

New sending models

Jesus' commission to the Church is to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). This leads directly to the challenge of properly funding a missionary, mission organization, or project. The Bible shows us that the need for creative solutions to this issue has existed since the birth of the Church. The apostle Paul, for example, sometimes earned his own living. Other times, he was supported financially by others. He made use of different roles to reach different audiences: Pharisee, rabbi, Roman citizen, even wandering philosopher.


Today, as much as ever, the Church needs to be flexible as well as faithful - a Church that is light on its feet as well as light to the world. Some challenges it faces in today's missional endeavours are:


1. The Western model of the past 200 years has been the cross-cultural missionary paid by churches in their home country. This model is declining as fewer countries offer religious worker visas, and the appetite for supporting missionaries dwindles.
2. Trends in giving have undergone generational shifts - first towards giving to an organization, then giving to a person, now giving to a project.
3. The momentum of the mission-sending movement is with churches from rising economies. They are often disinclined to adopt Western funding models and need to pioneer




new approaches.

4. Business-as-mission, study, serving with an NGO, and simply taking a job in another country offer new areas for service.
5. Flows of people around the world mean people of different cultures already live alongside us, a wonderful opportunity for welcome and witness.

 Praise God that he is working his purpose out to bring the gospel to the nations, even though the world population is vast and complex, and obstacles are everywhere.

 Pray that the Church will listen carefully to the leading of the Spirit, making the most of every opportunity.


 Pray for generosity, integrity, transparency and accountability in money matters.

MEXICO

Praise God for the changes in this country of 132 million people. The second largest economy in Latin America, it is slowly evolving from a one-party state with a rather repressive Catholic monopoly to a democratic state with freedom of religion. The growth in evangelicals and Pentecostals has tracked this social upheaval. Evangelicals of all kinds are 8% of the population or more.

Mountainous problems remain for the president and government, particularly poverty, crime and corruption. Poverty is a particular problem in rural areas, in shanty towns and in the Amerindian community. The drugs trade has fostered criminal networks; the government's response has been both heavy-handed and ineffective. Mexico is also now a transit route for Central American families seeking asylum in the United States, a trade that feeds corruption and sustains the organized crime networks.

The Catholic Church represents the full Catholic spectrum from Christo-paganism to the Alpha course. Protestant churches grow and have fostered a significant missionary movement. The government has reached out to the churches to help with the social problems.

 The fight to see the church in Mexico disciplined and to see the nation peaceful, fair, ordered, and prosperous is a good fight. Pray for the continued, deep, renewal of Mexico. Pray for politicians as they attempt not just to pass laws but bring about lasting reform.

