



**A Rapidly Changing World:  
Recruiting New Laborers  
for ISM in a Multi-Colored  
Landscape**

VALERIE ALTHOUSE, D.MIN.  
ISI NORTHEAST REGIONAL RETREAT  
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VALTHOUSE@ISIONLINE.ORG

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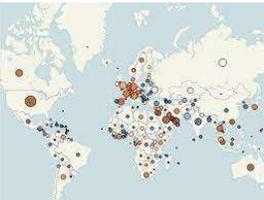
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### Age of Migration



More people migrating than ever before in history.

U.S. #1 Destination for migrants

1 in 5 migrants globally come to US

Urbanization – cities are top destination

60% global population will live in cities by 2030

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### Decline of Western Christian Adherence & Missions Sending

2019: Pew Research: from 72% to 65% adherence to Christianity.

7.5% decline in North American long-term workers reported by the 2017 North American Missions Handbook

**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION**

Category	2003 AVERAGE	2017 AVERAGE
ALL CHRISTIANS	65%	57.5%
PROTESTANTS	30%	22.5%
CATHOLICS	25%	25%
OTHER CHRISTIANS	10%	10%
NO RELIGION	15%	25%
OTHER RELIGIONS	10%	12.5%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2019; North American Missions Handbook, 2017

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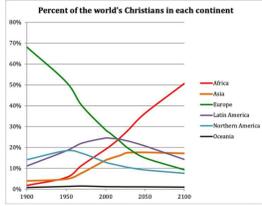
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## Shifting of Global Christianity



"...the era of Western Christianity has passed...and **the day of Southern Christianity is dawning**." - Philip Jenkins

"The third Millennium will stand **under the leadership of the Third Church, the Southern Church**. I am convinced that the most important drives and inspirations for the whole Church in the future will come from the Third Church." - Walbert Buhlman

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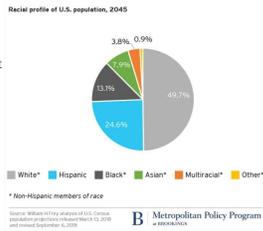
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## Shifting Demographics of N. America

Caucasians at 47% by 2044 (projections vary)  
 Americans with mixed racial backgrounds are most rapidly growing group in the country (2021)  
 Foreign-born in US - 45 million to 78 million by 2065  
 79% of immigrants to US in 2019 claimed Christian adherence = A great contribution of World Christianity in North America!



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## Diaspora Missiology

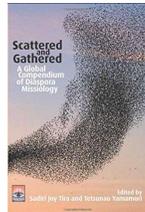
**Diaspora - To, Through, and Beyond** (Dr. Enoch Wan)

**To** - Welcome & help & witness

**Through** - Mobilize to serve others in their homeland or elsewhere

**Beyond** - Mobilize them to cross-cultural ministry to host society or among other ethnic groups within their geographical context

God scatters them so He can gather them, and then scatters them again on His mission. - Dr. Sam George



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*Paradigm Check:*

*“TO” versus “AMONG”*

*The nations around us are partners with us in Global missions, not simply recipients.*

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Growth of Multiethnic Churches



Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour of the week...but...

Multiethnicity in Evangelical Churches: grew from 7% (1998) to 23% (2019), up from 15% in 2012

“If your church is not diverse in the next fifteen to twenty years in America, it’s going to be largely irrelevant.” - Mark Deymaz, Mosaix Global Network

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“It is one thing to believe that all people should be reached with the gospel. It is quite another thing to truly embrace a diversity of people in one’s own local church.”

- Dr. Craig Ott



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Dr. Craig Ott  
(The Church on Mission, 2019)

**"Disunity undermines the credibility of the church and discredits our witness. If we are concerned about evangelism, we must be concerned about unity."**

**No church (or organization) is culturally neutral.** "Behaviors, language, style, ethos, decision-making processes, and various other factors can **send an unintentional message that others are neither valued nor genuinely welcome.**"

"If the church is to be a foretaste today of the fullness of the kingdom that is yet to come, **then finding ways to celebrate such diversity while demonstrating our unity must be considered a priority.**"

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"The American Church needs to face the inevitable and prepare for the next stage of her history—we are looking at a nonwhite majority, multiethnic American Christianity in the immediate future. Unfortunately, despite these drastic demographic changes, American evangelicalism remains enamored with an ecclesiology and a value system that reflect a dated and increasingly irrelevant cultural captivity and are disconnected from both a global and a local reality."

- Dr. Soong-Chan Rah

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We don't "have to" address these changes: we "get to." It is both Biblical and a privilege to join with and invite all peoples into the work of reaching all peoples with the Gospel.

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## Generational Values: *Future of Missions* – Barna Report

- "I didn't even know that being a missionary was something that Black people did. But then I started to catch a vision of people who look like me doing this work. I started to understand, *God really does desire to use you and your people. There is a place for you. Your gifts, perspectives and experiences are invaluable. You don't have to lose your blackness.*"



- Young black Christians 18-34 are more likely to be potential missionaries (61% vs 48%)

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## Generational Values: *Future of Missions* – Barna Report

...two in five young adult Christians say that "Christian mission is tainted by its association with colonialism"

- They have significant unanswered questions regarding WHY and HOW

More Christians 18-34 express concern about missions' past, say that "Christianity should rehabilitate its reputation before continuing international missions work."

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## The Research Results of my study

**Filipinos** were the most impacted by the mobilization material and took the most follow-up action.

**Overseas Born** participants were more excited about missions/reaching UPGs at the end of the study than American-born participants.

**African Americans increased the most in 'concern'** for UPGs, more than any other ethnicity.

**Participants noted the lack of diversity in the missions mobilization material** I used and called it out (no Latino or Asian representation, no urban context, international people were presented only as receivers of ministry rather than partners in it, etc.). They didn't see "someone who looks like me" doing this work.

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## Era of Global Missions Mobilization

A timely opportunity to **mobilize diverse believers on North American soil**

An opportunity to make participation in the Great Commission **accessible to all through story-telling & modeling.**

An opportunity to demonstrate that we are in partnership with the Global South Church in this work, including **those who represent the Global South Church on our own soil**



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### Questions for Reflection:

- Does your team demographic reflect what God is doing in North America? Why or why not?
- Do you recruit mainly from your same ethnic/cultural circle or church?
- Does your team/ministry promotional material image a global & diverse partnership?
- Are you conscious of the culture of your team/ministry? Does it reflect global and diverse cultural realities? Do you discuss those differences as a team?

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## Implications for Future ISM:

- Diverse and global teams reflect a lived-out Gospel that unites us across all dividing lines. Breaks down the myth of Christianity as just an American or Caucasian faith.
- Priority on intentional Global South partnerships HERE and OVERSEAS (returnees, local churches, organizations, etc.)
- Priority on expanding work in Urban centers



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# Recruiting Laborers: Practical Steps

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## (1) Need for a Missions Mobilization Tool that:

- Is digital, free and accessible to all.
- Is offered in a wide variety of languages.
- Is representative of global faces and partnerships engaged in the work, not only North Americans.
- Reflects global, not only Western, church history.
- Includes testimonies from those of a UPG background.
- Includes diaspora peoples who are missionally engaged in their host country (such as overseas-born Filipinos).
- Is urban in its production and feel.



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## (2) Are you in a box? Step out!

- (1) Find churches in your area that are outside of your own cultural/ethnic background. Network, meet leaders, develop **relationships**. *Become a learner. Start small.*
- (2) Add value to their church rather than "taking from"
  - Example: Kenny & Church partnerships
- (3) Become a missions mobilizer among diverse circles *intentionally*.  
*Example: NAAMC, etc.*

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### (3) Emphasize Bi-Vocational Models

**Tentmakers: Expand significance of the 'Ministry Rep' role** - redefine? Vision cast? New name?

- Working on this in NYC...
- Theology of Work/Marketplace thinking
- "Starbucks Model"

**Build Creativity in Fundraising Models:**

- Internship Funding for OPTs (regional, city)
- Major donor recruitment for subset funding assistance
- Other views on fundraising that may be different than "The God Ask" for example

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### (4) Use Storytelling & Modeling

- Proximity of story & experience
- Important for all people to see/hear those who "are just like me" doing this work
- Emerging Generations have questions about "missions" and "colonialism"
  - Don't get defensive - affirm mistakes have taken place. Tell BOTH stories
  - Explain steps taken to avoid colonialism and Western-centric thinking in ISM
  - Acknowledge we are all learners.

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JOY! We get to live out a diverse and global faith through ISM ministry partnerships! Praise God!



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Was anything new and/or challenging for you from this presentation?

Reflecting on your own ISM team, what next steps might you take to increase diverse and global partnerships?



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