

## **God's Plan for the Nations: Healing**

The Congress of Evangelicals in the Caribbean, CONECAR 2000, declared that the Caribbean evangelical community must elevate its vision and transform itself "from mission field to mission force" by means of a "new paradigm in a new millennium." A fundamental prerequisite for the development of this new paradigm is the development of a biblical theology of mission, or a missionary theology. There are three reasons why a missionary theology must precede this transformation. First, as George Peters astutely wrote:

Missionary theology is not an appendix to biblical theology; it belongs at its very core. No doctrine of God, Christ or the Holy Spirit has been expounded completely according to the

Bible until it has established the triune God as the outgoing God of mission, the God of saving purpose and relationship to mankind who undertakes a program for the progressive realization of His purpose (1972, 27).

This new paradigm, which endeavors to see the Caribbean evangelical community as a mission force rather than a mission field, cannot be developed without a sound biblical theology. Such a theology must be based on the missionary purpose of God. Failure to do so will cause the Caribbean church to fall into the same error as the Protestant Reformation, whose “failure . . . to generate the dynamic of missions and later to sustain this dynamic in its world outreach can be blamed principally on its incomplete and unbalanced theology” (Peters 1972, 26). Theology that does not have missions at its core is incomplete and will lead to further aberrations of theology in both faith and praxis.

Second, failure to develop a biblical theology of missions, or a missionary theology, opens the door to the aberrations of selfish Christian living such as those seen in the “prosperity gospel.” Prosperity preachers interpret the gospel as a personal experience focusing on the needs of the believer. “Biblical theology underscores that knowing God goes beyond a personal mystical experience, to a life of obedience to His command to ‘go and make disciples’” (Steyne 1997, 303). Unless the Caribbean evangelical community develops a missionary theology and elevates its vision of itself from a mission field, with the accompanying expectations of endless financial aid from Europe and North America, to that of a mission force, with the accompanying responsibilities to address the needs of the three billion unevangelized people in the 10/40 Window from *its own resources*, it will remain dependent upon the churches of Europe and North America. It will continue to seek prosperity, in the form of financial aid from Europe and North America, rather than fellowship in the sufferings of Christ (Phil 3:10). A missionary theology is essential to the transformation from mission field to mission force.

Third, only a missionary theology provides a paradigm that accurately explains God's purpose for humanity. The Bible "sets before us a vision of cosmic history from the creation of the world to its consummation, of nations which make up the one human family, and . . . of one nation chosen to be the bearer of the meaning of history for the sake of all . . ." (Newbigin 1994, 89). While many stories of cosmic history have been developed (Carmody and Carmody 1988, 3-11), the Bible contains a "unique vision of universal history and of the place of the human person as a responsible actor in history. . . . You cannot have hopeful and responsible action without some vision of a possible future" (Newbigin 1994, 91). A missionary theology provides a vision for the future that reveals God's purpose in all human history, for all nations. The transformation from mission field to mission force only has meaning if it has purpose. No human purpose is adequate for such an undertaking. Only God's purpose is great enough to provide a rationale for the sacrificial effort required of a mission force.

This essay attempts to open the dialogue leading to the development of a missionary theology for and from the Caribbean evangelical community. Only when that theology is in place will the Caribbean evangelical community be able to unleash its power as a missionary force. The central question that must be addressed, therefore, is: What is God's purpose in the world?

Revelation 22:1-6 presents the culmination of God's work in the universe. John, the apostle, was granted a vision of the new Jerusalem. The "river of the water of life" flowed from the throne of God "down the middle of the great street of the city"

(Re 22:1).<sup>1</sup> John then makes this powerful statement that provides the basis for a missionary theology, a vision for the future that is based on God's purpose in the universe: "On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Re 22:2). *God's ultimate purpose is that the nations be healed!* As the redeemed people of the King they will fellowship with him in the new Jerusalem, praising and serving him as they reign with him for all eternity. God purposed to bring healing to the nations! Three questions arise from this that are foundational to a missionary theology: First, what are "the nations"? Second, why do the nations need healing? Third, what is God's plan for healing the nations?

### **What are the "the nations"?**

Eleven different words are translated "nation(s)" in the Scriptures, occurring 430 times. The primary Old Testament word is the Hebrew *Goy*, or *Goyim*, which the Hebrews used for anyone who was not a Jew. This word is so used 346 times in the Old Testament. The primary New Testament word is ἔθνη, which is the root for the modern English word, ethnic. It is translated as "nation(s)" 61 times in the New Testament. In both the Old and New Testaments the term refers to people groups that have grown to be large bodies of people, as Israel grew from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be a clan, then a tribe, and then a nation. It does not, however, carry the modern connotation of a political nation-state. The

---

<sup>1</sup>Scripture quotations taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, by International Bible Society. Used by permission of the International Bible Society.

focus is on the specific people group, or ethnic group (Strong, s.v. “nation(s)”; Bauer 1969, s.v. ἔθνος; Harris 1980, s.v. “goy”; Kittel 1976, s.v. ἔθνος).

“The nations” are the identifiable ethnic groups that inhabited the biblical world, and continue to inhabit our world. They are the people of the earth—all living in their own lands, arranging their lives by their own rules, and seeking to provide for their own needs.

Where do the nations originate? Where did they come from? The Scriptures make it clear that all nations on earth have descended from Adam and Eve, through Noah and his wife (Gen 1:28, 9:1, 10:32). Adam and Eve had many children, but the only three that we know of are Cain, Abel and Seth. Abel was killed, as far as we know, without fathering children. Cain’s line perished in the Flood. Seth was the ancestor of Noah.

Noah and his wife, had three sons, from whom the world was repopulated after the Flood. The generations and localities of their children are delineated in Genesis 10. The Japhethites were the descendants of the seven sons of Japheth who are named in 10:2. The Hamites descended from the four sons of Ham named in 10:6. The Semites descended from the five sons of Shem named in 10:21. Each nation had its own territory and language. From Noah, therefore, all nations of the earth have descended.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>For an interesting discussion of how a monogamous Noah could produce all the races of the world see William D. McKissic, Sr., *Beyond Roots: In Search of Blacks in the Bible* (n.c. :Renaissance Productions, 1990) and Arthur C. Custance, *Noah’s Three Sons* (out of print). While further work still needs to be done, especially in terms of the etymological arguments of McKissic regarding the meaning of

When the nations united in opposition to God's plan for the repopulation of the earth, God confused their language so that they could no longer understand one another. The inability to communicate led to the scattering of the nations "over the whole face of the earth," as God intended (Ge 11:1-8). These nations are the focus of God's purpose as revealed in Revelation 22:2. God's purpose is that every nation on earth be healed by the leaves of the tree of life. Why do the nations need healing?

### **Why do the nations need healing?**

Genesis 3:1-15 explains that the nations must be healed from the disease of sin.

### **The Fall Into Sin**

The creation accounts of Genesis 1-2 detail God's creative acts, the original nature of humanity, and the loss of that original nature because of disobedience. Genesis 3:1-15 explains how evil entered human experience. The initial experience of Adam and Eve was to enjoy life as farmers, or gardeners, as they ruled over the created earth and the animal kingdom. They enjoyed daily fellowship with their creator, as he visited them in the form of a human being at the end of each day.<sup>3</sup>

---

the names of Noah's sons and grandsons, this may have serious implications for Caribbean culture and its evangelical community.

<sup>3</sup>Genesis 3:8 indicates that Adam and Eve hid from God when they "heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day . . ." This leads to the conclusion that Adam and Eve were accustomed to meet

The perfection of paradise was lost when Eve and Adam disobeyed God's instruction not to eat the fruit of a certain tree. This first sin brought death into the human experience because "the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished" (Nah 1:3) and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). Humanity experienced death in two forms. Physical death involves the separation of the human soul from the human body (Jam 2:26a). Spiritual death involves the separation of the human spirit from God (Eph 2:1-5, 4:18). Death, destruction, evil, degeneration—all these became part of the human experience because of that first sin. This is why the nations need healing, and only God could provide the healing balm.

### **The Promise of a Redeemer**

The perfection of God would not allow him to abandon his creation to such an evil fate. God acted immediately to punish the sinful acts of Adam, Eve and the Serpent. But in the act of punishment, God promised that his purpose for humanity, for the universe, would not be thwarted. He promised to provide a redeemer to repair the damage done by disobedience. He declared, "I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Ge 3:15).

While the full import of this promise was not clearly understood by Adam and Eve, nor even by the Old Testament prophets (1Pe 1:10-12), we today can see what God intended to do. God intended to heal the nations, to restore them to perfect fellowship with him. How did God intend to heal the nations? What was his plan? The answer to these questions reveals God's universal purpose for all

---

with God on a regular basis, and that God had temporarily taken a human form that would make a noise in the garden.

nations which culminates in the new Jerusalem when the nations eat freely from the leaves of the tree of life and are forever healed.

### **What Is God's Plan to Bring Healing to the Nations?**

The promise of a redeemer to repair the damage done by the first sin demonstrates that God intended from that very moment to restore all nations to fellowship with him, to heal their disease. The account of how he did this runs from Genesis to Revelation. It is the central theme, the core message of the Scriptures. The communication of that message, and the fulfillment of that purpose was entrusted to God's people from the moment the promise was given. The biblical account simply records God's actions to heal the nations, and preserve a knowledge of the only true God on the earth among all nations—not just one, but *all*. The remainder of this essay will detail God's actions through his people to fulfill this purpose. The account is too great, however, to be completed in one essay. Due to space limitations, this essay will only consider God's actions from Seth to Solomon. This will provide a clear view of God's purpose in the world, and challenge the Caribbean evangelical community to participate in the fulfillment of that purpose. It will also demonstrate that a biblical theology of mission, a missionary theology, must be based on the "whole will of God" (Acts 20:27), not merely a few New Testament proof texts. Finally, it will demonstrate that the formation of a missionary theology must precede the transformation from mission field to mission force.



## **The Antediluvians, Genesis 4-9**

God informed antediluvian society how they were to maintain fellowship with him. Regrettably, few chose to do so. God nonetheless continued his program for healing the nations.

### **Cain and Abel**

Cain and Abel were cognizant of God's requirements for worship. The fact that they presented sacrifices to God demonstrates that they knew what God required. While there are no specific statements, it seems reasonable that the slaying of an animal to make clothes for Adam and Eve served to establish the principle that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). This forms the background for the rejection of Cain's sacrifice, and the acceptance of Abel's. Cain must have known that a blood sacrifice was required.

The key point is that God ensured that the nations, small and few though they were at this time, knew his requirements. God did not leave humanity without a witness, or without knowledge of his will. When Cain refused to obey, God himself confronted him. There were no prophets to speak for God in those days, so God did it himself. Nonetheless, the Cainitic nation refused to repent and became "darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God . . . due to the hardening of their hearts" (Eph 4:18).

### **Seth to Noah**

The nation of Seth, however, "began to call upon the name of the Lord" (Ge 4:26). The knowledge of God was retained among this nation for many years. Enoch was six generations from Adam, but he retained sufficient knowledge of the Holy

to walk with God (Ge 5:22-24). Three generations later (according to the text) Noah was chosen to be the progenitor of the new humanity. He was a righteous, blameless man, who "walked with God" as did his great grandfather. Noah knew enough about God to walk with him, to obey his commands (Ge 6:22), and to lead his people in the worship God after the flood. The nations that grew out of the sons of Noah repopulated the earth. All the nations of the earth knew God, and how to live in fellowship with him, for they lived as one people with "one language and a common speech." The clan head would have taught these essential truths to the entire clan. The knowledge of God was passed on from generation to generation. The common language and speech ensured that all nations could hear the message of God that provided healing for sin.

### **The Scattering, Gen 10-11**

After the flood, the nations again rebelled against God at Babel. God confused their languages so that they dispersed throughout the earth. But as hundreds of years, and many generations passed, the knowledge of God was being lost on the earth. The multiplication of languages made it difficult for the one true story of humanity, the universal history, to be retained among all nations. Nations began to worship the creatures of the earth, the stars of the heavens, and many other despicable things. Knowledge of God was lost in many of the nations. They were without the knowledge that would heal their sin and restore their fellowship with their creator. In Ur of the Chaldeans, however, at least one man retained sufficient knowledge of God to respond in faith and obedience to God's call to service. God intervened to provide healing for the nations.

## **The Selection for Service: Abraham, Isaac and Israel**

Genesis 12:1-3 records the call of Abraham. God promised to bless Abraham so that Abraham would bless the nations. Abraham was responsible to use his blessing, not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of the nations. God made Abraham rich so that he would have the resources required to bless the nations. The nature of that blessing of the nations is revealed in Genesis 18:18. Abraham was chosen so he would teach his children the things of God. The nation that would grow out of Abraham would keep knowledge of the Lord available on the earth. Genesis 22:18 repeats the promise to bless Abraham, with the expectation that Abraham would bless the nations. In Genesis 26:4 the blessing and the responsibility are conferred on Isaac. In Genesis 28:14 the blessing and the responsibility are passed on to Jacob.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve tribes, and the nation of Israel were blessed by God so that they would bless the nations of the earth. The blessings given to Abraham and his descendants were spiritual and physical. The physical blessings were to be used in proclaiming the name of Yahweh to all nations. In essence, they were to be missionaries.

## **The Service of Israel to the Nations**

The missionary responsibility of Israel is often overlooked. While it is only expressed enigmatically in Genesis,<sup>4</sup> it

---

<sup>4</sup>Detlef Bloecher argues that the Hebrew word, *qara*, used on Genesis 12:8 and 13:4 could legitimately be translated as "proclaimed" rather than the traditional "called on" (1996, 17). Harris supports this contention (1980, 1:810). Thus, Abraham's construction of altars and offering of

becomes specific in Exodus and Deuteronomy. Israel was certainly aware of its responsibility to proclaim the name of Yahweh among the nations—or at least they should have been! Israel chose, for the most part, to concentrate on enjoying its blessings, using them for their own personal benefit, rather than blessing the nations with the knowledge of El Elyon, God Most High.

### A Kingdom of Priests

In Exodus 19:1-5 Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai. After the people set up camp, Moses ascended the mountain to meet God. God specifically instructed Moses to say to Israel, “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (19:5-6). Israel was selected to be a kingdom of priests.

Priests are the bridge between deity and humanity. Aaron was appointed to be the spokesman for Moses (Ex 4:14-17). He was to be the bridge between Moses and the elders of Israel, and between Moses and Pharaoh. Similarly, Israel was to be the bridge between God and the nations. “All nations” of the “whole earth” belonged to Yahweh, and he

---

sacrifices could be seen as missionary proclamation of the name of the Lord, not merely as an invocation or worship of Yahweh. However, the Septuagint translates the passage “called upon the name of the Lord” as ἐπεκαλέσατο ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου, using the middle voice, which is always used as “to call upon, invoke” in prayer as in 2Cor 1:23, or “appeal”—as to Caesar in Acts 25:11, 12, 21 (*Analytical Greek Lexicon* 1967, S.v. ἐπικαλέω, 157). Thus, missionary proclamation in Genesis is at best enigmatic.

wanted them all to worship him, to fellowship with him, to be healed of all their sin. This was impossible if the knowledge of God was lost among the nations. God planned to bless Israel so that the world would wonder about its God and travel to Israel to learn about Yahweh. As Israel traveled throughout the world trading and establishing links with other nations, or sending missionaries to the other nations, the knowledge of Yahweh would spread to all nations.<sup>5</sup> Israel was to become the bridge between Yahweh and the nations so that all nations would retain the knowledge of God and be healed. All of this was conditioned, however, on Israel's obedience to the Law which was about to be revealed at Mt. Sinai.

Moses presented this to Israel prior to receiving the Law from God on Sinai. When Israel accepted this responsibility (Ex 19:8), Moses informed the Lord and received instructions for the giving of the Law. This Law was to be the message Israel would share with the nations, the blessing of the nations promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Unfortunately, the disaster at Kadesh-Barnea delayed

---

<sup>5</sup>De Ridder has clearly established that Israel did in fact launch its own missionary efforts to the Gentiles: "The literary effort of the Jews was more than preparation for Christianity: it was significant in its own right and was a spreading of the truth of God's redemptive work for the world" (1979, 119). And further, "Whatever [the] character of the mission Israel carried on, her goal and purpose had to be the glory of God. The Old Testament furnished the conditions by means of which the mission of the church flourished. This was not merely preparatory for the Christian mission . . . but was a legitimate mission in its own right, an appeal of God through Israel to the nations" (1979, 127).

fulfillment of the purpose of God, and required that the call to service be repeated to the next generation of Israelites. However, it is abundantly clear that Israel knew what God intended for them to do with the blessing, in the form of the oracles of God (Rom 3:2 KJV), they were about to receive.

### A Kingdom in the Land

In Deuteronomy 4:1-9 Moses repeated the call to service for a new generation of Israelites. He prefaced the declaration by reminding the people that by obedience to the Law Israel would be able to take possession of the land (4:1). Possession of the land was tied to fulfillment of the purpose of God. The land was a strategic location. Under Solomon, Israel controlled the land bridge between Asia, Africa and Europe. If the knowledge of God was firmly planted in that location, the good news of healing for the nations would spread to all nations. The location gave access to the vast majority of the world's inhabitants at that time.

Obedience to the Law would draw the nations to Israel (4:6-8). Nations who traded with or traveled through Israel would hear of Yahweh. Israel, by its obedience to the Law would grow glorious and prosperous. The news of its greatness would spread to all nations. The nations would be amazed at the wisdom and understanding of Israel. They would be attracted to Israel. When they came to see if what they heard was true, Israel was to preach the gospel, to tell them about God.

The basic paradigm is this: Israel was blessed with the laws of God, the knowledge of God. This knowledge was to draw the nations to Israel. Israel was to share it with the nations. The nations would be healed. Israel was to be a

nation of missionaries! The truth of this pattern is established by the psalms of David and the experience of Solomon.

### **The Psalmist of Israel**

David understood God's purpose for Israel, and worked for its fulfillment.

#### **Psalm 22:25-28**

The psalm begins with David's anguished question, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" David pleaded for God to respond and save him from his enemies. In vv. 22-24, David praised God to Israel because God answered his prayer. David's song of praise would be remembered by "all the ends of the earth" (v. 27), and this would cause the nations to praise and serve God. David recognized that his worship of God would call all nations of the earth to join in the worship of Yahweh. In this way, David and Israel, were to be a kingdom of priests. They were to tell the nations about God's plan for healing.

#### **Psalm 47:1-9**

Further evidence of David's understanding of the missionary responsibility of Israel is found in this psalm. David called all nations to praise God (v. 1). Clapping hands and joyful shouts were to be raised because Yahweh Elyon, God Most High, was an awesome God "over all the earth" (v. 2). He subdued nations under Israel, God's representative on earth. In vv. 7-9 David exulted in the fact that God rules over all nations. Yahweh was not merely a local deity, but God Most High, the god of gods. All nations were under his rule, and "the nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham" (v. 9). For this to happen, for the nations to be the people of Yahweh, Israel had to tell them about

Yahweh. The glory of Israel would draw the nations to Israel, so Israel could tell them about the God of Israel. David understood the missionary responsibility of a kingdom of priests.

### Psalm 67:3-5

This is the strongest proof that David understood that Israel was blessed in order to proclaim the name of Yahweh to all nations of the earth. The first two verses are a benediction. David asked God to bless Israel so "that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations." David recognized that the blessing of Israel would result in the knowledge of God reaching all nations. When Israel was

blessed, all nations would know of the salvation, the healing, God had provided.

David was so taken by this idea that in vv. 3-5 he called for all nations to praise God and rejoice in his just rule. Justice would only be experienced by the nations when God ruled over them. When God directs the nations, peace, justice and prosperity flow to all.

In vv. 6-7, David explicitly asserted that when the nations praise God and enjoy the blessings of his rule, then "the land will yield its harvest." God will bless Israel and all the earth will serve him.

David understood that the blessing of God was not given to Israel for Israel to use on its own lusts. Israel was not blessed simply to enjoy the blessings. Israel was blessed to that they might make the name of Yahweh known to the ends of the earth, to all nations. David understood this and sought to bring about its fulfillment by building a temple for the worship of Yahweh. Solomon was chosen to build the temple. He, too understood the missionary responsibility of



Israel, but he lacked his father's commitment to Yahweh. He used the blessings for his own enjoyment, not for the fulfillment of God's purpose to heal the nations.

### **The Reign of Solomon**

The reign of Solomon is the visible fulfillment of God's purpose to bless the nations through Israel. According to 1 Kings 4:29-34, The fame of Solomon drew people from all nations to hear his wisdom. God expected Solomon to teach all these people about the worship of the true God, God Most High, so that the laws and decrees of God, the knowledge of God would be carried to all nations.

Solomon knew exactly what God wanted him to do for all nations. This is abundantly clear in Solomon's prayer of dedication for the temple (1Ki 8:23-53). Solomon prayed:

As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name—for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel . . . (1Ki 8:41-43).

God intended that the nations would hear of Israel and its God. To this end, God blessed Israel with a strategic land, with a great Law, and with great rulers. This was not given so that Israel could live in luxury on the slavery of its conquered neighbors. It was given so that the nations around Israel, and to the ends of the earth, would be amazed that a nation had such a God, that Israel treated each other as brothers, and

extended the same protection to the widows, orphans, poor, blind, lame, and diseased, as it extended to its powerful rulers and princes. Solomon, however, led the way in using the blessings of God to fulfill his own lust.

The prime example of this is the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon's court (1Ki 10:1-13). She heard of the greatness of Israel and its king, and traveled to Israel to see for herself if all she heard was true. God's intention was for Solomon to tell her about Yahweh El Elyon, God Most High. Rather than evangelize her, Solomon bedded her.<sup>6</sup> Solomon used the blessing of God to fulfill his own lust. This became his pattern of behavior (1Ki 11:1-6).

Solomon failed to do what God had blessed him to do. Solomon married wives of other nations, in violation of God's command (1Ki 11:1-3). These wives persuaded Solomon to worship their gods in Jerusalem, so that instead of the nations coming to Jerusalem to learn about the true God, the nations taught Israel the worship of demons. God punished Solomon by splitting the kingdom, ending the prosperity of the nation, in hopes that Israel would repent. A remnant was faithful to God's purposes, but they were unable to save the nation.

When iniquity grew so great that the purpose of God could not be achieved through the nation of Israel, judgment and captivity came upon them. Israel knew, or should have known, that they were responsible to proclaim the name of God to all nations. The blessings they received from God were for this purpose. When they refused to fulfill the purpose, God withdrew the blessing. If Israel would not use

---

<sup>6</sup>This assumes that Solomon treated the Queen of Sheba as he did the other royal visitors to his court (1Ki 11:1-3).

the blessings to heal the nations, God would find another nation who would.

### **Conclusion**

The story of God's plan for the healing of the nations continues through the days of the prophets, the captivity, the restoration, the gospels, the epistles and culminates in the Apocalypse of John. The details of the fulfillment of God's plan cannot be traced fully here due to limitations of time and space. However, the record of God's effort to heal the nations began in the Garden and concludes in the new Jerusalem. The tree of life lost in Eden is regained in Jerusalem. God's purpose never changed. God's eternal, universal purpose will be achieved. Now, its fulfillment is the responsibility not of the nation of Israel, but of the Church, the nation of those redeemed by the blood of the Promised Redeemer (Ge 3:15, Re 5:9-10). The task of the Church is to proclaim the name of Yahweh, of God Most High, to all nations. This is God's purpose for humanity, and He intends to fulfill it through the Church.

It is indeed time that the Caribbean evangelical church begins to fulfill its part in the eternal plan and purpose of God. But if it is to do so, it must develop its own missionary theology to guide its actions. Without a firm foundation on biblical, missionary theology, i.e. theology with missions at its core, the Caribbean evangelical church will lose its focus before it begins its greatest work. It runs the risk of losing its missionary fire before it really begins to burn, as did the Protestant Reformation. It opens the door to the heresies of the "prosperity gospel," and the licentious lasciviousness of Solomon who used the blessings of God for personal pleasure. It will lack a vision for the future that is powerful

enough to sustain it in the face of the tremendous sacrifices required of those who attack the strongholds of Satan.

The Caribbean evangelical church has great potential for impacting the 10/40 Window. Yet, this potential will not be realized if the Caribbean evangelical church does not focus its efforts on that which is God's primary purpose. The transformation from mission field to mission force must begin with a vision of obediently performing the task to which God has called the entire Church—the proclamation of God's plan for the healing of the nations.

## REFERENCE LIST

- Analytical Greek lexicon*. 1967. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Bauer, Walter, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. 1969. *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*. 4th. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Carmody, Denise Larder, and John Carmody. 1988. *The story of world religions*. Mountain View: Mayfield.
- Custance, Arthur C. n.d. *Noah's three sons*. n.c.: n.p.
- De Ridder, Richard R. 1979. *Discipling the nations*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2.vols. Chicago: Moody.
- Kittel, Gerhard, ed. 1976. *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 10 vols. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- McKissic, William D., Sr. 1990. *Beyond roots: In search of blacks in the Bible*. n.c. :Renaissance Productions.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. 1994. *The gospel in a pluralist society*. London: SPCK.
- Peters, George W. 1972. *A biblical theology of missions*. Chicago: Moody.

Steyne, Philip M. 1997. *In step with the God of the nations: A biblical theology of missions*. Louisville: Cornerstone.

Strong, James. 1975(?). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible*. New York: MacDonald.