



Changing Values, Unchanging Commission: *Workshop Outlines*¹

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I: Exalting the Master of Change

Theological Fundamentals:

- God does not change.
- Truth revealed as God's Word does not change.
- Christ's fulfillment of God's redemptive covenant does not change.
- All else is in process of change.

A Christian View of Change:

- Change is basic in the created order (e.g., day/night; orbits; seasons; cycles; development; reproduction; maturation.)
- Change that leads to fulfillment of his purposes is valued by God.
- Change is almost always difficult, often painful, as part of the human condition.
- Change must be evaluated (judged); change is not always good.
- Change can be resisted.
- Change can be affected by human interventions.

Cultural Issues of This Era:

- Fear and pride are the great motivators of resistance to change.
- Increasingly angry and fearful world makes attunement of the Christian message more difficult.
- Intensified inter-ethnic conflict increases the importance of spiritual gifts.
- Gap between rich and poor puts North American evangelicals under increased stress in today's intercultural ministries.
- Increased intolerance of colonial and paternal models of interpersonal relationships demands self-criticism and change.

Conclusions:

- We cannot change God's plans or purposes, whether by “getting ahead” or by dragging behind.
- Prayerful following is the only road to Godly mission.
- Two common dangers: 1) resisting God's own intentions for the future; 2) becoming detached from the changing circumstances in which we are to minister.

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- At the most practical level: the time has come to assess prospective missionary candidates in terms of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), evident and attested within ministry.

II: Readiness For The Days Ahead

Recruiting and educating missionaries for the days ahead:

- Experience in ministry.
- Experience in intercultural cooperation.
- Experience in teamwork.

Mission field characteristics:

- Increasing sensitivity to *pushing, inventing, and boasting*.
- Urgency of international and intercultural teamwork.

Posture of the missionary:

- Responsiveness and humility are essential.
- Autonomy and enterprise are increasingly problematic.

Trends to reverse:

- The rush to join.
- The pressure to expand.
- The temptation to recruit from “easy ponds.”

Discussion Questions

In light of the changing conditions in the world . . .

1. What qualities, characteristics, and skills should we *prefer* in a candidate?
2. What should we ascertain is *true* of a candidate?
3. What evidences should we accept in support of a candidate's own claims about motives, skills, gifts, and experiences?
4. Where are we most likely to find the candidates needed for the days ahead?

After discussing the items above, focus further on this matter:

What assumptions about “the days ahead” are most evident in your ways of dealing with the topic of *recruiting for the future*?