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MERF News

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Middle East Reformed Fellowship—“Declaring the Whole Counsel of God”

“Faithful, Fruitful and Cost-Effective Indigenous Missions!”

Missions Has Changed

By Pastor Victor Atallah



New graduates of MERF Lokichoggio, Kenya Centre 3-month intensive biblical training courses for South Sudanese & other East African church leaders

The word “missionary,” is rooted in the Latin “missionem,” sending out. At the end of the 16th century, Western churches began to consider the global scope of Christ’s departing command to his apostles, the founders of his church, to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:1-20). Only Jesus himself appointed “apostles” (Act 1:15-26). Apostolic teaching laid the foundations for the calling and equipping of evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders, deacons and other spiritual leaders. Faithful missionary efforts aim at “making disciples” of the nations, guided and governed by the same biblical standards and practices of the apostolic church.

Loving Peoples

The European Reformation took hold when people were able to read and understand the Bible for themselves in their own native tongues. This gave birth to the Bible translation movement. Naturally gifted and academically qualified Bible translators were called and appointed to provide God’s Word to other peoples. The difficult and demanding task of learning native languages constituted the top priority of pioneer missionaries. They committed themselves to share the gospel with people groups in distant lands. As they sought to learn the local languages, they were naturally enabled to understand the local cultures. They identified with

the people and understood their needs. They exercised Christ-like self-giving love. They did not isolate themselves away in “missionary compounds.”

Gospel Training

Faithful pioneer missionaries also were vitally committed to the apostolic injunction to train godly local spiritual leaders and partner with them in the work and to gradually hand over to them the job of evangelism and church-planting (2 Timothy 2:2). They did not seek to control the works they established. Their godly vision and conscious commitment was to train and equip local workers in the ways of Christ and his apostles. They prepared them to continue and

expand gospel witness. In this way they freed themselves up for additional outreach. So, biblical and theological education of local church workers has always been, and remains, key for the work of missions.

Missions is not a human endeavour controlled by fallible cultures, corrupt geopolitics, human con-

“And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

— 2 Timothy 2:2



Tanzanian graduates of MERF's Loki Augustine Programme teach pastors, evangelists and their wives back in Tanzania.

flicts or even pandemics. Gospel missions is subject to divine guidance. The Lord, in his sovereign and wise providence, provides timely and relevant means for the continuation of gospel proclamation, the gathering of his people and their edification. Pioneer missionary service was blessed with much fruit. This was providentially enhanced by much easier worldwide travel and expanding telecommunications technologies. The world has become "a global village."

New Opportunities

English has become the international language for communication. The Bible is now widely available in print and in every major language, as well as in most

minor ones. Free electronic formats have vastly multiplied Bible and Christian literature circulation through the Internet and by means of smart phones.

Opportunities opened up in Western countries for different peoples from non-Christian communities to find work, seek higher education and even immigrate. These have daily opportunities to rub shoulders with Christians. In a sense, this brought mission fields to churches in the West. It has gradually helped the church develop new means to carry out its gospel calling locally and globally.

Basic Bible Training

From the labours of faithful pioneer missionaries,

the Lord has multiplied opportunities to train and equip local indigenous gospel workers. Like Christ's simple apostles and early church spiritual leaders, the need of indigenous workers is for sound, Christ-centred basic biblical and theological training. This must be at levels appropriate for the lifestyle and the understanding of their own people. So, for most fields, Western-oriented academics are not relevant or helpful.

require no visas or work permits and face no danger of deportation. Also, their support constitutes a fraction of the cost of foreign missionaries. Churches are being established and their work is becoming increasingly self-supporting.

Expanding Outreach

The Lord is using indigenous missions, founded on the efforts of faithful pioneer missionaries for expanding worldwide gospel outreach. Biblical



The MERF Centre in Jakarta, Indonesia regularly gives Sunday school teacher training so needed to reach the very young population of this huge nation.

Well Equipped

Local indigenous workers are able to immediately begin service, since they already know the language. They know how to navigate in the culture, facing far fewer security threats. They

training is the backbone of MERF's fourfold ministry of evangelism, church extension, biblical training and diaconal aid. Thank you for your partnership in gospel ministry to Arab and Muslim lands, through MERF.



In the vast country of Ethiopia, the MERF biblical training team gathers church leaders in regional centers for in-depth teaching and literature distribution.

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