:19), so our missionary impact will grow only as we recognize and join in with what the Father is doing.

“While we affirm the values and strengths of our organizational traditions, there is also, perhaps, the urgent need to bear witness to a holy impatience for renewal and for organizational changes that will make us more a reflection of the global body of Christ. A spiritual and organizational growth that will see an increase in membership and participation in God’s mission with brothers and sisters across cultures and nations for the goal of making Christ known.”

Emerging issues between the times

“We are under obligation to engage in the demanding task of rethinking how we approach the next stage of mission and to devise new approaches. If we fail to come to terms with this new reality, we risk merely reflecting the fragmentation and factionalism of the wider society by continuing to rely on monocultural missionary teams as the primary model.” – Wilbert Shenk

“The unwillingness to (listen and) learn is perhaps the greatest obstruction to unity in mission efforts and to deepening relationships with the body of Christ around the world.”

“We need to give attention to issues of power, dominance and control and how these play out even when we genuinely, genuinely want to work alongside brothers and sisters in the non-Western world. How may we address these strongholds that create suspicion, distrust and sow seeds of inferiority complex that limits the vision of some leaders in the non-Western world? How may they be empowered and be all that God has called them to be? How may we serve under them? Where are the power gradients in World Gospel Mission and what steps are we willing to take to receive well and build others up for the glory of God?”

Re-capturing a biblical vision of community and partnership in God’s mission

“We must listen both to the unchanging word and to the constantly changing and challenging world and allow the word to confront us, disturb our security, undermine our complacency and overthrow our patters of thoughts and behavior... We should allow the scriptures of the past to become the tidings of the present.” – John Stott

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A big dance such as is held in Ghana provides a vision of community and partnership in mission. As God beats on the big drum, He draws more and more people to join the dance. For a while, one group will be featured in the center, but the rhythm of the dance is to rotate this focus. The dance is more exhilarating as more people are drawn into the rhythm and the focus shifts to others. Our model is the triune God who consistently seeks to reveal and glorify each person of the Godhead in an eternal dance of community and unity. Biblical koinonia is our vision.

“When fellowship with brothers and sisters is authentic, the depth of love for each other becomes the message (John 17:23b). The Trinity let us in and we have no reason to let anyone out or deprive any other believer from fully participating in the vision of God.”

Growing in authentic mutual relationships – Five imperatives

1. Dependence on God
2. Humility
3. Listening Well
4. More Partnerships (and even more structural and attitudinal adjustments)
5. Koinonia (a biblical and strategic concept for inclusive gospel witness)

“We need to bring the full weight of our leadership and organizational strength to bear on making adjustments in our structures and attitudes to better serve the participation, integration and flourishing of believers from the majority world church. This is critical to increasingly becoming a mission agency from everywhere to everywhere.”

“This Greek term (koinonia) encapsulates the idea of genuine Christian fellowship and an avowed commitment to the concept of the one body with specialized parts which work together to benefit the whole. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one body – this is the new paradigm which should underscore every new initiative we undertake.” – Dr. Solomon Aryeetey

Conclusion – Seize the moment!