Rethinking the Question “Who Is A Missionary?”
in Light of 21st Century Diaspora Realities,
with Implications for Missionaries, Churches and Mission Agencies Today

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Introduction

During the “great” 19th and 20th centuries of Protestant missionary activity the question—
“Who Is a Missionary?”—could be answered quite easily. At that time missionaries were
individuals who left the confines of North America or Europe and went to bring the
Gospel to people groups who were culturally different from themselves, peoples who
were primarily found outside of these two continents. These missionaries voluntarily left
their own home countries to do mission work “over there” in Africa, Asia or Latin
America. Towards the end of the 20th century new answers to this question were in order
in light of the tremendous numbers of nonwestern missionaries that God had raised up.
These nonwestern missionaries were also leaving their home countries and going to
people groups “over there.” As a result, missionaries were now made up of both western
and nonwestern men and women, reaching people groups throughout the world. Their
modus operandi, however, was in keeping with the “great” centuries: they voluntarily left
their own home countries to do mission work somewhere else among people groups who
were culturally different from themselves. Today this internationalization of the global
mission force is taken for granted.

Now, at the beginnings of the 21st century, God is once again doing a new thing with His
mission force. God is doing this through the historically unprecedented movements of
people groups that are being scattered throughout the world. Never before have we seen
the intensity and numbers of peoples going from everywhere to everywhere.² These are
the modern-day diaspora peoples. According to the Pew Research Center, as of 2010
approximately 3 percent of the world’s population had migrated across international
borders. Of these 214 million diaspora peoples those with a Christian-background
constituted about one-half of the total, or 106 million.³ This latter number represents a

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² For a fuller treatment of the missiological implications of this phrase in relationship to diaspora
peoples, see Sam George, “Diaspora: A Hidden Link to ‘From Everywhere To Everywhere’ Missiology,”
Missiology 39, no. 1 (January 2011): 45-56. See also Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization,
Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora (Manila, RP: LifeChange, 2010); Enoch
Wan, ed., Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice (Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora
Studies/Western Seminary, 2011); and Michael Pocock and Enoch Wan, eds., Diaspora Missiology:

potentially significant new mission force. Many of these Christians have left their home countries voluntarily as immigrants, international students or foreign workers. Many others have been compelled to leave their home countries involuntarily as a result of forced relocation as refugees due to war, persecution or some other kind of evil. Many of these diaspora Christians are evangelizing both their own people as well as other people groups located in their new host countries. Consequently, the once clear demarcation lines of mission work—like “sending” and “receiving” nations, “home” and “foreign” missions, and so on—are today becoming quite blurred.

So are some of these diaspora Christians missionaries in the former traditional sense? In others words, if a diaspora Christian has relocated from his/her own country and is now evangelizing his/her own people group in another host country, is that missionary work? Or, if a diaspora Christian has relocated from his/her own country, is now living in another country, and is doing evangelistic work among a people group different from his/her own, is this missionary work? What about the huge numbers of diaspora Christians who are ministering in a host country for a significant length of time because of job or educational opportunities, are they missionaries? And what about vocation? Can these diaspora Christians still be considered missionaries if they also have full-time secular jobs? Thus, in light of this tremendous relocation of peoples worldwide, the question is indeed appropriate: “Who Is a Missionary” today?

This paper will examine answers to this question in three parts. Part One will begin with a brief overview of how the word “apostle” was used by Paul in the New Testament, and how Paul’s understanding of the missionary gift is still helpful in light of current diaspora realities. Part Two will briefly examine the broad categories of evangelism and mission—using the “E-Scale” as defined by Ralph Winter—to show how these categories, in revised form, are still helpful for understanding the role of diaspora Christians today. Part Three will briefly look at the current diaspora realities facing the church both in the USA and abroad. Implications for missionaries, local churches, and mission agencies will conclude the paper.

Part One:
The Apostle Paul’s Understanding of “Who Is a Missionary?”

Though the apostle Paul never actually uses the word “missionary” he does indicate a clear understanding of the missionary task. He does this through his use of the word “apostle.” His primary understanding of that word is as a spiritual gift especially given to those working cross-culturally among peoples different from themselves. Elsewhere I have written about this at length. What follows here is a brief overview of the basics behind Paul’s understanding of the spiritual gift of apostle. This overview is important because in answering the question—“Who Is a Missionary?”—it is necessary to first

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determine the biblical understanding of a missionary, and that biblical understanding is founded upon the word apostle.

What is the spiritual gift of apostle? Simply stated, this is a spiritual gift given by God to individuals who are involved primarily in cross-cultural evangelism and church planting activities, especially in pioneering, frontline work among unreached peoples. Paul lists the gift of apostle first and foremost among all of the spiritual gifts (see the “gift lists” in 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11). Being listed first seems to emphasize that a church might not have come into existence in the first place if it had not been for the apostles who had initially gone forth and planted them, especially in cross-cultural situations.

Paul understood his own ministry as an apostle in this way since he was involved primarily in cross-cultural evangelism and missions work to unreached peoples. His own spiritual gift of apostle compelled him to evangelize and to plant new churches among peoples who had yet to hear the gospel. Paul’s heart for unreached peoples gave him his fundamental motivation in life: “It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation (Rom. 15:20, NIV). Paul’s understanding of an apostle can also be seen in his desire to go to Spain, since, “I no longer have any room to work in these regions” (Rom. 15:23, RSV). Paul could have stayed where he was and worked with already reached or reachable peoples. But this is not what an apostle does. F. F. Bruce notes:

The statement that he “no longer has any room for work in these regions” throws light on Paul’s conception of his task. There was certainly much room for further work in the area already evangelized by Paul, but not … work of an apostolic nature. The work of an apostle was to preach the gospel where it had not been heard before and plant churches were none had existed before. When those churches had received sufficient teaching to enable them to understand their Christian status and responsibility, the apostle moved on to continue the same kind of work elsewhere.

Paul’s spiritual gift of apostle compelled him to evangelize and to plant new churches among peoples who had yet to hear the gospel. Such a ministry was for him, of necessity, cross-cultural. While the phrase “cross-cultural” is a modern term that Paul had no understanding of, nevertheless, when we apply the phrase to aspects of Paul’s missionary strategy it is obvious that this apostle to the Gentiles was indeed involved in significant

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5 Certainly Paul has his own apostolic ministry in mind when he places apostles first in his listings of spiritual gifts. Of course there was more to Paul’s apostolic gift than planting churches cross-culturally; for Paul the gift also involved teaching canonical doctrine. Because missionaries today, unlike Paul, have access to the complete canonical Bible, this doctrinal aspect of the gift of apostle no longer functions. For more information, see Caldwell, Sent Out!, especially Chapter Four. In this Chapter I note the complexity of understandings concerning the word “apostle” in the New Testament: from the universal apostleship of all Christians as sent ones, to the individual gift of apostle in terms of “apostolic office” as once-for-all-time doctrine apostles and “apostolic ministry” as missionary apostles like Paul who planted churches in cross-cultural contexts.

6 For further discussion see Caldwell, Sent Out!, 60-68.

7 Of course Paul also evangelized his fellow Jews wherever he went. However, he saw his primary responsibility to preach among the Gentiles (cf. Gal. 1:16, as well as Luke’s accounts of Paul’s missionary call in Acts 9:1-19, 22:3-16 and 26:9-18); see Caldwell, Sent Out!, 54-60.

cross-cultural ministry. John Piper shows, in no uncertain terms, that Paul saw his entire ministry as a cross-cultural one: “Paul saw his special missionary ‘grace and apostleship’ [Rom. 1:5] as one of God’s appointed means of fulfilling the ‘command’ that the obedience of faith be pursued among all the nations. To this he gave his life.”

Paul’s understanding of his own ministry can be seen in several places in his writings and speeches (Acts 13:46-47; Rom. 4:16-17, 15:7-12; and Gal. 3:6-9), especially in his closing remarks found in Romans 15:18-22, which we have briefly touched upon above. It is also important to note that Paul was a tentmaking missionary and thus fully devoted to a vocation in the midst of his cross-cultural evangelistic activities.

So what does this brief overview of the word apostle have to do with the question of “Who Is a Missionary?” I believe that this biblical analysis clearly shows that the designation “missionary” should be given to Christians who, like the apostle Paul, are engaged in cross-cultural evangelism and church planting, primarily among unreached peoples, whether or not they are also engaged in a secular vocation. Thus, any Christian who is doing cross-cultural evangelism and church planting most likely has the spiritual gift of apostle, or at least a “gift-mix” that includes apostle. This would, of course, by default include diaspora Christians who are doing such ministry. But exactly what kind of ministry should be truly considered cross-cultural? To that we turn next.

Part Two:
The Continuing Relevance of the E-Scale for “Who Is a Missionary?”

Having looked briefly at the biblical evidence necessary to help answer the question, “Who Is a Missionary?” the next step is to try to ascertain just who is and who is not a missionary based on that biblical evidence. Here the famous “E-Scale” of Ralph Winter, comparing three different types of evangelism, is helpful. Briefly, and rather simplistically, the E-Scale is outlined below:

- **E-1**: Evangelism done among those of one’s own people group. It is assumed that your own people speak the same language that you do and have the same basic cultural understandings. For example, as an Anglo English-speaking American I am doing E-1 evangelism if I am sharing Jesus with other Anglo English-speaking

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11 For a discussion of gift-mixes see C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1979) 40. A gift-mix presupposes that a Christian usually has some aspects of a few or several gifts, most likely with one of them being dominant.
13 Winter also spoke of E-0 evangelism, the evangelism done among those of one’s own people group who are already nominal Christians. This E-0 category, however, is not pertinent to our discussion here so it has not been included.
Americans. I do not need to learn another language and culture in order to communicate the gospel. E-1 is *mono-cultural near-neighbor evangelistic work*.

- E-2: Evangelism done among a people group that is slightly different from the culture of your own people group. For example, as an Anglo English-speaking American I am doing E-2 evangelism if I am sharing Jesus in Spanish with Spanish-speaking Hispanic migrants now living in the USA. Even though both of us are located in the USA I need to learn another language and some culture in order to communicate the gospel. E-2 is “simple” *cross-cultural missionary work*.

- E-3: Evangelism done among a people group that is significantly different from the culture of your own people group. For example, as an Anglo English-speaking American I am doing E-3 evangelism when I am sharing Jesus in Tagalog with Tagalog-speaking Filipinos located in the Philippines. I not only need to learn another language and culture, I need to move to another country in order to do this type of evangelism. E-3 is more “complex” *cross-cultural missionary work*.

So why talk about the E-Scale in relationship to the question, “Who Is a Missionary?” Precisely because the E-Scale helps us to more clearly distinguish between E-1 evangelism that needs to be done by all Christians and E-2 and E-3 missionary work that needs to be done by a (fewer) number of Christians who have been spiritually gifted and equipped for that cross-cultural task. The E-2 and E-3 Christians are missionaries in the biblical sense as the apostle Paul understood missionary work: evangelizing and planting churches among people groups who have yet to hear the gospel, especially among unreached people groups. Consider that the differences between E-2 and E-3 evangelism is, as C. Peter Wagner says, one of “degree, not in kind, since they both involve starting churches in different cultures. Note that geographical distances have nothing to do with this. People at an E-3 distance can often be found in the same city.”[^14]

Over the years, many missiologists have adapted the E-Scale to an M-Scale (the cultural barriers that hinder the communication of the gospel),[^15] a P-Scale (the cultural distance a particular people group is from joining the nearest church),[^16] and even an ME-Scale (the methods of evangelism used in relationship to the cultural barriers that are crossed).[^17] I would like to create still another adaptation, the “D-Scale,” a scale geared specifically to diaspora realities. I believe that creating a new D-Scale will help us better answer the question, “Who Is a Missionary?”

Let me describe the D-Scale using the same general categories of the E-Scale, outlined above:

- **D-1**: Evangelism done among those of the diaspora Christian’s own people group. Such evangelism is *done outside of the diaspora Christian’s home country*. For example, Filipino Christian workers living and working in Dubai, who are evangelizing other Filipino workers also living in Dubai, are doing D-1 evangelism. D-1 is *mono-cultural near-neighbor evangelistic work*.

- **D-2**: Evangelism done among a people group that is slightly different from the culture of the diaspora Christian’s own people group. For example, Christian refugees from the Dinka people group of South Sudan now living in Sioux Falls, SD, and who are evangelizing other South Sudanese from the animistic Nuer people group also now living in Sioux Falls, are doing D-2 evangelization. To do this type of evangelism Dinka Christians will have to cross cultural and religious barriers to reach the Nuer, even though they can possibly use a common trade language or even eventually English. D-2 is “*simple*” *cross-cultural missionary work*.

- **D-3**: Evangelism done among a people group that is vastly different from the culture of the diaspora Christian’s own people group. For example, Congolese Christian refugees now living in Paris, France, who are evangelizing Syrian Muslim refugees also now living in Paris, are doing D-3 evangelism. To do this type of evangelism the Congolese will have to learn some of the Syrian Muslim’s religious beliefs (and perhaps some language, though French will work with some) while in a geographic location that is fully European, both linguistically and culturally. D-3 is more “*complex*” *cross-cultural missionary work*.

Clearly such a D-Scale is rather simplistic, but I believe it helps get at the question of “Who Is a Missionary?” when that question is asked in light of diaspora realities today. As with the E-Scale, the D-Scale makes a clear distinction between mono-cultural evangelistic efforts and truly cross-cultural mission work.18

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**Part Three:**

**Diaspora Realities and “Who Is a Missionary?”**

Economic and technological developments, coupled with political and social upheavals, have caused an unprecedented number of peoples to leave their place of origin over the past two decades. Today, as we have already noted, over 200 million people live in countries that they were not born in, with nearly 700 million displaced within their own

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18 Note that the distinction between mono-cultural evangelism and cross-cultural missions is not implying a hierarchy of value between the two types of ministry. Both activities are crucial for winning the world for Jesus. Rather, these distinctions are necessary for clarity involving the types of training needed, the length and intensity of that training, the strategies involved in reaching groups through near-neighbor evangelism verses cross-cultural engagement, and so on.
homelands. There are at least three overarching characteristics of these diaspora peoples: 1) they are living outside of their cultural place of origin; 2) they retain a significant socio-cultural identity and link with their cultural place of origin; and 3) they experience a psychological sense of dislocation, either negative or positive. Diaspora groups are made up of refugees, workers, students and tourists.¹⁹ So “Who Is a Missionary?” in light of these diaspora realities?

Let me give you a recent example from my own life to help illustrate some of the complexities involved with these diaspora realities. Last year I was invited to Bangkok, Thailand to speak to a group of Pakistani Christians about their need to evangelize Thai Buddhists and Iranian Muslims in Bangkok. At that time there were approximately 25,000 Pakistani refugees who had fled Pakistan to live in Thailand. Many were from Christian backgrounds. At that time there were also found in Bangkok several thousand mostly young Iranian Muslim refugees who had recently fled Iran. Thailand, as most of you are aware, is a predominantly Buddhist country with a very small percentage of Christian Thai after two centuries of western missionary efforts. One of these Thai churches, begun by an American missionary some 20 years ago, had a successful Thai church of around 80 Thai attenders as well as a recently added English-speaking church service made up of mostly Thai with a few western internationals. This English-speaking church had recently become inundated with Pakistani Christians, and some Iranian Christians, looking for a church home. Several former Pakistani and Iranian Muslims had also recently become believers, had been baptized, and were now coming to the church. So, here I was, an English-speaking American missionary living in the USA—using copies of my Missions and You! book that had recently been translated into the Urdu language, as well as using an Urdu translator to translate my message—urging Pakistani Christians now living in Bangkok to evangelize their own Pakistani compatriots in Bangkok (D-1) but also to reach out to and evangelize the Iranian Muslims (D-2) and Thai Buddhists (D-3) that lived all around them. Did you catch the significance of what was happening there in Bangkok? Clearly God is doing a new thing in missions today! And I should also point out that the Thai church was not very happy about this new thing that God was doing. Weren’t the American missionaries supposed to just be for the Thai people? Even the American missionary at this church took a while to get excited about what God was doing among the Pakistani and Iranian diaspora in Bangkok. So I also led a seminar for the Thai church concerning what missions is all about, and the new diaspora realities, and encouraged them to continue in their E-1 efforts (Thai to Thai evangelism) and to branch out into E-2 (Thai to Pakistani and Iranian Muslim evangelism, if they all speak English) and E-3 (Thai to Pakistani and Iranian Muslim evangelism, if they will have to learn some Urdu or Farsi) efforts as well. Unfortunately, parochial reactions to what God is doing are not just limited to North American or European Christians!

Let’s look at the diaspora realities in another way. Many diaspora missiologists refer to diaspora missions as missions “to, through and beyond” the diaspora. These categories can also help us when we try to define “Who Is a Missionary?” The first category—missions “to”—refers to diaspora peoples who move into contact, or within reach, of

¹⁹ Though diaspora groups are made up of refugees, workers, students and tourists, the comments presented here will be limited to diaspora refugees and workers.
churches within their new host country. In this case any missions outreach by the host country’s Christians to these diaspora peoples is E-2 or E-3 evangelism, depending on the level of cross-cultural difficulty. To date most churches in the West are not taking advantage of this mission opportunity. The second category—missions “through”—refers to diaspora Christians who reach out to their own diaspora peoples within their new host countries. This would be D-1 evangelism. To date this is a very effective form of diaspora missions. The third category—missions “beyond”—refers to diaspora Christians reaching cross-culturally to other diaspora groups, as well as to the host population, in their new host countries. This would be D-2 and D-3 evangelism, again depending on the level of cross-cultural difficulty. To date missions “beyond” is the most difficult form of diaspora missions, yet one that holds great promise.20

In my own illustration above—concerning my trip to Bangkok—the Thai Christians reaching out to Pakistanis and Iranians in Bangkok is an example of the first category, missions “to.” Pakistani Christians, now living in Bangkok and reaching out to fellow Pakistanis who are Muslims and also now living in Bangkok, is an example of the second category, missions “through.” Pakistani Christians, now living in Bangkok and reaching out to Iranian Muslims also now living in Bangkok, is an example of the third category, missions “beyond.”

So who are the missionaries in this illustration? If we follow the conclusions of Part One—namely, that the apostle Paul’s understanding of a missionary is one who is primarily involved in some kind of cross-cultural missionary activity with an unreached people group different from him/herself—and we follow the conclusions of Part Two—namely that the E Scale and D-Scale help us distinguish more clearly between mono-cultural evangelism and cross-cultural missionary work—then the following two points seems to apply:

- **The work of mono-cultural evangelism** (E-1 and D-1):
  1. Thai Christians evangelizing Thai Buddhists in Bangkok (E-1).
  2. Pakistani Christians evangelizing Pakistani Muslims in Bangkok (D-1).

Though both of these examples require necessary evangelistic work, it is simply that: evangelism. In these ministries the location, or even the religious differences between the groups, are not great enough to talk about significant cross-cultural issues, though of course both the Thai and Pakistani Christians will need to know the religious belief systems of Buddhists and Muslims, respectively.21

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20 The missions “beyond” category also includes those diaspora Christians whose mission vision motivates them to return to their home countries and evangelize their own people, or to do mission work among another people group in their home country. In this case the E-Scale categories would once again go into effect since these diaspora Christians technically would no longer be among the diaspora since they are now home once again.

21 This knowledge cannot be assumed. In many contexts the local church has little knowledge of, and limited contact with, the Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists who also live in their home country. If this is the case then their ministry to these groups moves to the category of D-2, or perhaps even D-3.
The work of cross-cultural missionary endeavors (E-2 and E-3, D-2 and D-3):

1. Thai Christians evangelizing Pakistani and Iranian Muslims in Bangkok (E-2 or E-3).
2. Pakistani Christians evangelizing Iranian Muslims in Bangkok (D-2).
3. Pakistani Christians evangelizing Thai Buddhists in Bangkok (D-3).

All three of these examples require evangelistic work coupled with a heavy dose of cross-cultural missionary work. In the case of the Thai Christians, they will at the very least need to learn both about Pakistani or Iranian culture, as well as about Islam, and quite possibly will need to also learn some Urdu or Farsi language to be most effective. This places the Thai Christians in the category of “missionary.” The strategies for their proper training and equipping for their outreach to the Pakistanis or Iranians will be far more complex than simply evangelism only. For the Pakistani Christians, the cross-cultural aspects of their evangelism efforts will also be significant as they attempt outreach to Iranian Muslims and Thai Buddhists. As a result, those individuals, churches, or mission agencies spearheading such cross-cultural missionary work will need to look for Thai and Pakistani Christians who have a desire to reach the unreached and a “gift-mix,” including missionary, that goes with that desire.  

As we have seen, missions is not as simple as it once was. These new diaspora realities have several implications.

Implications for Missionaries, Churches and Mission Agencies Today

There are many implications of this study of “Who Is a Missionary?” I will address a few of the most pertinent implications for missionaries, for churches (especially Anglo churches located in North America) and for mission agencies.

Implications For Missionaries:

1. Work with diaspora Christians. More “traditional” E-2 and E-3 western and nonwestern missionaries must look for and figure out how to include diaspora D-1s, D-2s and D-3s into their overall mission strategies, both in diaspora homelands as well as in diaspora relocation countries. God has created this new diaspora missions force and it behooves all of us to work with what God is doing.

2. Recognize the work of diaspora missionaries. D-2s and D-3s are already doing significant missionary activity and need to be recognized. They often have good access to other unreached diaspora groups in their work and living situations in

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22 Note that in this paper I am describing first generation diaspora peoples in relationship to the D-Scale. Second and especially third generation diaspora-background peoples will require different strategies. These strategies will most likely be those more related to E-1 mono-cultural ministry.

23 I am indebted to John F. Baxter, Director of Diaspora Ministries for Converge Worldwide, for his contributions to this section of the paper. Specifically in relationship to mission agencies, see his “Western Agency, Meet the Diaspora,” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 30, no. 3 (Fall, 2013): 119-122.
their host nations. They may also be a key to help unlock social networks for reaching mega-cities. These D-2 and D-3 diaspora missionaries are doing bona fide mission work that parallels that of the apostle Paul. More traditional missionaries can help diaspora missionaries better understand the God-ordained “why” of their relocation and help them to better flourish in their God-given missionary role.  

3. Help with diaspora missionary training. Appropriate missionary training is crucial for both E-2s and E-3s as well as for D-2s and D-3s. Most missionaries today would agree that E-2 and E-3 missionaries need specialized training for their cross-cultural ministries. This holds true, as well, for D-2s and D-3s. Diaspora missionaries who are doing D-2 and D-3 ministries must have the training necessary for them to succeed in those ministries. I am not speaking of formal training here, since most of these diaspora missionaries will be fully employed in secular work. However, minimal training in cross-cultural effectiveness and knowledge of the basics of their target audience’s religion, and perhaps even language, will go a long way towards their overall effectiveness as cross-cultural missionaries.  

Implications For Churches:

1. Partner with diaspora churches and missionaries. How can local predominantly Anglo churches develop better ties with diaspora churches now located in their own home areas? How can these Anglo churches help D-1s to better reach their own local people group, as well as help develop the potential of D-2s and D-3s in order to better reach out to other diaspora unreached people groups also located locally? In the not so distant past, missions was something done “over there” by western E2 and E3 missionaries sent out by Anglo churches. The new diaspora realities, however, are causing E2 and E3 mission opportunities to be done at “home,” literally right next door. And, in fact, these opportunities might be better met by D2 and D3 missionaries who are now living in the western host nations. How, for example, does an Anglo church’s previous mission strategy of supporting an American missionary to the Fulani in Africa need to change when a Fulani family is now living just down the road from the church? Are Anglo churches prepared to truly partner with local diaspora churches and local D2 and D3 missionaries?

2. Develop church-based training. Discipleship, evangelism and cross-cultural training must be church-based, both pre-field and on-field for majority world diaspora Christians. Here’s where western churches can partner with diaspora

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24 One way to help diaspora missionaries flourish is to help them understand the fact that as diaspora peoples they are bicultural peoples as well, and that this biculturalism is potentially a real plus for their cross-cultural ministry opportunities. Elsewhere I contrast the biculturalism of the apostle Paul with the biculturalism of diaspora missionaries; see Larry W. Caldwell, “Diaspora Ministry in the Book of Acts: Insights from Two Speeches of the Apostle Paul to Help Guide Diaspora Ministry Today,” in *Diaspora Missiology: Reflections*, 91-105.
churches both at home and abroad. Informal training programs will help meet the needs of most diaspora missionaries who are working full-time jobs in their host countries. In the past western churches have excelled at such training and have much to offer diaspora churches.

3. **Recognize a missiology of weakness.** Western churches (and mission agencies), particularly those in North America, have approached missions during the last several decades from positions of wealth and strength. Diaspora missions, and diaspora missionaries, however, come mostly from environments of poverty and marginalization; theirs is a missiology of weakness. Will western churches be able to effectively function in contexts where a missiology of strength is no longer appropriate?

**Implications For Mission Agencies:**

1. **Remember that diaspora missions, and diaspora missionaries, are majority world centered.** Western missions agencies, for the most part, have failed to fully grasp the God-made mission shift that has occurred over the past two decades. The God of history, and of peoples, has been moving the peoples of the world, most of whom are from the nonwestern majority world. As a result, the role of western missionaries, and western mission agencies, must be rethought. If they keep to the status quo, western mission agencies will likely see little success among diaspora peoples, though not for lack of trying. So far they have mostly failed to grasp the advantages that D2 and D3 missionaries have in evangelizing both their own people group, as well as other similar diaspora people groups, who are now all living in same country. These D-2 and D-3 advantages underscore a tremendous shift that profoundly affects mission strategy. For example, who will be better at reaching Muslim Syrian refugees in Frankfort, Germany? Typical E2 or E3 western missionaries or D2 or D3 Syrian Christian missionaries who have also been forced to flee the violence of Syria and are also living in Frankfort? Most western mission agencies are way behind in light of these diaspora realities. They must quickly find a new nimbleness if they want to work more effectively with what God is doing in the world today.

2. **Recognize that westerners are not in charge.** This is a corollary to the first point. Since D2 and D3 missionaries are from the majority world, their need for the western missionary world is not what it once was. They are no longer the receiving peoples of western mission work. Westerners are not necessary for successful D2 and D3 ministries. This means that western mission agencies will need to rethink teamwork, alignments, and recruitment—especially the recruitment of diaspora missionaries. They will also need to realize that this is a lay empowered grassroots movement. Will western mission agencies (and western missionaries) submit to the new realities of diaspora missions?

3. **Reconsider “home” missions vs. “foreign” missions.** Diaspora missions should cause mission agencies to re-think what is “home” missions and what is “foreign”
missions. A corollary to this is that mission agencies may need to shift to a non-geographic affinity people group focus rather than the old “over there” geographic focus. New wineskins are indeed needed for new wine, and mission agencies must learn how to better incorporate D2 and D3 missionaries into their mission strategies.

**Conclusion**

Clearly God is at work in the movement of peoples from everywhere to everywhere in these first two decades of the 21st century. This new work requires all of us to rethink what mission is and who the missionaries really are. Old 19th and 20th century categories and ways of doing mission—especially in answering the question “Who Is a Missionary?”—must be reexamined by missionaries, churches and mission agencies today in order for them to take full advantage of what God is doing.