

# Growth of Global Christianity: Shape and Significance for Theology

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# 3 Topics to Discuss

- 1) The expansion / growth of global Christianity,
  - as an important mission goal, and
  - the context of this study;
- 2) Shaping of the understanding of Christian mission, and
- 3) Preparation of mission players.

Goal, Theory/Theology, and Practice

# Plan for Each Section

- Context of global Christianity;
- A critical view of the 'received' mission understanding, assumptions and paradigm;
- Possibilities and Challenges for the global Church and the Anglican network.

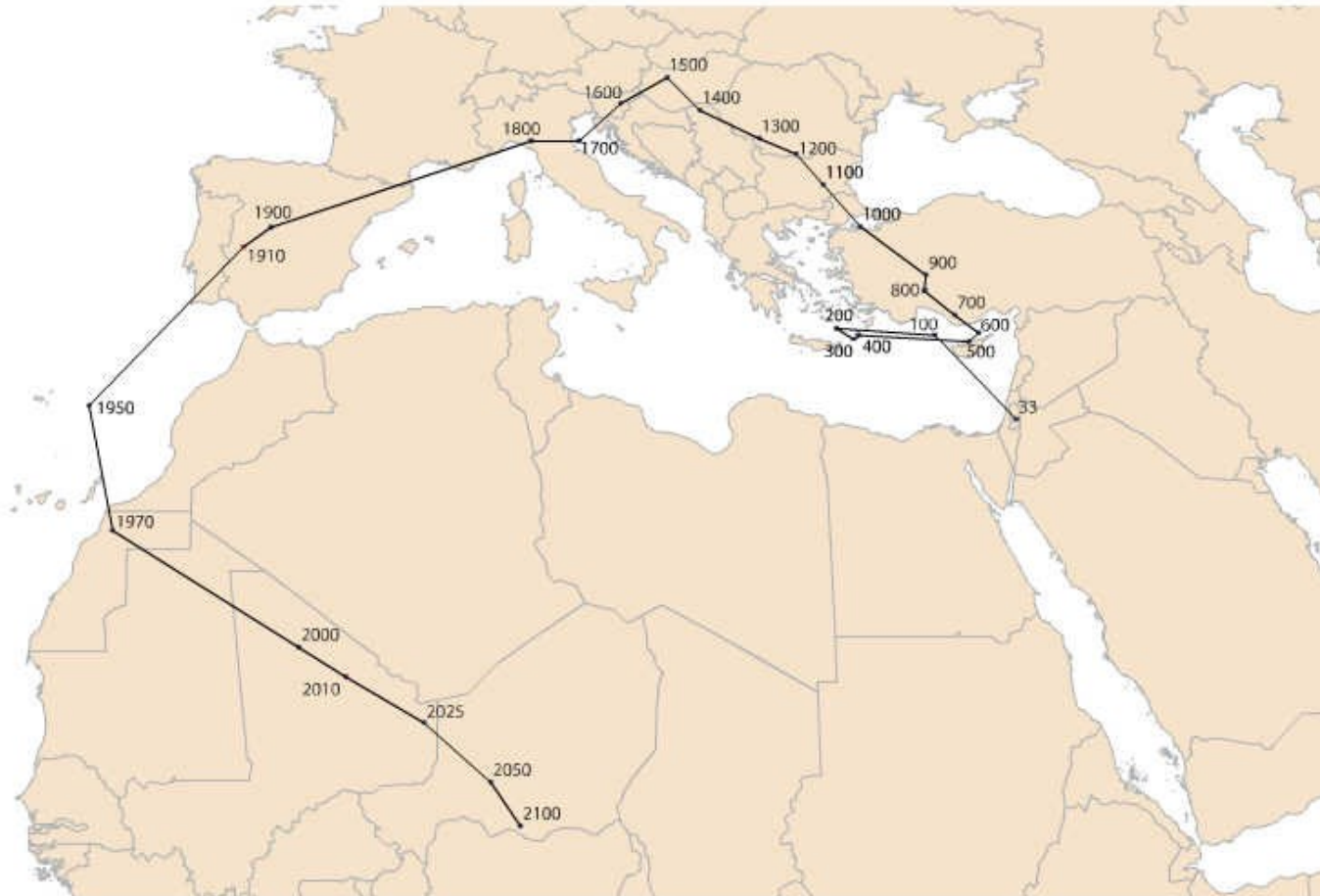
# Misc.

- Perspective: As a 'southerner': Korean Pentecostal who served in a frontline mission setting, and now reflecting;
- Serious Handicap: on Christendom and Anglicanism;
- Reference work: Johnson & Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh, 2009)

# 1. Expansion of Global Christianity

# Centres of the Gravity of Christianity

Tracking the statistical centre of global Christianity, AD 33–2100



# Between 1910 and 2010

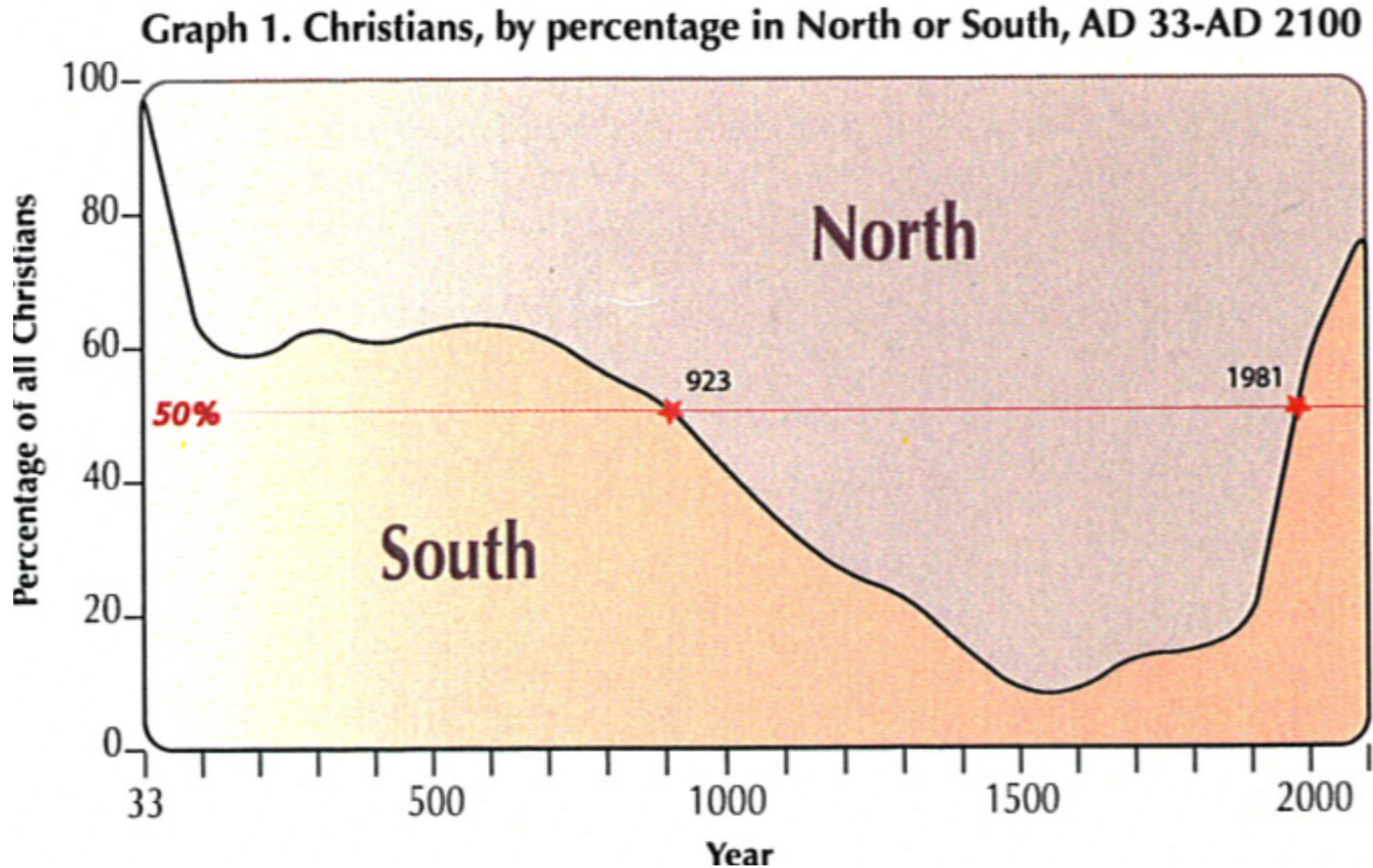
- The southward move began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- An explosive growth of African Christianity;
  - 43-fold growth;
  - against the Edinburgh feeling;
  - gain in some former Islamic lands;
  - growth among indigenous and Charismatic Christianity
- Thus, a steady southward move;

# 1910-2010 CE

- From 1950, a discernible eastward move:
  - Growth of Asian church: a 14-fold;
  - Growth and Revivals, e.g., China
  - Sustained growth
- The decline of European Christianity, and soon of the western churches;

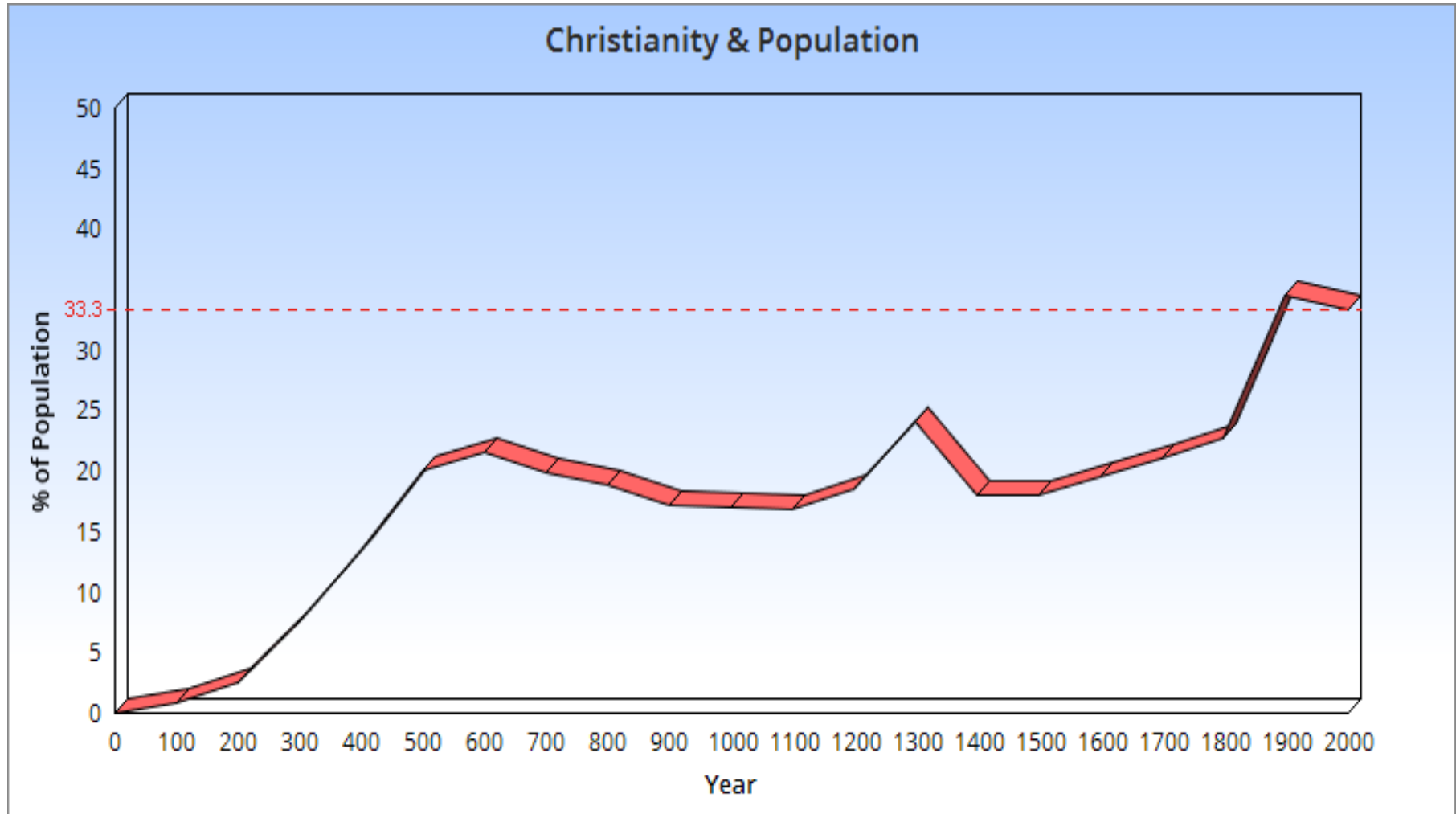


# Tilting Moments



- Early 1980s: a tilting moment of global Christianity
- A 'southern' religion in the second time;
- A brilliant fruit of western missionary movements
- Anglican role in Africa and Asia in particular
- Intentionality of mission: Western contribution;
- More than numbers: Creating new spaces and possibilities!

# '1/3' Agenda: challenge & chance



# The Unbroken 'Sound Barrier' of Christianity

- Christian proportion of the world population: From 34.8% (in 1910) to 33.2% (in 2010)
- Except a brief moment around 1910, global Christianity has never grown beyond the 1/3 level.
- A race against population growth and other religions: getting tougher.
- 'Can it grow beyond the 1/3 line, and stay or growth on?'
- Possible? If so, why and where are signs?
- Challenges, what are they?

# Two Places Holding the Key?

## 1. Asia

- Over 60% of the world's population;
- Less than 9% Christian;
- Christian growths in the 'billion' club, especially China.
- Also 50% of Christians are Pentecostal-type.
- Some are now 'missionary-sending' churches, particularly to Asian neighbors.

## 2. Pentecostal Christian Family

- Much of Christian growth in the 20<sup>th</sup> c.: thanks to P/C Christianity, e.g., African Initiated Churches, Chinese Church;
- By 2050, 1/3 of Christians expected to be P/C;
- Zealous evangelists, based on their experiences;
- Saturated presence, e.g., Burkina Faso

Ours is a generation with this unprecedented possibility!

The  
Economist

## Global Pentecostalism

# Ecstasy and exodus

Charismatic Christianity thrives among people on the move

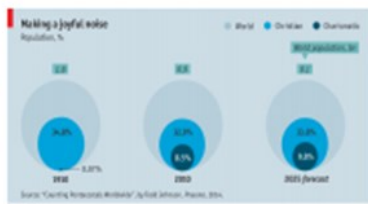
Jan 23rd 2016 | LETTERKENNY, IRELAND | From the print edition

TEJU HASSAN has come far, and so have most of his flock. Born near Lagos 50 years ago, he converted to Christianity as a young man and now ministers in the far north of Ireland to a multinational congregation. Like many a "reverse missionary" from the devout developing world to the secular north, he sees his task as repaying the lands that exported Christianity. "The Gospel was brought to Africa by English and Irish priests. White people also did bitter things, but we are still grateful for the faith and we are bringing it back."



His 100 followers are an outpost of Christendom's fastest-growing segment: people who seek an ecstatic experience described as "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and insist that biblical feats, from healing to exorcism to speaking in tongues, should be part of present-day worship. They are sometimes described as "charismatic" or "renewalist". Within this category are Pentecostal churches that stem from a revival begun in America over a century ago; subgroups within established churches, which after 1960 began worshipping in a similar way; and newer churches that use Pentecostal style and language, with a fresh stress on prosperity. This can mean offering business tips, involving the faithful in ventures or telling them that God will enrich them if they donate money.

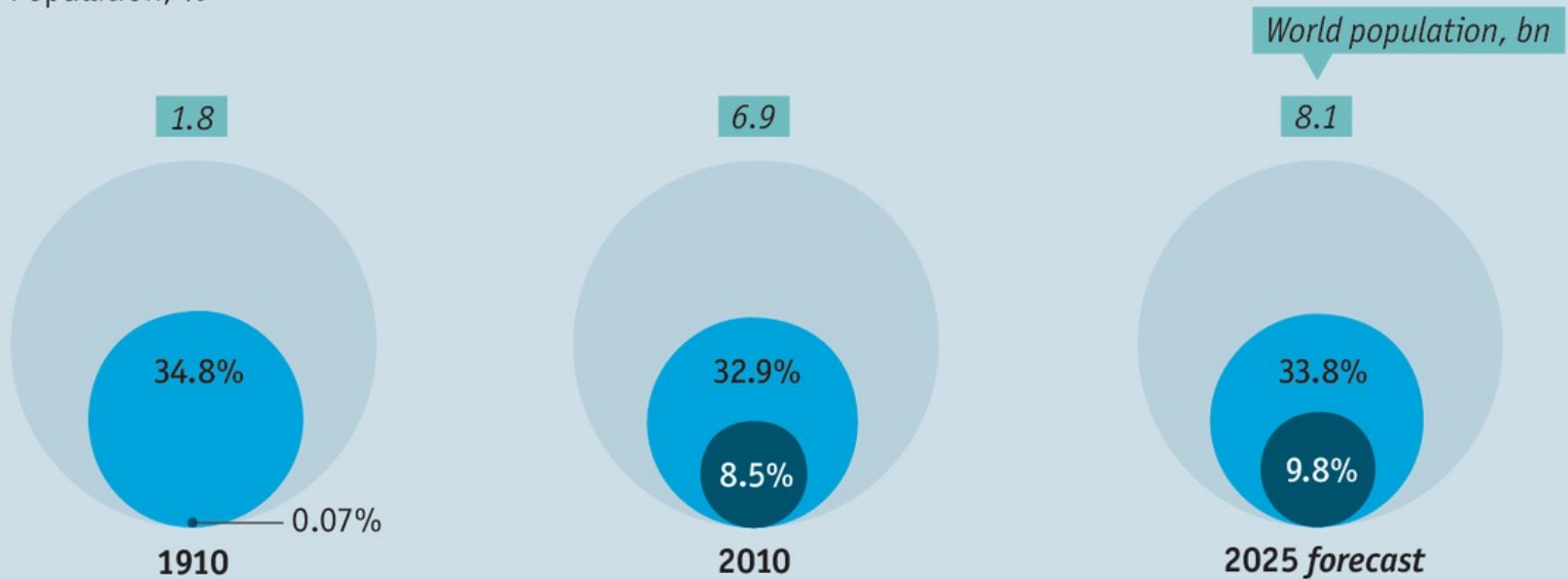
Todd Johnson of America's Centre for the Study of Global Christianity reckons that as of 2010, these charismatic worshippers amounted to a quarter of the world's 2.3 billion Christians; by 2025 he expects their number to reach 800m (see chart). It is often noted by religion-watchers that Christianity globally is becoming more southern and exuberant. But the success of Pentecostalism and its imitators also highlights a more subtle point: the need for a kind of religion that is flexible enough to suit people in transit, whether between the



## Making a joyful noise

Population, %

● World ● Christian ● Charismatic



Source: "Counting Pentecostals Worldwide", by Todd Johnson. *Pneuma*, 2014.



# Summary

1. Is growth really important? Isn't Christianity in lifestyle than in number?
2. Didn't we have the same joyful expectation a century ago? Any different?
3. What to do with 'mile-long, inch-deep' Christianity?
4. Is '1/3' any significant?
  - Race against Islam, to outnumber us in 2050

# Anything for the Anglicans?

- This is what *you* need to figure out.
- To celebrate, learn from, and share the fruit of hard work and experiences;
- The role of Evangelical and Charismatic segments of the church, here and out there.
- Keep the tent pitched wide and far: Anglican's tradition of accommodating variety

## 2. “Mission”: Who’s Called to This?

# “Mission” Then

## (using a North American example)

- Subject: Western Church and Its missionaries
- Object: Unevangelized in other continents
- Thus, a ‘foreign’ and ‘home’ binary
- ‘Go’

Mission means “a small number of specially committed and trained people [missionaries] from the West are expected to carry out this important task of the church in the “Rest” of the world”.

- A viable outcome of the days.

# How 'Normal' Is This?

- 16<sup>th</sup> C beginning of the mission paradigm
- Protestants continued the pattern.

(Consequence)

1. The World Divided between “Christian” and “Heathen” spheres;
2. Mission “fields” (out there) requires a small number of specially selected and trained professionals (“missionaries”)--elitism;
3. The church “at home” was deprived of mission.

# Agenda: Democratization of “Mission” (3 References: Christendom; Today; Jesus)

## 1. Missionary-sending & -receiving

- Historically Unidirectional: West to ‘Rest’
- Absence of ‘World’ in Christendom thinking
- Shift in Global Christianity
- Rise of New Missionary Churches
- Presence of the ‘World’ in Former Christian nations
- Another ‘Commission’ Passage: Jn 17: 18

## 2. Expansion of Mission Domain

- 1910 Conference: “Evangelisation” & Development of Ecumenical Missiology
- 1974 Lausanne: ‘Evangelism’ but also Holistic Mission
- Radical Evangelicals, ‘holistic mission’
- Rise of Mission Players in the South: Engaging with Challenging Contexts

### 3. Mission Players & Workers (cf. “Missionaries”)

- How every believer can live and work for the ‘sent’ life? (‘Mission for the Rest of Us’)
  - 1) Addition/Restoration of the ‘World’ as ‘Mission field’
  - 2) Missionization of Works and Work Places
  - 3) Every believer is a missionary everyday and everywhere
  - 4) Believer’s life becomes a witness;
  - 5) Engagement with the World and the development of balanced Theology of World
- North & South: Together to Chart the “New Mission”.



# Anglican Role?

1. Historical resilience in negotiating with the 'world';
2. Wholistic understanding of mission
3. Impression of Clericalism and hierarchy

Brokering Power: Calling South and North, to deconstruct the 'received' paradigm and reconstruct mission as it should be.

# 3. Preparing Mission Players

# To see the 1/3 break, Churches in the South to Rise

## Challenges:

1. History of Mission: Receiving Mission Gifts (from the North);
2. 'We don't have money'!

Common Challenge: “How can the growing churches in the South, as well as the waning churches in the North, be prepared, equipped and empowered for mission?”

# Mission Paradigm: Based on Have's

One outcome of Christendom development:  
Mission with Power (by wielding and perception)

- 1) Political Superiority
- 2) Economic Strength
- 3) Power of Civilization
- 4) "Superior Race"

"Can we break this "power" presumptions for a new mission paradigm?"

- The first step for "Every Church" towards true Missionary Church.

# Mission Paradigm: Based on “Have Not’s” or Weakness

- Can we develop a mission paradigm which the “new” churches in the South can embrace, with its political, religious, cultural and economic challenges/weaknesses?
- ‘Mission from the Position of Weakness’ possible?

# Possibilities

1. Life of Jesus, the Lord of Mission
  - Heart of “Incarnation”: Voluntary Emptying of Power (Phil 2:5-8)
2. Early Church: the Persecuted “Underdog”
  - Antioch Church established by Fugitives (Acts 11:19)
3. Syriac Christianity reaching out the “Ends”
  - Always persecuted by the world and Christians
4. ME Converts through Filipino Christian house maids

# Summary

- Only anecdotal, yet with strong argument;
- Mission with or without Power: Either-or or Both-and?
- How South and North learn and work together?

‘The paradigm of weakness is a paradigm which the church today has to recover, in addition to the paradigm with strength and resources’.

# For Anglicans?

- Western to bring its reflection on mission paradigm;
- Uncover countless stories of ‘mission in weakness’
- ‘Good Practice’ in Stewardship of Power
- ‘South’: diligently collect cases of ‘m-i-w’
- Together: Revision Mission theology & practice (taking both paradigms)
- A Korean Story of Anglican Mission



# What attracts so many young people to this deepest corner of Korea? R.A. Torrey III



다락방 문화기인 예수원 소개 영상. 조용히 앉아 기도를 하다보면 영성이 재충전되는 특별한 곳이다. 특별-오랜 방문객



# Concluding

- Shift in Global Christianity: More than a Number Game!
- Just one mission agenda is discussed, and there are more! Yes an important priority.
- For each agenda, a similar reflective, deconstruct and reconstruct process is expected.
- Definitely South-North collaboration is essential. We are together in this. (Inventory of Mission Gifts)

Each generation is called to discern the spirit of time and God-given opportunities for its own time. We live in a remarkable time, and we will all stand to be judged if we have been faithful stewards of opportunities. To those more are given, more will be expected, and the Anglican Communion is one in our time.