Missionism: The Work of Pentecostals and Radicals in Andean Latin America

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Missionism: The Work of Pentecostals and Radicals in Andean Latin America

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Abstract

This study seeks to submit a formal framework whereby Radical and Pentecostal missionaries can create 21st-century models for outreach and global mission work. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions for 21st-century Radical and Pentecostal missionaries: 1) where do Radical and Pentecostal missionaries begin in missions, 2) how do 21st-century best practices for missions fit into the culture of Radicals and Pentecostals, and 3) how do Radical and Pentecostal missionaries remain faithful to their doctrines of holiness and sanctification while honoring the very rich and diverse cultures of the world? Data drawn from interviews from pastors and missionaries, observations of missions and missionaries in Andean South America, scholarship and best practices across diverse fields have led to a very rich and cutting-edge framework that can be duplicated and tailor-made to meet the needs of any missionary in any part of the world. This investigation concludes that as missionaries adopt concepts of missionism, bi-culturalism, anthropological-driven approaches, and the Blake Urban Initiatives, they will produce successful missions and have a greater degree of success on the mission field.
Lester Earl (L.E.) Johnson. A social entrepreneur and field Missiologist, L.E. impacts the lives of people by promoting education, the power of the knowledge of self-worth, and hope for one’s future. Born September 20, 1981 to Frederick Watson and Leola Johnson, L.E. is the first person in his father’s family to graduate high school and attend college. Through much adversity and minimal support, L.E. persevered through a bachelor’s degree at the University of Michigan—a four-year program that took L.E. ten years to complete. L.E.’s biggest challenge during his undergraduate career was the lack of moral and financial support. Because of the lack of financial support, L.E. had to take an 8-year break in the middle of his undergraduate career. During this time, L.E. not only found opportunities to earn money, he found opportunities to impact humanity. It was during this time that he gained the passion for his career of choice—social entrepreneurship. During this time, L.E. influenced nearly 3,000 students through motivational speaking, mentorship, and afterschool impact opportunities. His passion led him to urban centers throughout Midwest United States and countries in northern South America. After completing his bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan, L.E. pursued a Masters of Liberal Arts (ALM) degree from Harvard University in International Relations to learn ways to impact people globally in the non-profit sector. As L.E. has completed his master’s degree, he is pursuing an EdD in Leadership for Change at Fielding Graduate University to expand and deepen his global reach. His goal is to create and be a part of the system that creates the most cutting-edge, value-
driven ways to help the most vulnerable people in the world’s urban centers. L.E. seeks to use his education to improve the lives of suffering humanity. His humanitarian work extends from cities in Western Michigan, Northern Indiana, and Illinois to countries in northern South America. Recently, he launched the Mildred Casenia Hayward Wells Campaign in the countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. The campaign reached 10,000 children in rural and urban areas in 2017 teaching The Five Pathways to Success. To complement this program, L.E. launched the Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation. The purpose of this program is to aid women in obtaining the resources to have personal careers and an impact their communities. In the Lake Michigan loop, L.E. combats illiteracy and innumeracy through Hip-Hop 4 Change. Through hip-hop pedagogy, Hip-Hop 4 Change increases literacy and numeracy among teens in urban centers.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Radical and Pentecostal missionaries who, without any formal training, evangelized this world with the gospel of holiness, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. We dedicate this work to the founder of the Church of God in Christ, Bishop Mason. Bishop Mason—a modern 19th-century Nazarite—was jailed for preaching the doctrine of sanctification and holiness. Mother Pearl Paige Brown and Bishop J.W. Denny have gone on to be with the Lord. But their hard work and labor lives through those of us who continue to do missions in the Church of God in Christ. Mother Kennedy and Bishop Black, you were two of the forces for missions in the 19th century. I dedicate this work to you. This thesis is dedicated to the father of COGIC World Missions, Bishop Carlis L. Moody Sr. For forty years you led missions in the Church of God in Christ and took our church from having a presence in four countries to being in sixty-one countries across the world. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandmother, Mother Celia Pearl Swift. Her persistence in holiness and sanctification laid the foundation I now stand upon.
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1. Introduction

While mission work has been an integral part of the Pentecostal and Radical church since its inception, missionaries of this persuasion on a large scale enter the mission field blindly. That is to say, they receive the call and go directly into the mission field with little to no formal training. The work is done by faith. The effect of this is sometimes time loss, fragile relationships, staggered growth, cultural infringement, and most importantly a life potentially in danger.

Background of the Problem

Most missionaries know exactly what they want to do on the mission field. But, how what they want to do translates into the environment they are entering is often unknown. While the United States of America is often heralded as one of the greatest nations of our time, and many peoples across the globe envy the freedoms United States citizens hold, most people prefer their native culture to foreign ones and draw strength from their own traditions. Many missionaries do not seem to be aware of this fact.

Furthermore, while many missionaries have a good understanding of the doctrines of the church they represent, they may not be aware of the Americanized filter through which the doctrines are taught. Thus, when these
missionaries enter the field, they teach a westernized doctrine. The result can be cultural destruction, an outcome that deprives the world of its natural diversity.

Cultural destruction is the result of erroneous or misguided approaches to mission work, which stem from ideas and implications of cross-cultural ministry. In cross-cultural ministry many Radicals and Pentecostals who have mastered the skill of doctrinal translation may inflict this infringement of culture. The idea of cross-cultural ministry may hinder the full appreciation of the culture in which one is assigned, which unfortunately, may breed the implanting of foreign cultural norms in worship and day-to-day living. Cross-cultural ministry does imply some form of intentional exchange; however the expectation is often one-sided.

Scholarship around Christianity and missiology most often focuses on the general ministry of non-Radicals and non-Pentecostals, but does not include Radicals and Pentecostals. It may be assumed that these groups can learn from the scholarship of conservative, non-Radical missions. But, the culture, the doctrine, the values, and the execution of ministry are extremely different and conversations centered in Radicalism and Pentecostalism does not exist on a large scale. Many non-Radical and non-Pentecostal groups have been working across the globe for centuries and have settled in a broad range of communities. Radical and Pentecostal groups are gaining momentum in places like South America, Central America, and the Caribbean as their influence grows. However, the scholarship around best practices has not increased proportionately. Without a change in practices, these nations could experience cultural identity loss. The indigenous, Latin American groups experienced great trauma during their initial
conversion. As Pentecostals and Radicals move toward mass conversions, this history must be considered as a learning context.

While the field of missiology has been established, there is a gap in content in the field that needs to be filled to strategically inform the work that meets the needs of Radicals and Pentecostals as well as those in which they serve. Let it be further noted that Pentecostals and Radicals have traditionally focused on one thing primarily: conversion of the individual into a life of holiness and sanctification. The Pentecostal missionary adds one more requirement: the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Conversely, American Pentecostals and Radicals have ventured out into working with governments, NGOs, and social movements on a large scale in the past twenty years. However, this kind of work is still in the infancy stage. Therefore, this concept has not become one of major focus for foreign missionaries. As its absence may be contribute to the stunted growth of the domestic churches, it is also likely contributing to stunted growth in the foreign field.

The proposed project broadens the understanding of the importance of the relationships between mission groups and secular entities and the negative impacts separation from each other can have on one’s mission. This project examines four different communities in Colombia and assesses their efforts as they work with various types of approaches to ministry. Pentecostal Christian missionary work has for the most part centered around spreading the doctrine of holiness, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, solely. Examining how understanding cultural context, developing relationships with non-church
groups, especially governmental ones, as well as using the Blake Urban Initiatives can enable greater impact, also has applied implications.

This project seeks to put together a formal framework whereby Pentecostal and Radical Christian Missionaries can broaden their ability to impact 21st-century Latin America. It examines the variety of different approaches that can be applied to ministry. Through four different trajectories, this project argues that Pentecostal and Radical Christian missionaries who employ anthropological approaches and the Blake Urban Initiatives accompanied by relationships with governments, non-profit organizations and non-governmental organizations will have a greater degree of success with mission projects. For instance, missionaries in the Cuba Jurisdiction of The Church of God in Christ who had working relationships with the government were easily able to acquire free land to farm and use to support their outreach.

The proposed project examines how solely hearing the call and going to the mission field is not sufficient for impact in 21st-century Latin America. With the growth of social media and access to more educational systems throughout the world, the doctrines of holiness, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost have begun to receive more intense criticism and in many cases rejection, due in part to erroneous cross-cultural approaches to ministry. In other cases, Pentecostals and Radicals have not been aware of the difference between offering Christ and western culture. In his book, Current Concerns, Karl Franklin poses the question, Is God American? This question exposes a grave concern when mission workers begin to annihilate cultures in an attempt to introduce Christ. The
former is not a prerequisite for the latter. In-depth training in culture and biblical analysis from an anthropological perspective can enable Pentecostal and Radical missionaries to properly put their doctrine in a cultural context. This project argues that thorough anthropological training is necessary for twenty-first-century mission workers.

Yet, beyond the issue of understanding culture is that of understanding the impact one’s interpretation and implementation of sanctification can have on the success of their mission. Sanctification—a major theme amongst Pentecostals and Radicals—means to be set apart from the world (non-Christians). Sanctification often results in seclusion as it relates to non-governmental participation. Many Pentecostals have taken this word to mean separating themselves from their families, communities, and in extreme cases their career paths. While this is a bold act of commitment, it might not work so well on the mission field. It is possible that seclusion can actually be working against the intended goal. Seclusion can make governments uneasy about a missionary’s work. Moreover, such practice carries the implications that a rebellion could secretly be on the rise, further widening the relationship gap of highly Catholic-prone governments and Christian mission groups. What this proposed project suggests is that healthy relationships with governments engender productivity, not compromise. In addition, further study into the Christian faith reveals that seclusion from the world may be more than what the Father of Christianity, Jesus Christ meant by sanctification in his teaching.
Finally, because the central focus of the doctrine of Radicals and Pentecostals is holiness and sanctification, there has not been a focus on improving the quality of life of converts. Many Pentecostal and Radical churches in the United States are located in the most urban, uneducated, and impoverished neighborhoods. Many members do not obtain upward mobility through gainful employment and thus remain uneducated and impoverished for generations. To address this issue, the Presiding Bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Bishop Charles Edward Blake adopted five urban initiatives to combat recurring concerns within the community of local parishes. Ironic as it may seem, the greater number of Pentecostal and Radical churches on the mission field also exist in the most urban, uneducated, and impoverished communities. American Pentecostal and Radical churches took one hundred years to recognize the importance of these initiatives; there is no need for the mission field to recreate the same one-hundred-year realization. The adoption of the Blake Urban Initiatives on the foreign field could allow for growth that mirrors the growth on the domestic field.

The anticipation is that mission sites that employ this model will have a greater degree of success for their intended mission goals. Anthropological practices, which focus on people within their cultural context, may allow missionaries to integrate within communities more successfully, as well as develop relationships with governmental entities. Both are critical components to the new model for 21st-century Pentecostal and Radical Christian missionaries. Furthermore, the model may strengthen the missionary’s ability to make true converts of sanctification and holiness by translating their doctrine from one
cultural context into another, word for word, work for work, lifestyle for lifestyle. Anthropological approaches may also decrease governments and local non-governmental organizations (non-profits) resistance to missionaries. Furthermore, the cognizance of cultural context may assist in keeping missionaries focused on one of their primary purposes, which is to make converts to Christianity and not to Western culture.

The Blake Urban Initiatives shifts the focus from conversion only to making greater citizens and holistic persons. The anthropological approach is central to the implementation of these urban initiatives as well. Simply implementing the Blake Urban Initiatives is not good enough. Each one of the five programs must be tailor-made for the needs of each community, taking into consideration cultural imperatives such as values, norms, and current issues. If missionaries prove more successful, this hypothesis will be proven right. If not, we will have to look at models in which the shortcomings can be improved to assist in creating a perfected 21st-century Pentecostal and Radical Missions Model.

By examining how each component of the 21st-century Pentecostal and Radical Christian Missionary Model contributes to a greater degree of success in Latin America, this project builds on efforts to construct a more comprehensive framework for the study of Pentecostalism, Radicalism, and Missiology. The development of the mission field has been frustrated by conflicting practices, lack of methodological framework, lack of anthropological training, and skepticism of Pentecostals and Radicals in general. Formatting a model within these confines
suggests components that can resolve some of the issues Pentecostal and Radical Christian missionaries face on the mission field in Latin America.

In addition to creating a model for the 21st-century Pentecostal and Radical Christian missionary, this project bridges together different criticisms of missionary work in general that allow both the missionary and its gainsayers to walk on opposite sides of the professional spectrum with the knowledge that their efforts are not so contrary to one another. Much of the research has been done with non-Pentecostal or non-Radical mission groups. In general, both Radical and non-Radical missionaries face a different set of issues on the field, and while some issues are similar the context is different.

The results of this study represent a significant contribution for an under-represented group of workers in the field of missiology. Furthermore, while it is true that Pentecostal Christian missionaries represent a minority of field workers on the mission field, they still represent a group of individuals who travel making impact in the developing world. Their ability to do this in the most ethical fashion is crucial to the overall health of the future of our world. This study assists to inform any shortcomings they may have.

This project has implications in that it can inform current practices of mission and service organizations. Elements from this model can be used in various vocations and can assist in helping suffering humanity. Although the scope of this project is made for the 21st-century Pentecostal and Radical missionary in Latin America, its principles can be extracted and applied to the humanitarian’s work in general.
Research Background

Since the establishment of the Christian Church, there has been extensive criticism of the missionaries by those outside of the faith amongst the scrutiny amid Christian contemporaries themselves. Inversely, many Christians applaud missionaries for the work that they do which often necessitates leaving the comfort of their homes, families, and native country for the sake of the salvation of others. To some, this sacrifice and devotion is far too precious to be criticized. At least this seems to be the consensus among homeland Christians in the United States. However, for the anthropologist and the like, sacrifice or not, the work of a missionary must be done with skill, great observation, and great consideration of the effects of one's help outside of the parameters of Christendom irrespective of any sacrifice being made.

Some scholars argue that the origins of modern anthropology are rooted in Christian missionary work. The writings of Amerigo Vespucci, a merchant and trader of the 16th century, allegedly described his journeys and findings in the new world. However, like many other explorers, his stories “were full of factual errors and saturated with Christian piety” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001, p. 6). However, his contemporary, Jean de Lery, a missionary, work represented a “more truthful and even sympathetic account of Native American life” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001, p. 6). Unlike Vespucci, his work did not contain language and literary illustrations for the entertainment of the reader. His work, although out of the context of
current anthropological methods, were true to form and adhered to basic ethics. According to Eriksen and Nielsen, these “morally ambiguous accounts still weigh on contemporary anthropology” (Eriksen and Nielsen, 2001, p. 9).

Not all missionaries of the past have gone into communities seeking to transform every part of culture. Actually, “Jesuit missionaries overcame the profound obstacles of language, culture, and existing ideology within their target societies to achieve substantial, even surprising success” (Culbertson & Pieper, 2007, p. 4). In fact, Culbertson and Pieper’s research show that some Jesuit missionaries employed practices that allowed converts to maintain their authentic culture. This was due in part to missionaries actually embracing culture and using that embrace as a means to survival. As the Jesuit missionaries penetrated India, significantly different from their Franciscan and Dominican counterparts, they mastered “the pragmatisms of mere existence” —both language and cultural norms (Culbertson & Pieper, 2007, p. 10). “As the average Jesuit missionary in India was a man of culture, observation and judgement,” these missionaries were able to penetrate societies, introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ, and cause little disturbance to culture (Culbertson & Pieper, 2007, p. 11). The Jesuit missionary’s success was demonstrated through their ability to merge and live in foreign communities. These missionaries obtain schools that engaged more than thousands of Indians on a voluntary basis.

Many of these missionaries spent substantial time in these communities observing the culture while documenting such experiences in a scholarly way. To
which, early anthropologists were able to gain knowledge of these primitive and foreign cultures through the work and writings of Christian missionaries.

Some 2,000 years after the birth of Christianity and nearly 1,000 years after the Crusades of the Middle Ages, the Christian missionary has changed in so many aspects. The world itself has changed on multiple levels. There was a time in history where religion was a driving force within governments. Because of this, Christian missionaries, at one point in history, were able to go into societies and murder people who would not convert to the faith. This is no longer the norm. Modern Christian missionaries simply employ many facets of preaching to win converts. The missionary is free, within reason, to recruit citizens to the faith in most countries.

One may argue that the separation of Church and State weakened the influence of the Christian Church. What it seems to have weakened is the monopoly on religion that Christians held in the Western world for so long. Religious freedom and the separation of “Church and State” in the United States opened the door to individualized religion. Individualized religion has led to multiple forms of Protestant worship and a wide range of non-religious sects, including many sciences like anthropology. The development of the later has created a significant amount of religious criticism from those outside the faith. While some of these criticisms are simply anti-God, many of the criticisms objectively point to the need to develop people-centered best practices.

The Christian missionary should take modern criticisms and use them to work towards a more effective ministry. It makes no difference why supposed
gainsayers have these validated opinions. It only should matter that the Christian missionary can potentially make their work better from these criticisms. In a modern context, it does not seem logical to continue the debate of whether the anthropologist is the Antichrist or whether the Christian missionary is the initiator of primitive cultural destruction. In a vast ocean of knowledge, development, and innovation, the Christian missionary should only take the criticism and learn from it.

This review encompasses the assessment of the relationship of Christian missionaries and anthropologists and then explores literature that addresses various types of Christian missionary approaches on the field, and finally literature that offers implications of possible solutions to how Christian missionaries can use an interdisciplinary approach to be successful in the 21st century.

According to the Dictionary of Mission, anthropology “studies people and their relations to one another and to the environment in which they live” (Müller, 1997, p. 23). The Dictionary of Mission further explains anthropology and mission to have a relationship that “might best be regarded as a specialized form of applied anthropology”. Its specific aim is missiological, while the perspective and approach taken are anthropological” (Müller, 1997, p. 28). This definition suggests that there is a working relationship between anthropology and Christian missionaries that is cohesive and not irregular. The greater question is, how long has this relationship existed and why have these two disciplines not been able to recognize it?
I suppose Louis J. Luzbetak addresses the first question to some extent when he states, “I am primarily concerned with today’s and tomorrow’s missionaries rather than with those of the past. While the animosity of today’s missionaries toward anthropologists is weakening, the hostility of anthropologists toward missionaries on the field seems to be on the rise” (Müller, 1997, p. 23). Luzbetak gives what seems to be a simplistic answer: “Anthropologist and missionaries must talk to one another—not merely against one another” (Müller, 1997, p. 3).

There is no need to argue over why missionaries and anthropologists of the past did not recognize their similarities and how their disciplines could compliment one another. Today’s missiologists can take advantage of the opportunities afforded to them by exploring knowledge and research. The exploration of the knowledge of opposite fields is the beginning of a potential conversation. It is essential to today’s anthropologist that they be able to observe the differences and similarities of missionaries, both past and present, in an effort to expand their work to other sectors.

What is most important is to realize that the Middle Ages order of missionaries has dissolved on a very large scale, and conversion by force is no longer practiced. It would be irrational to presume that every missionary on the foreign field views those former practices as erroneous. However, with great observation, it can be perceived that conversion by force is no longer practiced. Furthermore, “missionary policies, strategies, and motivations have actually differed not only from one historical period to another, but have differed also
within the same period and same church tradition, making broad generalizations about the driving forces behind missionization highly questionable” (College of William Mary, 1985, p. 4).

Anthropologists seem to be concerned with culture while missionaries are seemingly only concerned with conversion. What can there be between these two very different disciplines that could be similar? Is it possible that they actually complement one another? How could each side benefit from a conversation with each other? The answer to these questions begins with the discovery of a new and growing discipline among scholars called missiology. “Missiology is a multidisciplinary field concerned not only with theological and historical aspects of Christian missions but with the psychological, sociological, political, aesthetic, anthropological and other dimension of mission as well” (Müller, 1997, p. 12). Missionaries across the field are beginning to recognize that their work requires more than the preaching of the Gospel. They recognize their need to understand the world around their potential converts if they are to win them. This recognition has created a reason for missionaries to reach out to anthropologists. What premise can be created to influence an anthropologist to be eager to have a conversation with the missionary and break the barrier between these two disciplines altogether? The answer is the heart of the anthropologist discipline, culture. If the issue is that missionaries destroy cultures, then anthropologists can come to the table ready to share how their scholarship can help missionaries convert people without disturbing culture. Being a multi-faceted discipline,
anthropology can employ different units to make missiology a more effective modern discipline.

SIL International is a well-established missionary organization that can be categorized as unorthodox because its approach to mission work is not the pulpit. This is a Christian missionary group that does not use gospel preaching as their primary platform for evangelism. SIL goes into communities and develops relationships with governments. Their goal is to assist indigenous people in advancing themselves through developing relationships with the prominent power-holders. While helping to develop these relationships, the members of this organization translate the bible into the language of the people. This is subtle evangelism. The goal is conversion, but the central focus is the relationship with governmental authorities that assist in changing the lives of the people.

SIL receives negative criticism from both anthropologists and Christian missionaries. They receive negative criticism from anthropologists because as they translate the scriptures, they do not translate them in a cultural context. Therefore, the meaning of the scripture is not truly translated from the Jewish context to the new context in an effort to make true converts. One prime example is SIL’s translation of Mark 6:3 for the Saniyo:

When Jesus begins to teach in his home synagogue and people say, “isn’t this just the carpenter, Mary’s son?” you cannot translate the rest of that for the Saniyo without saying that Jesus was Poto, the first-born son, and the others were Pafei, Henei, Waro, and Eriyo, because they always talk in terms of birth order in a situation like this (Franklin, 1987, p. 153).

If the main focus of Christian missionaries across the globe is conversion through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you can assume that
because SIL does not employ the building of the church by evangelistic crusades and vacation bible schools, they are the subject of criticism from other Christian missionaries. However, other Christian missionaries should be careful not to treat SIL like anthropologists treat them. In any discipline it is important to be open to new and different scholarship with a critical eye and ear.

SIL has picked up on a lost piece to the missionary puzzle from the founder of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ himself. There is a scriptural passage where Jesus actually promotes the relationships of his disciples with non-Christian entities:

And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations (King James Version—Holy Bible, Luke 16:8-9).

Jesus was admonishing his disciples to take the relationships with nonbelievers and use them to “turn [things] to your advantage” (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1871). Jesus’ disciples continued this type of teaching as they began their own ministry as missionaries expanding the Christian Church. The apostle Peter states in a letter, “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities (Holy Bible—King James Version 2 Peter 2:10). This scripture is profound because during the time of his writings Peter and the Christian church were experiencing great persecutions from the Jewish government in Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul extends this argument in his teachings as well. He states in Romans 13:1:
Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil (King James Version—Holy Bible).

It may be that SIL observed that relationships between governments and secular entities and the church were not being cultivated and they sought to revisit these types of relationships in Christendom. It must be noted that SIL, as an organization, does not separate themselves from traditional Christian missionary organizations. As a secondary practice they somewhat support these organization, but not through the normal structural collaboration efforts that most missionary organizations have with each other. SIL remains focused on secular entities. The relationships that are developed are mainly with governments, but it should be noted that SIL has relationships with other significant non-Christian groups. SIL within itself has many departments that assist in carrying out its mission. In short, “SIL’s desire is to help men and women build for a better tomorrow, not by destroying options, but by creating them” (Franklin, 1987, p. 131).

The matter of culture is not new to the Christian missionary. According to Christian accounts of the first missionaries sent to non-Jewish people they encountered this issue early on. What the leaders of Christianity decided was to refrain from imposing Jewish customs on non-Jews and request that converts keep the basic rudiments of the faith. In the book of Acts 15: 28-29 Peter states:

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well (King James Version—Holy Bible).
An anthropologist could appreciate the fact that in the context of this scripture, leaders of the church chose not to impose cultural change upon their new converts. The only things imposed were things that were necessary to keep the Christian Faith. Does this affect culture? No, it affects the religion of the culture. The middle ground within the context of Christian missionaries and anthropologist is minimal change to authentic culture. The Christian missionaries in this context may deserve applause for their efforts. How this concept of converting got lost over time is beyond our scope of observation. How the Crusades became the peak of Christian missionary history will forever linger in the minds of scholars around the world. What should be thought about is how we got to this point. Moreover, how do we effectively move from here?

Trinkets of the original form of missionism have been lost over the centuries. What some missionaries refuse to admit is, anthropologic criticism has caught the flaw before they have. Missiology and anthropology may not grow to a point where they agree on every concern. In that regard, one would end up canceling out the other and the world would be without a great field of scholarship. Anthropologists should admit that some of the most skilled Christian missionaries were the predecessors to anthropology. Missionaries belonging to the cult of Assunta Pallotta founded in China in the late 19th century seem to display anthropological practices in their work prior to the foundation of the field. These missionaries were able to merge within a new culture and learn extremely minute principles and practices and record their findings. In their medical missions, “they were not promoters of Western biomedicine to the exclusion of Chinese medical
traditions” (Harrison, 2012, P. 128). These practices proved very successful to the extent that these missionaries are respected in having influence on the advance of Chinese medicine. This is a true success story. Modern Christian missionaries should move past the offense of anthropological criticism and grow their field from these observations, perceived as negative or not.

This review has focused on the differences and similarities of anthropologists and missionaries. It has also given substantial space to differences amongst missionaries on the field. What is not present is research and observation that deals with missionaries who accept the criticism of anthropologists as a means to advance their field. In addition to looking at different formats and approaches to the missionary field, the effective 21st-century missionary program is one that adheres to the cultural concepts of anthropology with the exception of religious perception, the building of strong relationships with government entities, and employing multiple methods for conversion.

Research Design and Methodology

From the central question of this study, how do anthropological approaches, relationships with governments and other non-profit organizations, and the Blake Urban Initiatives affect the degree of success of 21st-century Pentecostal and Radical Christian Missionaries in Latin America, the following hypothesis emerges: 21st-century Pentecostal and Radical Christian Missionaries with cultural training who embrace relationships with local governments as well
as network with other non-profit organizations and employ the Blake Urban Initiatives will demonstrate a greater ability to produce successful missions.

The study took place over a four-month period in Colombia. As one of the largest mission fields in the Church of God in Christ (a Pentecostal and Radical Church), with 50 missions and churches spanning almost the entire country, it offers the greatest opportunity to build this study through participant observation. The researcher secured permission to participate in this fieldwork and conduct this research through his affiliation with the Church of God in Christ.

Participant observation of mission projects and their success (or lack thereof) was the primary method used to collect and analyze data during fieldwork in Colombia. This project involved participant observation at four different mission sites within the country. The observations were made with no interventions and anonymity of all participants is preserved. Further, the entire research project adhered to the human research protocols of Harvard University Institutional Review Board, and its approval was secured prior to the commencement of this field research.

Four different mission sites were chosen for observation. The selection criteria for the four sites were as follows:

a. Site A operated only with a traditional Pentecostal preaching approach.
b. Site B operated with a traditional Pentecostal preaching approach in addition to having relationships with governments and other non-church entities, but no Blake Urban Initiatives.
c. Site C operated with a traditional Pentecostal preaching approach without relationships with governments and other non-church entities, however they employed the Blake Urban Initiatives.
d. Site D operated with a traditional Pentecostal preaching approach in addition to having relationships with the governments and other non-church entities accompanied by the Blake Urban Initiatives.

The project assessed the degree of success for each mission site over a specific amount of time, a month in duration for each. An assessment was employed to measure the extent to which each mission was achieving its objectives and also to mark its degree of sensitivity to the local culture. This assessment drew upon anonymous interviews with and observations of the mission’s participants and community members.

The dependent variable was the observed success of each of the four different aforementioned mission sites. That is to say, after having known the general goals for a mission, based upon the method employed, was the mission able to accomplish their goal? More importantly, was it easy, easier, or not easy for the mission to accomplish their goals? Or, was the mission not able to accomplish their goals using the choice of ministry?

The independent variables were the explanatory variables – relationships with other entities, anthropological approaches, and the Black Urban Initiatives. In sum, this research assessed the degree to which the missions are achieving their goals in relation to the relationship they have with one of or all of the independent variables. The explanatory variables include the following:

a. Traditional Preaching: Director of mission site solely focused on preaching sermons from the bible and making converts to Christianity – nothing more, nothing less. It was expected that this approach would be limited in its success.

b. Relationships: Director of mission valued relationships with government officials, non-profit organization, and non-government organizations. The director networked with these organizations to meet
their mission goals. The study theorized that building relations with communities and the government increases the success of the mission.

c. Blake Urban Initiatives (Five outreach pathways that are used to reach and impact community members outside of the church and sacred settings): Missions that employ this approach, especially when coupled with building relationships, were expected to be the most successful.

1. Education (Access, Excellence and Equity) to identify and make available programs that focus on giving individuals equal access to an excellent education. In the long term, we will witness visible transformation within families and communities as men, women and children are empowered with the ultimate prerequisite to success—a good education.

2. Economic Development (Job Training and Job Creation) to identify and make available programs that result in the creation of new jobs and job training. In the long term, we will witness visible transformation within families and communities as individuals are given the means and the tools to achieve a living wage.

3. Crime Prevention (Reduction, Prevention and Rehabilitation) to identify and make available programs that reduce crime and lower recidivism rates for past offenders. In the long term, we will witness visible transformation within families and communities as individuals learn to successfully navigate positive, alternate routes to securing food, shelter, clothing, inclusion and acceptance.

4. Family Life (Developing Healthy Men, Women and Children) to identify and make available programs that focus on improving the quality of life within the nuclear family. In the long term, we will witness visible transformation within families and communities as men, women and children are given the tools to achieve a thriving, productive, wholesome, spiritual family environment.

5. Financial Literacy (Earning, Saving, Investing, and Spending Wisely) to identify and make available programs that result in enlightened individuals who Earn, Save, Invest and Spend Wisely. In the long term, we will witness visible transformation within families and communities as individuals learn to develop and execute sound long-term financial plans focused on creating, growing and managing wealth.
In sum, this study assessed four different approaches to mission work to determine the extent to which building community and government relationships and the employment of Blake Urban Initiatives yielded more successful missions.

Research Limitations

The most significant limitations were the day-to-day interactions between mission site directors, their project beneficiaries, and the community itself that will vary in each mission site. Although all participant observations took place in the country of Colombia, they were in different regions of the country. Even with similar cultures, values, and circumstances, each region has a variant of peculiarities that make them different. That difference served to strengthen the project or reduce the degree of success. These peculiarities included but were not limited to government infrastructure that supports the mission and its community or not, community relationships, ratio of Catholic versus Protestants in a particular community, socioeconomic status of individuals in a given community, community perception of Radicals and Pentecostals, and strengths and weaknesses of the individual mission director.

Each mission director had little to no education. However, the varied amount of exposure and experiences affected their ability to execute the assignment. Additionally, there was no guarantee that any given community would be an environment conducive for Radicalism or Pentecostalism. Colombia is a predominantly Catholic country. Community’s attitudes towards Radicals and Pentecostals could have proven to be problematic. On the contrary, with the
growth of Pentecostalism in Colombia this trepidation could have proved to be obsolete.

Finally, and as noted above, this research complied with all IRB requirements at Harvard University as outlined on this website:

http://cuhs.harvard.edu/
II.

The Study: Understanding 21st-Century Missions in Latin America

To understand the differences between a good deed and deep-rooted impact, it is crucial to understand the difference between tokenism and missionism. While the former has been criticized and categorized as negative by those immersed in the work of missions, the recipients of those tokens of love are very appreciative of the acts of kindness. Tokenism can be described as short-lived, sporadic gifts that allow many across our globe living in poverty to sustain themselves between tokens of concern. However, many social entrepreneurs, Missiologists, and advocates for children look deeply at turning those tokens of love into either continual support or transformational systems of change.

Missionism

Individuals categorized as poor have been in the world since antiquity, and so have individuals who have given tokens of concern. Tokens are those gifts given that meet the immediate needs of an individual. Tokens do not necessarily impact the long-term state or systems that impact the lives of impoverished people. Missiologists’ very existence derives from instruction in the Holy Bible that commands these tokens. Their history dates back to antiquity. During the Persian rule, the children of Israel experienced great persecution because of their religious practices—which were much different than the other nations in the
empire. The book of Esther in the Holy Bible tells of an account where a gentleman by the name of Haman took it upon himself to destroy the entire nation of Israel. Queen Esther, an Israelite woman, took it upon herself to beseech the king on behalf of her nation. She was successful. She saved the lives of Israelites across the empire. As Israelites celebrated their salvation, it was mandatory that they give gifts to the poor. The celebration became an annual event that they named Purim. Purim were “days for feasting and celebrating and for sending gifts of food to one another, especially gifts to the poor” (Esther 9: 22, Holy Bible God’s Word Translation, 2006).

This tradition dates back to before the children of Israel were under Persian or Babylonian rule. When the Israelites were a sovereign nation, their laws obligated them to give gifts to the poor that were among them. The Mosaic law states: “At the end of every third year bring a tenth of that year’s crop, and store it in your cities. Foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your cities may come to eat all they want” (Deuteronomy 14: 28-29, Holy Bible God’s Word Translation, 2006). The very culture of Israel necessitated that those who could not care for themselves be considered, clothed, housed, and fed through tokens of concern. In their law, amid their ordinances concerning stealing, murder, and labor were mandates for caring for the poor. Israelites perceived that what the proverb said was true: “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again” (Proverbs 19:17 King James Version Holy Bible).
Although many of his contemporaries criticized and did not understand his method of implementation of the Jewish faith, calling Jesus the “prince of demons, Jesus Christ embraced the Mosaic Law (Matthew 12:24 King James Version Holy Bible). When Jesus began his ministry, he made his stance on the Mosaic Law very clear. He stated: “Don’t ever think that I came to set aside Moses’ Teachings or the Prophets. I didn’t come to set them aside but to make them come true (Matthew 5:17 God’s Word Translation Holy Bible). This is proven in many of the teachings of Jesus Christ. One of Jesus’ first teachings states:

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. (Matthew 6:1-4 Holy Bible King James Version)

So, giving tokens of concern is not seen as negative. Nor is it against biblical principles. It is, however, in most cases, temporary and does not impact the overall life of those impoverished. This culture of tokenism has sustained the poor and needy throughout the ages. However, during this informational age, missiologists, philanthropists, and concerned citizens are interested in a culture of giving that is not sporadic but continual, systemic. Moreover, they are interested in giving that changes the lives of people and brings them out of poverty, long-term. As Sean Stannard-Stockton states, “most donors fund issues because they want to have a sustained impact on a situation” (Stannard-Stockton, 2008, N.P).
When I speak of missionism, I am speaking to the very culture of investing substantially into those who are less fortunate. Missionism speaks to the very conscience that creates one’s personal values. If we are to impact this present-day global society, we must move from a culture of tokenism to one of missionism. Merriam Webster dictionary defines ism as “a belief, attitude, style, etc., that is referred to by a word that ends in the suffix -ism”. Modern day Christian churches spend less on missions today than in the past. The implications are that the culture for giving has declined significantly. It seems as though there is an inward, self focus that lives among Christian churches in the United State.

It is estimated that the Christian church in the United States receives $30.5 trillion in donations annually. Of the $30.5 trillion in donations, $31 billion dollars goes to world missions —less than 1 percent. More than 75 percent of the mission budget of the Christian church in the United States is spent on reaching those who are already reached. Researchers found that “only .1 percent of all Christian giving is directed toward mission efforts in the 38 most unevangelized countries in the world” (Barrett and Johnson 2001, p. 656). Message Ministry and Mission describes it in this way: for every $100, 000 received, the church gives $1 to the world’s poorest people. This level of tokenism, while appreciated by receivers, is by no means noteworthy. However, a deep analysis of these tokens leads leaders in the world to believe that Christians can do more, more consistently. It seems that Jesus attempted to introduce a new type of giving.
Jesus respected the traditional giving of tokens of love. But, the scripture implies that he wanted to introduce a culture of consistent, systemic giving — missionism.

Matthew chapter six records one of Jesus’ earlier lessons to his disciples. However, Matthew chapter nineteen records a later lesson. Here in Matthew nineteen, Jesus is giving final instructions to his disciples concerning the culture that is to be noted among those that follow his discipline. In this lesson, Jesus spoke of the importance of giving to the poor and how it related to his followers being good disciples. He says, “Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Matthew 19:21, Holy Bible King James Version). Here, Jesus did not speak of a token. In this text Jesus spoke to something that was a matter of the heart. The giving of all. It seems that this is the same case that Jesus is making in Luke chapter 21. Luke writes:

And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had. And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. (Luke 21:1-6 Holy Bible King James Version)

The idea of giving a token or a tithe seems to be one that Jesus wanted his disciples to forsake. The implications are that Jesus wanted a culture of giving that was based on passion, love without limits, and not one checking off a box of duties. According to Zondervan’s Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible the widow gave “all that she had—her whole subsistence” while the
rich men gave of “their superfluity; what they had to spare” (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1871).

The thought of giving all to those who have less superseded the one-time gift he spoke of in Matthew chapter six. Giving all that one had definitely was more than giving ten percent of one’s crops at the end of three years. Jesus spoke of something greater than a good deed or a box checked on a list of to dos. The implication here is that Jesus wanted a group of disciples who were totally committed to the cause of those in need. Unfortunately, this is not reflected in the Christian church in the United States on a broad scale, today.

Of foreign mission funding received, “87 percent goes for work among those already Christian. 12 percent for work among already evangelized, but Non-Christian. 1 percent for work among the unevangelized and unreached people” (Baxter, 2007, p. 12). The Christian church of the book of Acts reflected a much different culture of giving. The accounts of such cultural traditions are recorded. Luke, the writer of the book of Acts reports:

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet (Acts 4:33-37 King James Version Holy Bible).
These new disciples were selfless and were ready and apt to give without restraint and redistribute wealth — “an eminent example of that spirit of generous sacrifice which pervaded all” (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1871).

The disciples of Jesus Christ were to give their hearts to those who were in need. Jesus taught a selfless gospel. He taught his disciples that if they were to work for the advancement of his kingdom and what he thought was right, he would take care of their needs (Matthew 6:33 King James Version Holy Bible). There were two disciples who made an attempt to test whether or not this doctrine of giving was substantially true or not. Acts chapter five verses one through eleven tells how instead of selling their property and giving the total amount of the sale to the church Ananias and his wife kept a portion. This selfish act of deception rather than devotion was so serious that both individuals died when they lied about how much they had received. The story implies that missionism—the very culture of consideration, giving, and consistent sharing—is one of high importance.

The Apostle Paul’s account of his missionary journeys did not speak of Christians who sold their houses and gave the sum of the cost to the church. However, Paul did speak of consistent giving. As Paul was making his missionary journeys to various countries he collected money to support those Christians who were suffering from hardship in Jerusalem. In 1 Corinthians chapter sixteen, he instructs the disciples that they should collect monetary gifts once a week that can be given to help the disciples in Jerusalem. In his third letter, John reminded his disciples that they had an obligation to support missionaries who were traveling
the world preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and serving those less fortunate (3 John 1:8, Holy Bible God’s Word Translation). The second verse of this same chapter, John expresses his deep desire for his disciples to be well and to “succeed in all temporal affairs”. There is a holistic approach to outreach displayed here, an outreach that is much deeper than money to buy groceries.

The latter doctrines of Jesus teach the importance of making the needs of others one’s own. Rather, Jesus shifts the attention to those whose needs are greater than one’s own. His disciples carry this tradition beyond Christ’s ascension into heaven, and it is noted throughout the records of the early church. Moving the church away from a tradition of tokenism to a culture of missionism will allow the modern church to reflect the early church by means of consistent, selfless giving. The current dissemination of funds reflects individuals who are very concerned with themselves. The instructions of Jesus remind Christians that they shall testify of him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8-9 Holy Bible King James Version). Jesus pushes believers to consider others before they consider themselves. Consistent, selfless giving and missiological efforts create a culture of outreach that helps to make the world a safe place where all people have the opportunities to succeed, be healthy, and enjoy life.
Bi-Cultural Ministry

The success of religious exchange between cultures that are not similar is based upon one’s ability to properly communicate and translate one’s theory of God from one cultural context to another. To truly make converts—proselytize—one must be able to reach beyond introductory sentiments and reach into the hearts and minds of people in an effort to create a shared passion for one religious view of God. That is to say, one must be able to penetrate the hearts and minds of people. According to Robert J. Schreiter, “It has gradually become unthinkable in many Christian churches to engage in any theological reflections without first studying the context in which it is taking place” (Schreiter, 2015, p. 4).

The relationships in local societies determine the values, norms, and communal practices among people and organizations. It is these values, norms, and communal practices that influence and drive communication and commonality among people. Without knowledge of such information, one may find oneself not being able to penetrate the hearts and minds of local residents. Moreover, without such knowledge one “can become either irrelevant or a subtle tool of ideological manipulation” (Schreiter, 2015, p. 4). Consequently, they will not be able to make religious converts without force. This forced conversion becomes the foundation for a cultural infringement—cultural destruction. In other words, if one does not understand a person’s culture they cannot convert him or her with cultural integrity.
In missionism, cultural destruction takes place when a missionary takes their cultural norms and commingles them with the doctrines and dogmas as if they are one, inseparable. We find this happening in the beginning of the early church. The apostles and church leaders frowned upon this type of behavior. In Luke’s account of the early church in the book of Acts, he tells of a time when the gospel of Jesus Christ began to reach beyond the Israelite nation. Without any hesitation or conviction, early missionaries offering Christ to new converts began to impose Jewish customs on non-Jewish people. It created such a breach in the church that the leadership had to decide upon a clear way of converting. When the leaders could not decide if it was necessary that non-Jewish people follow Jewish cultural traditions Peter responded by asking a question. He said, “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Peter described these traditions as a weight. The implication is that by Christ’s coming, the burden was taken away and Christians should not restore the burden—that no one had been able to bear—to the place that it once held among people. The resolve of the apostles was that new converts should “abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15: 20, 10 Holy Bible King James Version).

Peter and the church leaders’ direction implied that the only thing necessary for discipleship was the worship of God. The things listed that men should abstain from were all connected to the worship of other Gods. Peter’s directions were consistent with what Jesus taught. When a person asked Jesus
what was the greatest commandment. Jesus responded by saying, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:36-40 Holy Bible King James Version). Peter, following the precedent set forth in the teachings of Jesus Christ, gave direction for converting non-Jewish people with cultural integrity. It would be a denial of Christ’s finished work on the cross to negate the traditions of non-Jewish converts. Imposing one’s personal traditions and convictions on converts is cultural destruction. Missionaries are admired to make “sense of the Christian message in local circumstances” (Schreiter, 2015, p. 2).

Unfortunately, throughout the ages, many missionaries have erred. The Constantine crusades, the Spanish conquest of South America, and many other mass conversions of peoples have proven to eradicate, in the name of Christianity, the beautiful and sacred cultures of many peoples. Language, tradition, and communal practices are all lost in the graves of people of old. These missionaries of old did not make a difference or separation between what it takes to become a Christian and what it takes to become an American or Spaniard. In most cases it is evident that thesis missionaries did not take into consideration the instructions for conversion left by the apostles in Act chapter fifteen. As 21st-century missionaries, one should be cognizant of the importance of making these separations and acknowledging the need for what Robert Schreiter now calls a “local theology”. Being aware of these concepts and one’s purpose and bias will
allow a missionary to successfully convert people with cultural integrity to avoid such high infringements as cultural destruction.

From an American standpoint, in short, conversion with cultural integrity means that one is teaching doctrines and dogmas with the intent of giving adherents a greater understanding of God through a local lens, a local theology. According to Robert Schreiter, a local theology and cultural integrity also magnifies the importance of the acknowledging of one’s bias that implies the superiority of American culture and strategically and purposely teaches in a way that insures that those biases are not reflected in lessons. The teachers takes themselves out of the home culture and embeds themselves in the culture in which they are teaching. Teachers then teach from a point of view that values the local culture as much as they value their American culture. In this way they become truly bi-cultural.

Different from cross-cultural ministry, bi-cultural ministry allows one the ability to acknowledge their cultural biases, accept the equality of a new culture, and teach about God from a local cultural lens. Cross-cultural ministry must not be underappreciated, either. For during a time where individuals assumed that Christianity and American were synonymous terms, missiologists were able to become the savior to many rich cultures by teaching missionaries how to know the difference between teaching pure Christianity and American Christianity. Unfortunately, even with the understanding of cross-cultural ministry, while many are teaching a non-Americanized Christianity, a great multitude of both missiologists and social entrepreneurs are still impeding authentic, local cultural norms by imposing American values and norms outside of the church setting.
“The theologian cannot create a theology in isolation from the community’s experience” (Schreiter, 2015, p. 21). Many have taken American out of their doctrines, but they have not taken American out of their influence upon doctrine and in life in general.

For instance, when ministering to women in the native tribe of the Pia Poco in Colombia, do missionaries have the right to introduce women’s rights? Most of the women over the age of 40 are housewives. Many of these women do not know how to read or write. The American thing to do is to liberate the women by teaching them to read and write. The idea is that once the women know how to read and write, one would probably give them access to a high school diploma, technical skills, and a college education. This would be in an effort to help them find a better life for themselves. While this may not be altogether the wrong thing to do, it is first important to become a Pia Poco citizen in thought to learn if it is the right thing to do. The best way to accomplish bi-culturalism in this sense is learning the whys of the community.

One needs to learn the why of everything that happens within the day-to-day culture. From there one may come to a conclusion that Pia Poco women value their lives as housewives. More importantly, one may find out that being a housewife in this context is a place of elitism. Imposing an American value of a workingwoman in a subtle condemnation of housewives, one could be destroying a culture. The automatic assumption that there is a women’s rights issue here is the evidence of one’s bias and the thought that American culture is superior.
Women’s rights in America arose from the hostile and unequal treatment of women in the homes and jobs. Many women in the United States were the victims of physical and mental abuse. When many of these women left their homes to enter the workplace, doing the same job as their male counterparts, they received less pay. It is possible that women of different cultures don’t experience these same inequalities. The appearance of physical and mental abuse may be an unknown. Where women are in the workplace, they may receive equal pay. Women may simply value being at home. To attempt to overhaul this value system because of one’s American viewpoint is cultural destruction.

Further observing the Pia Poco, one may find another oddity if relating it to American culture. The homes within the Pia Poco have electricity, but no running water. Additionally, they use outhouses as opposed to having bathrooms within their homes. Quite naturally, one may find it easy and commendable to find a sponsor to take the toilets and showers from outside and put them within the homes. It is a modern convenience that all should have in the 21st century, yes? No! As a bi-cultural missionary, one’s first assumption must always be that whatever they encounter is normal, acceptable, and superiorially right. It is not until local residents, without the help or priming of outside influences, acknowledge that they would like a different normal that a bi-cultural missionary would recommend any American convenience such as indoor plumbing and showers.

As a bi-cultural missionary, one leaves their American values at home. Upon arrival to a new country, one assumes the cultural norms that are inherently
there. The only thing that comes with a missionary from country to country is the doctrines and dogmas of their religion that have been stripped to the bare minimum of the views of God and His direction. In the case that a doctrine impacts a cultural norm, teachings reflect that of the scriptural direction, not the American practice.

Furthermore, bi-cultural missiology moves beyond an ability to simply relate to someone. This understanding gives the missiologist an in-depth view of the why behind what happens on the day-to-day among individuals in a particular society. Michael Jr., in a Ted Talk given to a group of leaders, admonishes those listening to go beyond having a clear understanding of the what and the how. He encourages leaders to lead from the why because it was more powerful and this way of leading created greater impact. Michael argues that when one leads from the why that not only will one’s passion be realized, so will their motives. Doing missions from the why allows one to highlight what is necessary and what is not. Why am I here? What am I attempting to accomplish? Who am I trying to reach and to what end? What doctrines and dogmas should be taught? Why am I actually recommending this? These are all questions that help missionaries become self-aware of their cultural biases on the field and challenge themselves to suspend them, accordingly.

Bi-cultural ministry becomes critical when engaging with Pentecostals and Radicals. Different from many Protestant reformations, Pentecostal and Radical teachings are accompanied by a plethora of ways to live. The doctrine of holiness among Pentecostals and Radicals imposes a much stricter standard of living on
their parishioners than other sects of Christianity. Pentecostals and Radicals become modern Nazarites. In the Old Testament, Israelites took on a Nazarite vow for various reasons. Some like Samson, were chosen by God as Nazarites from birth. Others chose to be Nazarites for different reasons and different amounts of time. The bible records the requirements for a Nazarite vow as such:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord: he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. (Numbers 6:1-5 King James Version Holy Bible)

Zondervan’s Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible describes a Nazarite in this way: “a class of persons who, under the impulse of extraordinary piety and with a view to higher degrees of religious improvement, voluntarily renounced the occupations and pleasures of the world to dedicate themselves unreservedly to the divine service” (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1871). The modern-day Pentecostal and Radical doctrine reflect much the same.

In the United States, you may find various types of Pentecostal and Radicals. Things that they are known for are their belief that women should not wear pants, makeup, or cut their hair. Many of their men don’t wear short pants. In general, they only listen to Christian music. Any other music is considered to be of the world. You may find some of the stricter groups who do not watch the
news, attend sports outings, mingle with their families who do not share the same religious sentiments, or even drive drop top convertibles. One of the more famous teachings of these groups is centered in a bible character named Jezebel. Because of how the bible depicts Jezebel, women in these sects do not wear makeup or the color red (D. Moore, personal communication, July 8, 2005). For the sake of cultural integrity, the question becomes how does one sift through these traditions with a critical eye to determine what are the traditions of American Christians and what are the necessities that translate from one culture to another in the Doctrine of Sanctification. The Doctrine of Sanctification teaches that one must give up everything to follow Christ so that He can use one to do great things for His name (Church of God in Christ Manual, 1991, p. 95).

To accomplish such a sifting, one would have to embark upon cultural excavation of social bones and structures. That would be a great and cumbersome task. Fortunately for modern missionaries, Peter and the other early Christian leaders made it very easy for the basic Christian practices — “keep away from things polluted by false gods, from sexual sins, from eating the meat of strangl animals, and from eating bloody meat”(Acts 15: 20 Holy Bible God’s Word Translation). However, for the more complex Christian practices, the job of conversion is great. In short, this modern Nazarite vow of Pentecostals and Radicals is a way to go over and beyond so that God can use one in a special way—a way that He does not use other Christians. Bi-culturalism becomes imperative here. For example, belly dancing in the United States is very sensual and seductive in nature. In the Middle Eastern and Asian tradition it is not. It would be
inappropriate for an American missionary to preach against such in those contexts in the name of avoiding perversion and lasciviousness.

Another example is the tradition of dancing using one’s hip in various African traditions. Again, in the United States, this is seductive and sexual in nature. Among African traditions it is not. To shun such an evil in the United States among Pentecostals and Radicals is holy unto the Lord. It is neither holy nor unholy in African cultures. Therefore, teaching against it based on an American tradition would be cultural destruction, a cultural infringement.

One American group does not have music incorporated in their worship. In the late 19th century, converts took out pianos because they reminded them of the saloons they once went to as non-Christians (E. Hetrick, personal communication, January, 20, 2009). To preach a gospel globally that music is sin would be imposing their personal convictions and traditions on others —cultural destruction.

Pentecostal and Radical missionaries must truly hear God and people if they are to make converts with cultural integrity. According to Robert Schreiter, “A rootedness in the community is essential for a local theology, but does not in itself guarantee insight” (Schreiter, 2015 p. 23). Suspending their American culture is a must and is the first thing that must take place when entering a new culture. Second among priorities is becoming very acquainted with the whys of the receiving culture. The whys of a culture points to the origins of a practice and norm. This knowledge will assist in natives having the ability to determine whether this is something they need to give up for their Nazarite vow or not. As
Radicals and Pentecostals spread throughout the world by way of missionaries, it is imperative that these missionaries make converts with cultural integrity in an effort to spread the beauty of these sects throughout the world while simultaneously preserving the rich diversity of global cultures.

The Assumptions

As a first time missionary in Colombia in 2009, the assumption for one missionary was that indigenous pastors and leaders, regardless of ministerial experience, were inferior and in desperate need of American assistance. While many pastors and leaders in developing countries are in great need of financial support, these pastors and leaders have obtained a great deal of ministerial expertise —both formal and informal. This missionary realized that the superiority of American culture bias is two-fold and exists in both the American and non-American context. Unfortunately, the stewardship and accountability of that bias rest in the seat of Americans who come with a greater ability to access both academic and financial resources (Johnson, 2009).

Due to media such as television and the Internet, Americans are viewed as “angels”. Whether rich or poor, extremely talented or not, when Americans enter countries like Colombia, Ecuador, Perú, or Venezuela, citizens look for and expect answers to their problems. Unfortunately, Americans do not have to accomplish very much to acquire credibility in these areas of the world, because in the minds of many, they have prayed for the missionaries’ arrival.
Consequently, it does not take much—a broken promise, lack of financial resources, inability to articulate knowledge—to lose one’s credibility, either.

These types of preconceived notions do not make it easy to address one’s assumptions as an American of how needed they are in these environments. They do, however, make it difficult to rid one’s mind of their biases. The natural pull for help elevates one in one’s own mind. In scenarios where simple doctrinal or financial support is needed, one may find oneself offering more than what is actually necessary. Even worse, one may find oneself overstepping their boundaries unbeknownst to their own selves. Because of the desperate nature associated with the need for resources, pastors and leaders in these societies have developed a high tolerance for these inadvertent acts of disrespect. However, this tolerance only lasts for so long. Without a knowledge of infringement, if a missionary meets the end of their finances or educational significance, they may find themselves with an ended relationship unexpectedly.

One instance of this is found in the relationship between an American missionary and a Colombian pastor in Colombia. The pastor was in desperate need of financial assistance. Fortunately for the missionary, they had access to substantial amounts of financial resources. Because of this, the missionary was given a license to do practically anything they thought was necessary. Even though the pastor did not have an appreciation for most of the authority the missionary was taking, he allowed him to continue. Unfortunately for the missionary, the self-assumption that they were needed and the assumption that the missionary was an angel from heaven with all the answer did not become a good
combination in the end. This was due, in large part, to the overstepping of authoritative boundaries by the missionary.

The reality was that the pastor and leaders had developed a quite sophisticated form of worship and mission administration. The pastor was able to ignore, for the sake of financial assistance, the overstepping of boundaries for a great deal of time. When the pastor could not bear the unintentional disrespect any longer, he dismissed both the missionary and the finances regardless of their need for assistance. A knowledge of bias and the default assumption of a supposed superiority of American culture could have made for a better relationship. The acknowledgment of such assumptions allows the missionary to position themselves with the proper boundaries that will aid in building healthy relationships with pastors and leaders regardless of the level of need.

Intentionally reversing assumptions can also aide in cultivating healthy relationships with pastors and leaders. In some cases pastors and leaders pretended to be ignorant when in fact they are well informed. Assuming pastors and leaders have some academic, experiential, and financial resources that they need to do ministry may help aid in framing proper relationships. Some cases reported that pastors became infuriated when offered financial resources. Still others reported rough relationships between missionaries and indigenous pastors who suddenly became “aware” after pretending to not be knowledgeable of certain things. Assuming that pastors have everything they need and one is there simply to offer moral support and encouragement positions a missionary to avoid such unpleasant personal experiences. This way, the missionary is consistently
honoring the local leader in a way that positions the local as lead and in a place of
authority. In due time, any assistance that is needed will be requested through
explicit and intentional asks.

In the case of a pastor from Bogota, Colombia, these assumptions almost
ruined the relationship between an American missionary and the Colombian
pastor. The tolerance for these infringements was met with an infusion of great
honesty in regard to expectations. This thorough inquisition of the Colombian
pastor opened the door for the building of relationship, which led to the informing
of the American missionary of the actual expertise of the Colombian pastor. What
the American missionary found out was that the pastor from Colombia, a
supposed inferior nation, had a knowledge set that was built upon twenty years of
mission planting and nearly forty years of ministry. This particular pastor had
learned to do much with little and was therefore in a superior position of teaching
in regard to missions and financial management, networking, and raising capital.

Assumptions not only have the potential to wreak havoc on the mission
field. They also have the capability of creating missed opportunities. For the
missionary, it is imperative that one be able to acknowledge and search for
assumptions and address them before entering the mission field.
The Honeymoon Period

In the foster care system in the United States, they have what they call the honeymoon period. According to the Starr Commonwealth Foster Care training, “This is a space in time where the relationship between the foster parent and the foster child is in a particular state of bliss due to the child holding back their authentic personality for the fear of rejection and being sent to another foster home” (A. Williams, personal foster care training, August 1, 2005). The honeymoon period for teenagers is longer than that of younger children. The implications are that this honeymoon strategy is something innate that is ignited or instigated naturally in the minds of children and is enacted by them. The ability of teenagers to extend the honeymoon period may be contributed to them having being able to have enacted it upon several adults giving them the strength and the ability to hold back years of anger, violent reactions, and rigid intolerance for house rules. Related to the assumptions, this same honeymoon period exists on the mission field in relationship to financial assistance and local pastors.

The honeymoon period is likened to a lion in the wild pouncing, waiting in the high grass looking for the most opportune time to leap and attack its prey. The attack is abrupt and is random at best. The honeymoon in foster care is quite the same. It ends with no warning. There is no segue, and certainly there is no introduction. There is simply a rigid switch from what was to what is. It is imperative not to fall under the guise and into the traps of assumptions in regards to the desire of financial assistance of native pastors on the mission field. No two
mission fields are alike. However, as many advise, it is better to err on the side of caution. To assume that the primary question and concern will be financial contribution will prepare one mentally for the potential of an abrupt transition out of the honeymoon period.

One missionary reports that a honeymoon period between an American missionary and a Latino pastor lasted nearly five years (Johnson, 2009-2017). The missionary was blissfully enjoying traveling to and fro preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ because that is what they are called to do. It was assumed that this is what was absolutely needed because these pastors had no understanding of the scriptures. They were ignorant, unable to read or comprehend, and in desperate need of American expertise, yes? No! Although the pastor did not have an extensive educational background, he was not ignorant. The native pastor’s twenty years of ministry and extensive mission planting had given him an in-depth understanding of the scriptures that did enable him to preach quite eloquently. However, because of the pastor’s years of experience with American missionaries, and his desire to receive financial contributions, his tolerance for dealing with these assumptions were strong. He was able to take the missionary’s misappropriated energies for nearly five years. Then, out of nowhere, the conversations changed. Without notice, the conversation of intent and money became a priority. The shared understanding that the American missionary would partner with the local pastor to reach souls by preaching and having programs became obsolete. The American missionary experienced an awakening for which he was not prepared. That is, they were not dealing with someone who was any
less of a human than they were. He was dealing with a very intentional, street-educated individual who had experience in acquiring financial resources no matter how long it took and what they had to endure to receive them (Johnson, 2009 - 2017).

It has even been reported that some native pastors have aligned themselves with several denominations to receive financial assistance. The changing of mission signs reflecting that of the visiting denomination reflects the desperate and devious nature of some pastors. The very nature of a short-term visiting missionary lends itself as a benefit to these denominational swingers (M. Webster-Moore, personal communication, July 6, 2017). However, random visitations prove to ruin the plots and plans of these native pastors.

This type of behavior among native pastors not only opened up the knowledge of the honeymoon period, it helped the American missionary to realize that a person is a person whether they are in the United States, France, or Cote d’Ivoire. The same personality traits that are commonly found in the United States are found all around the world, even among the poorest people. In the United States, many have learned that the prejudice against the poor does not always prove right. Some of the most eloquent and astute citizens exist among America’s poor. Many of America’s acknowledged brightest and successful individuals have evolved from the most impoverished, trauma stricken scenarios. Though these pastors may be poor and without access to the world’s premier resources, their minds are bright. Some are prudent while others are manipulative. Dishonesty, integrity, opportunity driven, unpredictable, extremely talented, among many
traits, all help to describe the personalities that exist around the world regardless of socioeconomic status. All people have the ability to be the world’s next Einstein. Then too, all have the ability to become susceptible to the temptation of dishonesty due to the precarious scenarios in which that life tends to put so many. Such is the case of many pastors in Latin America who are so giftedly able to take American missionaries through an undetermined honeymoon stage.

One missionary reported that the average honeymoon period was two years. This missionary, who had interacted with forty-five native Latino pastors, reported that most pastors developed rather strong informal relationships with him. The missionary was received without prejudice, and in most cases, was able to preach and operate with exceptional freedom. On average, around the two-year mark many pastors began to open the conversation about financial contribution without warning. In some cases, the request began with small requests. For example, pastors asked for assistance to pay rent and mortgages, a bill, or for a special project that they wanted to accomplish. Over time the requests increased and eventually equated to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

While some pastors have a sincere desire to align themselves with an American group or denomination without any specific intent to receive money, over time the request for financial assistance will typically arise. Pastors with pure intentions when joining a denomination may ask for assistance. When the request is sent, the expectation is that they will receive their request. Unfortunately, if the denomination or granting organization is not in a position to meet the financial request, it is disheartening for the pastor. This disheartening does not negate the
pure intentions of the pastor. It only reflects the place in the minds of most native pastors that American missionaries and missionary groups hold.

Although only slightly, those pastors with more experience with American missionaries proved to have a stronger tolerance for unappreciated actions that extended the honeymoon period. One missionary reported on an independent group of pastors who at one time nearly thirty years prior had been associated with an American denomination. For reasons unknown, this group of pastors broke fellowship with the denomination and remained independent for thirty years. Upon meeting the American missionary, these pastors, many of whom had inherited missions within the fellowship, were open to fellowshipping with the American missionary’s denomination. Within six months of engagement, the missionary had begun to receive requests for assistance to do ministry projects.

Pastors within the fellowship who had seniority via time, were reluctant to interact with the missionary and the denomination. However, these pastors were willing to partner with the missionary to complete various projects. Of course, these projects incurred a great expense and it was the expectation that the missionary and their denomination would assume responsibility for those costs. When the missionary or their denomination did not assume financial responsibility, pastors stopped engagement. It should be noted that pastors within the fellowship who were financially stable did not engage. In fact, this kind of thought process is quite consistent among pastors. It has been the experience of this missionary that vibrant, financially stable missions with a substantial
membership will typically not engage or seek to engage with American missionaries or denominations.

A study of an interaction of an American missionary with a pastor whose mission was vibrant and financially stable proved this argument plausible until they decided to expand and build their mission. Before this point and time, the mission proved to simply want the ministerial expertise of the missionary. The native pastor never requested any financial assistance. However, the pastor was glad to receive contributions from time to time. Three years into the relationship, it was decided that it was time to expand the mission by replicating it in another neighborhood. Although the request was not direct and explicit like most of the others, the implied request for financial assistance was made and there was a subtle expectation that the missionary or the denomination would meet the request.

It should be further noted that missions that are in a tranquil state will have little to no desire to interact with an American missionary. One missionary reported a rare occurrence within a highly populated metropolitan area. A large mission, one with several thousand members, not only rejected the assistance and partnership of the American missionary, the church boasted of their own mission programs that were reaching other countries as far as Spain. A meeting with fifteen ministry leaders that consisted of pastors, ministers, and mission personnel proved to be one that was not typical of native pastors and leaders. There, the pastors and leaders made it quite clear that the people were blessed by the many years of American and European missionary efforts. However, leaders expressed
that it was now time for Colombians to go out into the world and become global missionaries themselves.

While financial stability is a signal that a mission will be unlikely to want to engage with an American missionary, and financial stability is typically associated with large missions, there are missions with smaller memberships that are content, financially stable and do not desire to engage with American missionaries. One case study reports a fellowship of two small missions. The first, a small congregation in a large metropolitan area with a committed group of community members reported no desire to join or be affiliated with the missionary or their denomination. The first mission had started a smaller mission that was about one hour away. As the mission struggled to give birth to the new mission by way of renovating a facility, the American missionary offered help from their denomination. It should be noted that in lieu of financial assistance, the first mission worked extremely hard to acquire the necessary finances to finish the work of the second church without assistance. While the American missionary was always welcome to come and share in the word and fellowship, by their actions, the mission made it very clear that they were and wanted to remain a self-sustainable organization.

While in most places large memberships usually reflected financial stability, in some places massive poverty and government instability proved to override such notions. A case study in Venezuela, during one of the country’s most unstable seasons of government proved that large memberships do not always allow a mission to benefit from the economy of scale. Massive poverty,
the unequal distribution of basic needs, and violence within a community create
great senses of desperateness. Several pastors of large assemblies were vying for
association, partnership, and assistance. The missionary reported that it was very
difficult to navigate the political climate among churches and their desire for
American associates. Here, where the poverty was so in depth and rooted in the
community, even mega missions found themselves equal to small missions in
regard to the search for survival resources among American missionaries.

In general, the implications are clear. Most pastors that interact with
American missionaries on a very intimate level are in need of financial assistance.
The desire to have financial assistance does not imply dishonesty on any pastor or
leaders part, per se. It does, however, reflect a great challenge, that is, pastors who
are seeking to meet the needs of their communities with access to limited
resources. It is here where missionism plays a great role in the mission world.
American churches with a cognizance of their financial privilege can recognize
the elite ability to support missions in these environments. The intentionality
around missionism can aid both American missionaries and native pastors in
fulfilling their call. For, in reality, the need for money may not necessarily be a
need as much as it is an inherent plight. The American missionary then becomes a
conduit of resources whereby the global church can employ systems in which
finances can flow from those in excess to those who are deficient of financial
resources. We therefore conclude that these pastors are not in search for money,
per se. They are in search of ways to fulfill their call to humanity, and it may be
that the American church has an obligation to fill that said need.
Building Denominations among Established Missions

Latin America is not deficient in denominations. It is deficient, for the most part, in financial resources. Unfortunately, for some, the need for financial resources is sometimes equated with the need for denominational or spiritual covering. This again extends the dialogue of who or what North American missionaries encounter when they reach Latin America. It may be that the narrative of encounters with so-called primitive people still lingers among many who are not well traveled. However, within the grandeur of Andean South America live some of the world’s most intelligent, innovative, and extravagant minds. Those who managed to escape total colonization by escaping to the mountains, preserving the beauty of their culture, are not a subhuman, subservient species in dire need of American or western influence.

Case study after case study often reveal that pastors and leaders align themselves with and become members of denominations because of the hope and expectation that at some point they will receive financial assistance, whether on a consistent or time-to-time basis. Whether one subscribes to the terminology or labels or not, a protestant in the United States or Europe is a protestant in Latin America. These are pastors and leaders who were once a part of the Catholic Church. They have now relinquished their membership with the intent either to start their own movement or simply to be independent and free of any religious structure or entity.
Much like any other pastor or leader in the United States that has left a particular denomination or religious structure and has established themselves as a pastor or leader in their community, the Latin American native pastor has a civic pride that comes along with any accomplishment. This is especially important and should be noted in a society that is eighty percent Catholic. A person makes a lot of sacrifices to establish a Protestant Christian mission for the sake of the people in their community in these regions. No matter how large or small the mission is, after accomplishing such a task, to have it diminished by an American missionary who comes with the necessary resources to cause the mission to have more impact is demeaning, dehumanizing, and discouraging. Especially after one has given all that they have to establish a work and impact the lives of a group of people — whether thirty, three hundred, or three thousand. Nevertheless, for the sake of the ability to expand the ministry, many pastors endure the humiliation.

Unfortunately, this is why many of the pastor’s name-switch. When the Assemblies of God missionary is visiting, Assemblies of God is on the mission marquee. When the Church of God missionary is visiting, the Church of God name is on the marquee. Other times it is Church of God in Christ, Church of the Brethren, etc. In some cases this type of behavior is indirectly coerced because of the requirements and conditions that come along with receiving financial assistance from many denominations.

Again, the assumptions of many North American missionaries may or may not put them in a position to be most effective in these regions. These assumptions may put both them and the native pastors in a difficult predicament.
The precarious position of many pastors will not provide space for complete and outright honesty, honesty that says, “As a pastor I am not in need of another denomination or covering. I am in need of your finances and finances alone.” Indulging in that level of honesty is very risky, especially when one may forfeit their ability to receive much needed finances. Would it be more productive to develop relationships with pastors, to partner with them to do ministry, and, if native pastors request financial assistance, to give them financial assistance? If they request to be a member of one’s denomination receive them. Absent of missionism, the mentality of denominationally driven missionaries inadvertently causes breaches in their indigenous relationships and unintentionally cause those natives to err because of their precarious state and importunity.

American missionaries may find that in a 21st-century Latin American context, mission planting or denominational spreading may not be their primary assignment. Unfortunately for some, the need or desire to spread their denomination is equated with kingdom building and winning souls. Lest we forget, the Catholic Church proselytized, by force, the whole of what we know today as Latin America. Those who escaped the Catholic conquest via Spain or Portugal hundreds of years ago have been reached by their converts over the past one hundred years. Within the last one hundred and twenty years, the protestant movement has penetrated the lands and mountains of Latin America. Much of the land has been proselytized. Pastors who have left the Catholic Church have established themselves, and in many cases established their own denominations and fellowships. Much of the spread of American denominations in Latin
America started between 1930 and 1950. Those denominations have made their mark, whether good or bad.

From the infiltration of these denominations have come a plethora of subsets of denominations and fellowships. This study reveals that Latin America has had their fill of denominations. While the implications are not conclusive, they are substantial. Some pastors and leaders do desire to be a part of American denominations. For many, the associations bring a different level of credibility. However, one may find that from simply studying the day-to-day life of missions that these local ecclesiastical organizations are fully equipped and able to reach their communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ. For the most part, they are not in need of denominational affiliation. They are, however, in need of financial assistance to help fill in the ministry gaps.

Massive penetration of American denominations, in many cases, becomes a duplication of efforts that create awkward relationships between the American missionary and the indigenous Latin American pastor. The absence of denomination or the need for denominational ties may lend itself to the development of more true and honest relationships. The planting of missions may find itself to be a duplication of efforts of local people. The facilitation of such relationships may not be feasible in this modern context. It may not even be necessary. Making a distinction between what the local pastor needs and what the American missionary wants may be the defining principle in moving forward with Christian work in Andean Latin America.
Planting versus Partnering

These research findings beg the question: is the time of mission planting over on a large scale in Latin America? To answer this question, one must take into consideration the work of the Catholic and other churches over the last several centuries. According to one Colombian pastor, within the last one hundred years, many Protestant reformations have penetrated various areas of Latin America (W. Torres, personal communication, October 20, 2015). Even in places where the Spanish or Portuguese were not able to colonize, Christians were able to proselytize —whether Catholic or Protestant. In the eastern plains of Colombia, several native tribes, like the Pia Poco, were able, to some extent, to escape total Spanish conquest. They have maintained their language and culture. But, Protestant groups converted them to Christianity in the early 20th century (E. Cortes, personal communication, February 12, 2015).

Much of Latin of America has been blanketed with the Christian faith. You will find those who are not consistent or faithful in attending weekly worship services still are committed to the Catholic Church. It is rare to encounter one who is an agnostic or atheist. Where there is no Catholic faith, there is Protestant faith. In a country that is blanketed with the faith of Jesus Christ, whether Catholic or Protestant, one may be puzzled with the question, what is the need for American Christian missionaries in Latin America? A Protestant may answer that question by saying that the area is still two-thirds Catholic and they need the Protestant faith. The question then becomes, are the indigenous Protestant pastors not equipped to preach and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.
from a Protestant doctrinal perspective? Moreover, what is the desire of Protestant pastors preaching and spreading the gospel?

The implications suggest that Protestant pastors prefer the financial support of their American counterparts to continue to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Protestant way in Latin America. Many Protestant pastors in Latin America have claimed freedom from sin and the Catholic Church. Many missions carry “Libertar” (freedom) in their name. In addition to this name association with protestant missions is the typical language that is consistent with missions that have freed themselves from the Catholic Church. When a preacher approaches the congregation, he asks a question. He asks, “Quien vive”? Which is to say who is alive? The congregation responds with “Cristo”, which means Jesus Christ is alive. The preacher then poses the questions, “A su nombre”? Which is to say, and what belongs to his name? The congregation responds by saying, “Gloria.” The preacher finalizes the call and response by asking a final question. In the Pacific coast, the question is, “Y ese nombre es”? The congregation responds by saying, Poderoso, poderoso, o poderoso”! Which is to say, the name of Jesus is the most powerful name there is. The final question varies from region to region. But, the entirety of the exchange points to one central meaning. That is, they are free from the bondage of sin and the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is very strong and is deemed by many Protestants in Latin America as a demonic stronghold. Many believe that the spirit of witchcraft is practiced within the Catholic Church. Therefore, this kind of a doctrine is crucial to Protestants in Latin America. Even with less than twenty percent of the population being
Protestant, these pastors and leaders have branded this way through both South and Central America.

The divide between the Catholic Church and the Protestant church in regions within Latin America is so strong that in many cases Catholics do not claim to be Christians. In a set of interviews on the Pacific coast, one missionary was astounded that so many people he encountered were supposed atheists and agnostics. The missionary was trying to make sense of the high number of agnostics and atheists in the region of Colombia, especially because the country was nearly ninety eight percent Christian—Catholic or Protestant. While having casual conversation with people in the downtown area, El Centro, he would ask if they were Christian. Nearly hundreds replied, no. The missionary was astounded. That was, until he began to dig deeper and realized that these individuals were Catholic. In these instances to be Christian was not to be Catholic and to be Catholic was not to be Christian.

Even though Protestants take up less than twenty percent of the population, they have been successful in laying a strong foundation for Protestantism in Latin America. In fact, most have taken ownership of the spread of Protestantism in direct opposition of the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, what these pastors truly lack is the resources, in many cases, to continue the movement. While Protestant pastors have taken ownership of the movement of Christianity versus Catholicism in this region, they do not reject or marginalize American Protestant groups that come in their societies to work alongside them to spread Protestantism. This welcoming spirit does not, however, negate the fact that the
pastors would like to take on the task themselves. In fact, many pastors see themselves as great apostles spreading Christianity, as opposed to Catholicism, throughout the land. The lack of financial resources prevents them from doing such.

It is here where missionism finds a great place. The spirit of liberal giving which overtakes those believers who have a surplus then becomes the catalyst by which the gaps in spreading the Protestant message are filled in Latin America. In these regions, you have very qualified pastors and leaders who are capable of fulfilling the assignment of the mission. In areas where the qualifications are not so comparable to American standards, the potential resides. In either case, you have willing, homebred Christian leaders who desire to spread the Protestant faith, with or without the manpower of American missionaries.

After reading such studies, one may presume that the time for American missionaries has ended in Latin America. Conversely, the statistics show that Protestant Christianity does not even represent a full quarter of the population. Therefore, if Protestantism seeks to spread itself, there is an evident great need. Whether the need employs American missionaries or not, is beyond the scope of this research. The implications show a strong sense and desire of indigenous people to own the movement. The implications also reveal that the indigenous pastors desire to partner with American missionary groups. But, if the partnership is to be a true, honest, and healthy one, it should be a partnership of financial support.
The need for the American missionary has not changed. The way in which that need is employed in this context has. If modern Protestant American missionaries are to have the same level of significance they once had when Protestantism was new to these Catholic nations, the work of missionaries must be repurposed, redesigned, and redefined. If American denominations seek to replicate themselves in new communities in Latin America, if they are to be successful in every way, they should be prepared to be a financial partner, not necessarily mission planters alone.

Many of the pastors and leaders have an understanding of the basic rudiments of the faith. Other than financial resources, pastors desire to learn more of theological complexities and ministry practices used for outreach. It must be clear, one cannot ignore the anecdotal findings of this study. From a Protestant point of view, there is still a great need to plant more missions in some areas and fortify missions in others. However, what this looks like today will be much different than what it looked like in the 20th century. Yes, pastors and leaders are willing to carry an American based denominational name on their building. But, with that name comes a great expense. The implications are that the true and authentic need is financial assistance and integrity.

This area of the world is much different from the 10/40 window, the geographic area on the world’s map where Christianity has not penetrated substantially. Because of this lack of substantial Christian faith, many American missionary groups and denominations find themselves more apt to give and totally undergird ministries in these areas. This same obligation does not exist in
Latin American regions. Study of one American denomination reveals that their assumptions in Latin America is that pastors simply desire to have their name, follow their rules, and pay dues. For a small minority this is true. However, on a large scale, pastors are only willing to carry the denominational name if there are financial means attached to it. This is true whether the denomination realizes it earlier or later. Some groups believe that Latin American pastors want to be a part because of the doctrine. Therefore, missionaries find it difficult to find funding for work in Latin America. On the contrary, these same group prioritize both evangelism and finances for the 10/40 window because of the need of the gospel. If American Protestant denominations are to be productive in Latin America they should be prepared to 1) plant their own missions, 2) partner financially with indigenous pastors to plant missions, or 3) be prepared to financially sustain indigenous pastors and leaders.
III.

Results of the Study

In Andean South America, over the course of five years, I conducted multiple observational (ethnographic) studies. As opposed to a gift, in some cases American missionaries offered both human and outreach resources in an effort to create a partnership to reach those in the mission and community from a social transformational focus, rather than the traditional preaching, to build the mission focus.

The Blake Urban Initiatives

To do this, the North American missionaries employed the Blake Urban Initiatives, which are five human need priorities that initiate community transformation. The Blake Initiatives seek to 1) increase positive academic outcomes, 2) work to prepare community members for the workforce, 3) decrease criminal and negative activity, 4) condition citizens to build capacity to build community, and 5) educate community members in financial management. By implementing creative programming that includes one or multiple priorities, missionaries found that relationships with indigenous pastors grew, regardless of the presence of financial assistance or not.

According to UNICEF, nearly twenty percent of the population in Colombia is between the ages of ten and eighteen. Missions spend a great deal of
ministerial energy on this population. Most non-Catholic churches host a Saturday night service specifically for this population. In Ecuador, no matter the size of the mission, a ministry could have a youth ministry of two hundred children or more. In a case study of missions from various parts of the country, missions with fewer than twenty-five adult members had ministries for children under the age of 12 with no less than seventy-five and as much as one hundred and seventy-five children. Whether the pastors see this as an opportunity simply to invest in youth or boost potential membership is not known. What has been found is that pastors are highly vested in the ministry of youth. This investment made the Blake Urban Initiatives a perfect medium for outreach and partnership, especially because most of the children come from homes that have no association with a mission. Several instances have shown that the presence of the Blake Urban Initiatives programs—resources and materials—enabled pastors to extend their reach in the community to youth. This was an enablement that was highly appreciated among pastors.

One particular case is the Mildred Casenia Wells Campaign, a youth mentorship program. The vision of the program is to combat the introduction of prostitution, drugs, and gang violence among preteens by introducing them to Five Pathways to Success. The pathways are based on principles taught in the mid-1900s by Mildred Wells, hence the program name. The goal is to instill God-centered principles of self-worth, accountability, and potential. The Five Pathways to Success are, 1) Christ Centered Lives, 2) Creativity and Innovation, 3) Integrity, Values, and Morals, 4) Education and Intelligence, and 5) Commitment to Community (Locally and Globally). The team that created the
program replicated and modernized Mrs. Wells’ strategies and lessons in an effort to recreate a 21st-century Wells Impact Model. By partnering with pastors in Andean South America, the team seeks to create a social imperative that will uplift a generation. Through songs, dance, tee shirts, and lessons, the team not only branded the Wells Impact Model, they further enabled pastors to reach the youth in their community. It should be noted that one pastor from Venezuela took a bus for three days simply to receive material from the campaign to use in his ministry.

The acceptance of such partnership proved to be beneficial for pastors and worth the creation of such programming for the team. In Barranquilla, Colombia, a mission with fewer than fifteen members, displayed great reception for this form of collaboration. A team of seven missionaries was visiting a week before the official launch of the campaign. The pastor heard of the possibility of reaching more youth through the campaign. He did not wait for the materials. Without any prior planning, he organized for a youth campaign the exact same day that he heard of the campaign. To these seven missionaries’ surprise, they were privileged to minister to over one hundred and fifty youth that afternoon. The pastor was eager to announce to the children the new program, lessons, and activities that were forthcoming. Surprisingly to the team, a mission that only has ten people in attendance during their regular weekly worship had nearly two hundred youth in their youth ministry.

The official launch of the campaign proved to have these same consistencies. The launch of the campaign in Buenaventura, Colombia brought
more children than the team was prepared for. The mission in this particular city averages fifty to seventy-five people in their weekly worship services. The team was prepared to service three hundred youth because of the size of the city. The team found that they had underestimated. They were right in that they needed more material because the city was larger. However, they did not realize that they needed quadruple the amount of materials expected. During the official launch, the American missionaries had to request that the pastors stop bringing children. The children were coming in by groups of forty and the team did not have the capacity nor the materials to service what the mission had the potential to serve. Like the pastors of Barranquilla, the pastors in Buenaventura were excited to receive materials and ways to reach more youth in their communities.

The consistency is the same whether for money—the primary desire is money—or materials, pastors desire assistance in building capacity for ministry. This was also displayed among pastors in Ecuador. However, much different than the pastors in Colombia, the pastors in Ecuador gathered other pastors so that they could share the benefits of their relationships with American missionaries. In each city where the campaign launched in Ecuador, pastors gathered between fifteen and twenty pastors to receive the materials. Pastors were both receptive and eager to receive materials. These pastors inquired about exact practices that were used in the United States to both recruit and retain youth in their ministries.

The ratio of adults who attend worship services to youth who attend youth ministry was similar in Ecuador to what it was in Colombia. There was usually four times the amount of children that attended youth ministry as there were
adults who attended worship services. In Guayaquil, approximately thirty-five adults attended worship while nearly two hundred youth attended youth ministry in Site A. Site B had approximately forty adults in worship and nearly one hundred and twenty five youth in youth ministry. In Santa Elena, twelve adults attended the worship service while seventy youth attended the youth ministry services. Portoviejo attracted 50 adults to the worship service while having nearly one hundred in the youth service. Rocafuerte’s mission had twelve adults in worship and nearly one hundred and twenty in the youth service. Materials proved to build pastors’ capacity to reach and impact youth. They were both ecstatic and grateful and ready to receive more materials to continue the impact.

An exceptional case exists with the ministry in Venezuela. Because of the schedule of working missionaries who had both a secular and ministry career simultaneously, the launch of the campaign was scheduled to take place over the course of twelve months in six countries. One pastor from Venezuela, representing six pastors in the metropolitan area of Valencia, took a three-day bus trip to receive their materials. They were the last country on the launch and waiting was just not possible. The pastors in Venezuela received the materials with joy and quickly began employing the campaign to reach youth in the neighborhoods in their cities.

Second only to children is the priority to minister to the many women that claim the streets and the neighborhoods in Latin America. Many of the children who attend youth ministries come from single parent homes and pastors seek to minister to the women who are the head of them. Missionary groups who
partnered with pastors to provide women’s ministry also found that pastors were more apt to partner with them regardless of the presence of financial support. American missionaries reported that several pastors in various regions were anxious to receive any ministry assistance specific to women. As with the children’s ministry, pastors were open and were not critical of new ministry ideas and opportunities.

It should be noted that the more urban and impoverished a community was, the more anxious pastors were to receive ministry partnership with women’s ministry. As opposed to the children’s campaign, where acceptance for partnership was equal regardless of the location or socio-economic status, the more rural a community was the less anxious they were to receive ministry partnership. In the village of the Pia Poco, where there is no presence of urban renewal, the pastor was receptive but not anxious to receive women’s ministry. Likewise, in Villavicencio, the pastor was receptive to women’s ministry but not anxious about it. In highly urbanized cities such as Bogota, Buenaventura, Cali, Cartagena, Barranquilla, Guayaquil, Lima, and Tocuyito there was a strong desire to partner in women’s ministry. The consistent finding of the study is that where there are urban cities, high poverty, and a high prevalence of children, there is an anxiousness to receive partnership with women’s ministry.

Pastors were especially receptive to private meetings where women talked among women about issues that pertain only to women, both conferences and half-day retreats. One missionary team created an online school for women called The Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation. The Center for
Women’s Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation addresses disparities in education among women by providing educational opportunities within entrepreneurship and social activism. The missionary team believes that if women have access to strategies and theories for business, they can create the income that can support their families. Furthermore, with access and exposure to theories of change and strategies for impact, women can help transform their neighborhoods. Pastors were very receptive to this school. Although American instructors teach courses online, women gain access to classes through the local mission. Thus, The Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation becomes an outreach of the local mission that pastors can use to both build the local mission and reach women within their communities.

Missionaries also reported that simply providing educational materials for pastors was satisfactory. Whether it was a book with doctrinal materials or a class on innovative ways to reach people within their community, pastors were open and receptive. Materials that assisted pastors in expanding their reach seemed to be the equivalent to financial assistance. Like the Blake Urban Initiatives, receiving materials seemed to overshadow the desire to have financial assistance. The implications are clear. Pastors desire to increase their ability to expand their reach and build their ministries. If financial assistance is not an option, ministry tools or collaboration is an alternative. The Blake Urban Initiatives work well for missionary groups who do not intend to or do not have the means to give financial assistance to pastors in Latin America.
Relationships with Government

In the United States, Pentecostal and Radical groups have experienced a greater ability to reach citizens in their community by building relationships with governments. During the first half of the 20th century, when Pentecostal and Radical groups were growing, Pentecostal and Radical groups opposed relationships with governments because of their doctrine of Sanctification. Unlike their Baptist counterparts, many Pentecostals and Radicals did not take the lead in the civil rights movement. Their focus was strictly on holiness and sanctification and preparing the Christian to get to heaven. The second half of the 20th century proved to be different. One significant example is that of the late Bishop Henry Louis Ford. He was a leader in the Church of God in Christ, a Pentecostal and Radical denomination. Bishop Ford had great relationships with political leaders and through his leadership the Church of God in Christ gained influence with national civic leaders in America. This proved productive for the entire denomination and became a trend among many Pentecostals and Radicals. Many pastors report that these types of relationships proved productive for their ministries. By coming out of their religious silos, pastors were able to access both human and financial resources to increase their ability to reach their communities. Because of this, The Blake Urban Initiatives was able to explode on a wide scale, to some extent, in the United States. Thus, the recommendation of the thesis was the adoption of the Blake Urban Initiatives and the building of relationships
with governments on the foreign field to ignite this same type of growth. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

The United States is a Protestant driven nation with Protestant prone politicians. Grievously for Protestants in Latin America, their countries are primarily Catholic with Catholic politicians. The recommendations for Latin American pastors to build relationships with governments proved unproductive. Politicians in Colombia are actually anti-Protestant to some extent. Overall, politicians are working continuously to clear the cities of Protestant missions. In the year of 2015, politicians began the process of trying to make laws to take Protestant missions out of the city limits in Colombia. If successful, Protestant missions would not be allowed to operate within the city limits. This would force them to the rural areas. With Protestant missions being in the rural areas many residents will lose access to Protestant worship opportunities because most citizens do not have transportation. Thus, in Colombia, relationships with governments did not prove to benefit pastors, their missions, or significantly impact their degree of success.

Although Venezuela is a country with a high population of Catholic citizens, their current government is neither Catholic nor Protestant prone. The current government is anti-religion in general. One missionary noted that during the food and medicine crisis of 2016, the Catholic Church sent thousands of dollars of medical supplies to the country for the citizens. The supplies were left at the border to rot away. This case seemed to prove that the Venezuelan government did not have deference for the Catholic Church or for any religion at
all. Like pastors in Colombia, relationships with the government would not prove to be a variable that would impact the degree of success for a mission.

Although relationships with governments are not necessary for ministry success, it does not mean that they cannot prove to be productive. In a rare case, one missionary group found that a relationship with the mayor of the city proved to position the group to have a broader reach. Unfortunately, the relationship was not about the government being vested in the success of the Protestant group or interested in building a relationship. The city is high in the mountains and on the outskirts of the country. The city receives very little government assistance and saw the relationship with the group as an opportunity to impact more of its citizens. Unfortunately, the group was not able to meet the full expectations of the mayor. Thus, the mayor abruptly ended the relationship. Much like pastors seeking financial assistance, this relationship was strictly about the government meeting a goal, the needs of its citizens. It was not about the relationship or the ministry.

In general, missions have to work on their own to build their own credibility in their communities. Missions that are successful are those that have worked to build relationships with the members of the community in which their mission resides. A pastor who is married and a noticeably good father gains credence among those in the community. It should be noted that pastors with large families that support them tend to have more influence in the community. Friends of family, and friends of friends tend to increase a pastor’s ability to accomplish his ministry goals. Not only are there financial benefits, there are human resources
available to build a team to do ministry. Those human resources also go a long way in regard to word of mouth. Thus, in these settings integrity and respect within the community offers more benefits that are equal to or greater than the relationships that might be cultivated with government officials.

An Anthropological Approach

For an American missionary entering new communities in Latin America, the same qualities mentioned in the previous section prove to make missionaries more successful in building relationships with native pastors that had rich textures. A relationship with a rich texture refers to a relationship that is likened to those within a family—a brother, sister, mother, grandfather, or uncle. Relationships referred to as not being rich in texture are transactional, business relationships—an associate, business partner or stranger. Missionaries noticed that older missionaries who are married, have raised children, and have established ministries in the United States gain credibility at a faster rate than younger missionaries who are not married, have no children, and have less time in ministry. However, young unmarried missionaries reported that adoption of indigenous cultures while interacting with indigenous mission groups allowed for a greater level of credibility at a quicker rate.

The use of the Spanish language, no matter the level of competency, proved to increase the level of engagement of local people with American missionaries. American missionaries who were not fluent in Spanish were extremely nervous when attempting to use Spanish phrases and salutations. For
example, saying good morning in Spanish is, “buenos dias.” Or, when asked to go somewhere or when asked to do something, most Colombians respond by saying, “listo.” That is the equivalent of the American colloquial phrase “cool” or “I got you.” Such simplistic phrases made American missionaries very nervous when trying to engage authentically with Latin Americans. However, no matter the level of nervousness that accompanied the attempts to use Spanish, which actually caused the stumbling through words and phrases, Latin Americans typically had a great appreciation for missionaries who used their language.

One missionary reported that without any Spanish classes, they delivered an entire message in Spanish. A five-minute inspirational talk nearly turned to fifteen minutes. The missionary stumbled through ninety percent of the words — not knowing where to put accents, how to pronounce Spanish authentic letters, or the rules of language. The missionary used Google Translator to translate the message from English to Spanish. So, there is no guarantee that he actually spoke what was intended to be said — especially since Google Translator was fairly new as a resource in 2009. However, regardless of the aforementioned difficulty, Colombians in attendance were ecstatic that the missionary took the time to translate the message into their language. There seemed to be little to no concern for the missionary’s ability to speak Spanish fluently or eloquently.

Another group of missionaries reported that while traveling in Colombia, the use of authentic phrases allowed them to jump start relationships with Colombians. While traveling over the course of a year, this same group reported that their ability to build relationships increased when they stayed in the homes of
Colombians rather than in hotels. The first trip, the group stayed in hotels and ate at restaurants. While they did not experience static in their engagement, these same relationships experienced a greater level of intimacy during their second trip when they stayed in the homes of the Colombians, ate at their tables, slept in their beds, and communed in their neighborhoods.

When these missionaries entered the country of Ecuador for the first time, they experienced greater levels of intimacy immediately. This was attributed to the missionaries staying in the homes of Ecuadorians as opposed to in hotels like the first Colombian experience. Upon their arrival into the country, Ecuadorians welcomed them into their homes. The close proximity of living spaces, the newness of home amenities, or the lack therefore, created a greater level of dependency and vulnerability for the American missionaries. The greater level of dependency and vulnerability created more space and opportunity for interaction. Trust levels increased. Thus, deeper relationships were formed in shorter amounts of time and the texture of these relationships proved richer.

Youth On A Mission is a youth outreach mission group of the Church of God in Christ. Each year, Youth On A Mission takes two to three groups of thirty to fifty missionaries to various places around the world to do mission work. Missionaries traveling with this group reported that over a thirty-year period they were able develop stronger, more intimate relationships with local people by staying among the people of the country in which they are serving (J. Rivers, personal communication, July 20, 2014). In places where the group stayed in hotels, they were not able to develop these same types of relationships. It was also
noted that in countries where staying in the homes of local people was not possible and missionaries stayed in the church, Latinos who stayed among the American Missionaries were able to develop intimate relationships at a greater rate than those natives who were not among the missionaries. It should also be noted that missionaries who did not associate with local people and or did not attempt to enact local norms, although in the same environment, were not able to achieve equal intimacy and relationship developments. The quality and texture of their relationships were weak. The implications are intimate relationships are not only formed from being in close quarters. They may also be created through cultural intimacy and bi-culturalism.

Other missionary groups reported some of the same differences. A group of missionaries, with similar personalities, living in the same space on the mission field for an extended amount of time experienced different levels of cultural intimacy depending on their ability to interact in an authentic Latino way with the Latin Americans among them. The use of phrases, the eating of authentic foods, and the refusal to be treated as an American guest were all common behaviors that could be attributed to one’s ability to jumpstart and build relationships and intimacy in settings on the mission field in shorter amounts of time than those who do not engage in that way, culturally.

The implications show that simply engaging does not provide the same relationship results as intentionally engaging authentically in a way that displays an appreciation for Latino culture. Missionaries and missionary groups report that learning the cultural practices, norms, and values positioned them to build
relationships that extend beyond financial requests and it increased communication between mission trips. Through social media platforms, missionaries report that these types of relationships produce continual family-like communication that is not need based and is rich in texture. Latinos are reported to inquire of the state of missionary lives. This includes but has not been limited to their health, children, employment status, etc. Latinos engaged in this way develop family oriented connections to missionaries. One missionary reported that the more they indulged in the culture, the more the relationship(s) strengthened – the richer the texture.

Latin Americans develop relationships in ways that are a bit different than Americans from the United States. One missionary reported that upon building a new relationship with a new individual in Latin America he always proposed to stay in his or her home. This particular missionary reported that, because of this, his relationships with one pastor in Buenaventura, Colombia, naturally and immediately spread to both the immediate and extended family of the pastor. This particular missionary became so familiar with the people of the mission that they developed relationships with people in the community. Business owners, professors, and community members alike came to visit this particular missionary when they were in the city. The observation showed that the missionary’s intentionality around being an authentic Colombian produced extremely rich textures in relationships, in a way that was unprecedented in Colombians’ previous experiences. The missionary’s extreme vulnerability produced irregular, but very productive results.
The results were similar with relationships for the missionary in Guayaquil and Rocafuerte, two cities in Ecuador. Whenever the missionaries exerted themselves in an effort to be authentically Latino, the relationships increased in intense intimate, family-like textures in shorter amounts of time. Sleeping in the homes of Ecuadorians, eating at their tables, and interacting with them in their setting proved to enhance relationships. Not all homes have running water. Some families bathe from a pan of cold water. Other families bath from a shower of cold water. Very few families in some areas have toilet seats or hot water for showers. Acting in a way that accepted this as normal produced a richer texture of relationship. When money was not an option, the ability to create relationships with rich textures helped sustain relationships between American missionaries and Ecuadorians.

It takes a great deal of observation of norms and interactions to accomplish rich textures in relationships. Missionaries reported that mistakes are naturally made in the beginning stages. Avoiding condescending tones in relationships is almost impossible at first because one is attempting to be someone they are naturally not. However, over time, one will be able to gain insight into the culture and be able to indulge without the awkward appearance and undertone. With practice, eventually missionaries will begin to be able to authentically mimic behaviors and languages.
Summary of Site Observations

There were a plethora of variations among ministry characteristics and outcomes in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. It is understood that no entity is the same. What a specific missionary brings to a group can be the same in four different places. Whether that is a vision to reach youth, eradicate poverty, make disciples, or perform miraculous healings, the implementation will change depending on what meets the missionary in the community. Conditions in any given mission field play a major role in determining outcomes. The wealth or poverty of any given mission field contributes to the outcome of mission programs in a field. It also indirectly determines what a missionary will be able to provide as far as programming is concerned. The culture of engagement also plays another vital role. Some communities are more apt to engage while others circumstances do not allow for them to think of anything besides survival. However, even within these very unavoidable realities, there lie certain consistencies that cultural norms produce no matter where a mission is placed. Thus, the study of four different mission fields with a variation of transcending characteristics gives implications of what a successful mission actually could look like.

Site A was a traditional Pentecostal mission that preached the gospel of holiness and sanctification. Like the other sites, the leader of the mission believed in holiness and sanctification and embraced the prophetic. The worship services
were very modern. This mission had missionaries who engaged with them who both did and did not use anthropological approaches. The missionary who used anthropological approaches was very successful in building relationships. When the American mentality accompanied by arrogance prevailed it destroyed relationships — in the absence of anthropological approaches. Both the pastor and his wife were educated individuals with distinguished credentials. While the pastor of the mission was involved in sporadic humanitarian work, the primary activities of the mission were Sunday morning worship, mid-week Bible study, and occasional youth ministry.

The size of the mission was significantly smaller than other missions. Compared to other missions, this mission had a significantly low amount of requests sent to the American parent denomination. The mission, unlike many other local pastors, without money being the center of the relationship, had a high sense of loyalty to the American denomination. However, even with little to no desire to acquire help from the American denomination, after a decade of service to their community, the pastor seemed to continuously face difficulty in trying to grow his mission. That was one of his primary goals. The method of operation proved unsuccessful.

Site B was similar to site A in that the pastor preached in the tradition of Pentecostals and Radicals except that the mission would more than likely be considered Radical. The worship services were extremely conservative. This mission had missionaries who engaged with them who did use anthropological approaches. The missionary was very successful in gaining relationships and
doing ministry here. They believed in the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But, they
did not force converts to seek the experience. This site was located in a small
village and it was the only mission in the village, although there was another
village less than five miles away with a mission. Most of the citizens who were
Christians living in the village attended the aforementioned mission.

The goals of the mission were quite simplistic. The pastor wanted to
engage his community in Sunday morning worship services and Wednesday
evening bible studies. Nearly fifty percent of the community engaged in the
mission. The governmental structure of the community was very democratic and
community-driven. Members of the community worked to support each other on
both the personal and community levels. The pastor of the mission represented the
community as government personnel. Because of this, the relationship between
the government and the mission was great. In actuality, the community saw little
difference between government and mission.

The mission showed the ability to move seamlessly throughout the
community without any resistance. Although the goals of the mission were
simplistic, whatever the mission wanted to do, they did. The mission was seen as
the light of the community. The mission was situated across from the community
school. Between the school and the mission, all community town halls were
housed and direction came from one or the other. The mission decided to expand
its walls to be able to provide more services to youth —post the introduction of
the Mildred Wells Campaign. The community was very supportive —both those
who attended the mission and those who did not—of all programs instituted by the mission.

The association between government and mission allowed the pastor to move throughout the community without resistance. Even though they were few, the pastor’s attempts to do outreach were typically always successful and never met resistance. In general, the pastor of the mission was able to reach his goals and keep a consistent membership in his mission.

Site C was a thriving mission with a medium sized membership. The pastor of the mission was extremely radical in his preaching. The pastor openly encouraged members of the mission to fight for their faith and resist the modern cultural pull for religious compromise in an effort to remain relevant. The worship services were conservatively modern. This mission had missionaries who engaged with them who did use anthropological approaches. The missionary was very successful in gaining relationships and doing ministry here. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was preached. The members were receptive to receiving the experience. The mission did not have any specific or intentional relationships with governments, government officials, or non-profit organizations. However, the mission did employ various forms of the Blake Urban Initiatives.

The pastor of this mission had great vision to reach into the community and engage in social work. The pastor worked with other pastors throughout the country to found a non-profit organization for the purpose of specifically doing humanitarian work. Through the non-profit, the members of the mission engaged in literacy programs to decrease illiteracy, after school enrichment programs to
keep youth out of trouble, senior citizen programs to care for the community’s most vulnerable seniors, and many more programs. Typically, the radical preaching, dogmas, and doctrines would keep very liberal thinkers away from a mission. However, the Blake Urban Initiatives attracted people to the mission and seemed to create a bridge. In essence, the Blake Urban Initiatives became a stabilizer for extreme radical missions in regards to attracting new membership.

Among the very radical teaching, the pastor was able, to a very great extent, to achieve his goals as a mission. The pastor of the mission was able to keep a steady membership in his mission while attracting a great number of community members to receive outreach assistance.

Site D was the mission with the conglomerate of ministry resources. Site D was an actually smaller mission within a smaller city. So, the ratio between population and actual membership was actually high. The mission actually employed the Blake Urban Initiatives in the midst of preaching an extreme and Radical doctrine of holiness. What made the difference with this mission was the relationship it had with the government.

The mission was able to make bold moves throughout the city because the government officials partnered with them to do so. Thus, they experienced very high degrees of success in ministry. The mission was Radical as opposed to Pentecostal. The worship services were very exuberant. This mission had missionaries who engaged with them who both did and did not use anthropological approaches. The missionary who used anthropological approaches at this site was very successful in gaining relationships. Though small,
this mission seemed very successful in their ability to reach their goals. There seemed to be no lack among them.

IV.

Conclusion

The most successful mission seemed to be the one with the four-pronged approach, confirming the thesis of this paper, that 21st-century Pentecostal and Radical Christian Missionaries with cultural training who embrace relationships with local governments as well as network with other non-profit organizations, and employ the Blake Urban Initiatives will demonstrate a greater ability to produce successful missions. However, it is very circumstantial. The religious nature of Andean South America is very Catholic prone. Therefore, the governmental culture does not complement Protestant missions. This religious culture works very well for Catholic missions. In some instances, this can become a barrier to success for Protestant missions.

It is rare, but possible to find government leaders who are not Catholic or Catholic government leaders who support the work of Protestant missions. In these rare cases, government relationships become a large plus for missions who are Protestants. Unless of course, one enters a community where Protestant citizens gain political prominence—as in the case in Site C. Otherwise, missions have to work hard to build credibility and relationships within the neighborhood that they serve. Even when this is the case, missions still often do to thrive. This is
especially critical in very poor communities where the faith in government does not really exist. A mission in this scenario has the opportunity to become the propitiation for the people to their dilemmas in lieu of government for the community whose government is in error or does not seemingly make the people a priority. Thus, the mission becomes the center for hope —the government problem. The implications are that citizens have hope in those who exert authority in their favor. Whether the mission or the government, when the citizens can see what is in it for them, they tend to follow and embrace.

The Radical or Pentecostal mission that only employs preaching as a means to reach the community seems to have the greatest amount of difficulty in building ministry. In existence for several years in the community, with or without family support, it seemed that the mission at Site A needed something more to build and expand. It was very clear that those missionaries who engaged with people the Colombian way—used their traditions, attempted to speak their language, worship like them, and wore their garments—had the greatest success. Suspending one’s American self at the border became a plus for American missionaries.

There were two observations that should be acknowledged. In dealing with American missionary groups, the one thing outside of money that was a priority was partnership. One missionary reported having built a relationship with a native with over twenty years of mission planting experience. The local leader expressed sincerely wanting to be a part of the American denomination. However, over time the local leader proved that what was really wanted was partnership by
way of mission planting. That is, the leader would plant the mission and the American denomination would sustain the mission. As similar examples show, partnership is directly related to financial support.

This missionary also reported having had relationships with several independent missions. The missions agreed that they want to be a part of the American denomination. What this missionary found was that the fellowship of missions really wanted partnership by way of ministry development and building outreach. What that meant is that the American missionary group would build any facilities, provide any materials, and grant salaries. The end result of the partnership was that there was some sort of fiscal responsibility inherent upon the American group. The groups sincerely wanted doctrinal and leadership capacity building materials. However, the American denomination would be responsible for the purchase.

There were other cases reported. Outside of the typical request for assistance with bills or the purchase of a building, the missions did want the ministry of the American mission group and denomination. Even in these cases, the financial responsibility of any outreach partnership was upon the American group. No matter where you are in the world, it takes finances to make an effort successful. Native missions are willing to partner to bring American groups as their guests to the community. However, they do not seem to be willing to partner by way of financial responsibility.

American missionary groups who want to penetrate various parts of the world where there is extreme poverty will have to prepare to use a great deal of
financial resources to make ministry possible. To go to an area and assume that an established mission will want to lose their identity to be associated with an American denomination or mission with no financial assistance may be an unrealistic expectation. American missionary groups or denominations should prepare to either plant their own missions or pay for established local missions to carry their name. Although they do exist, it is rare to encounter a pastor or mission that simply wants to be associated with a denomination for the purpose of association.

While some American denominations and missionary groups find this reality hard to meet, despite this difficulty, it is not far from the biblical teachings of the Apostle Paul. The concept of missionism as defined in this thesis is seen throughout the Pauline epistles. The churches with more, by way of the scriptures, have an obligation to use their excess to meet the needs of others. The sense of entitlement expressed by native pastors in poor communities sometimes makes it hard for American mission groups to release financial support to those in need. I suppose in some cases, the “what is in it for me mentality” affects those in need as well as those with a surplus of resources. However, a culture infused with missionism may eradicate these ills. Missionism is a mentality that shifts the focus of the culture to one that consistently looks at surplus as an opportunity to give without any burdens placed upon those who will receive. In some cases both the desire to build an American denomination or mission group or the need for financial resources becomes a barrier. Missionism eradicates the barrier. Missionism can create relationships without obligation and opportunities for giving with freedom. Missionism changes the why. In this way, those who want to
use their surplus to help the less fortunate can freely do so. Conversely, if those who are in need want to be associated with those who are giving in a very legal, binding, and official way, they may do so also, freely. Missionism allows for the freedom to give and receive with or without obligatory legalism.
Appendix

Definition of Terms

Anthropology: The study of people and their relation to one another and to the environment in which they live (Muller, 1997, p. 9).

Blake Urban Initiatives: The Blake Urban Initiatives or simply the Urban Initiatives is an intervention that seeks to address the most prevalent dilemmas in urban communities. The program is split into five areas of importance—Education, Economic Development, Crime Prevention, Family Life, and Financial Literacy. The program is both curative and preventative in nature.

Bi-cultural ministry: The idea that one must become one with the culture of intended ministry as opposed to relating and/or understanding it. One becomes of two cultures—holistically of their native culture and holistically of the new culture in which they intend to serve.

Cross-cultural ministry: “The learned skill of relating to people of other cultures within the contexts of their cultures.” Contrast with Monoculturalism in this same dictionary (Van Rheenen, 2014, p. 105).

Cultural destruction: The innocent or intentional destruction, demeaning, or annihilation of a culture by a missionary whose intent is to introduce Christianity and make converts. The introduction of new cultural norms based on a conscious or unconscious notion that another culture is superior.
Culture: “The integrated system of learned patterns of ideas, values, behavior, products, and institutions characteristic of a society” (Van Rheenen, 1996b, p. 81); “the sum total of ways of living built up by a human community and transmitted from one generation to another” (Newbigin, 1984, p. 5); “the more or less integrated systems of learned ideas, feelings, and values encoded in patterns of behavior, signs and products created and shared by a community of people (Hiebert & Cox, 2004, n.p.).

Ministry: Any form of service to a community, group of people, or individual (Missiology.org, 2014).

Mission Field: The region in which a particular project is implemented.

Missionism: The culture and thought processes which drives the practices, values, morale, and themes that produces the heart, ambition, and motives for projects in a particular mission field.

Missiology: A multi-disciplinary field concerned not only with theological and historical aspects of Christian missions but with the psychological, sociological, political, aesthetic, anthropological and other dimensions of mission as well.

Monoculturalism: “The assumption that all other people are like us, resulting in the tendency to judge other peoples’ actions and attitudes on the basis of our own” (Van Rheenen, 1996b, p. 97). Contrast with cross-culturalism in this same dictionary.
Pentecostal Missionary: A Radical Christian missionary who embraces being baptized (filled, emerged, overtaken) with the Holy Spirit (the ghost of Jesus Christ) and speaks in unknown tongues (a heavenly, unearthly language).

Radical Missionary: A Christian missionary who believes that Christianity is centered in human works and believes that a Christian can live a life totally free from sin, without which one cannot enter heaven.

Sanctification: The separating of one self from anything that does not reflect the values of one’s religious beliefs.

SIL: The acronym SIL originally stood for Summer Institute of Linguistics. However, the organization is now known as SIL International, or simply SIL. SIL is founded on the principle that communities should be able to pursue their social, cultural, political, economic and spiritual goals without sacrificing their ethno-linguistic identity. As a faith-based nonprofit organization, SIL works alongside language communities as they discover how to harness the power of their language to address challenges and reach their goals (Sil.org).

Tokenism: The sporadic act of giving financial needs or tangible necessities to the less fortunate.

World: The ideologies, processes, values, and norms of non-religious bodies of people.
Bibliography


