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Chapter 18

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BEYOND THE 10/40 WINDOW: WHEN ALL YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD TO DO IS NOT ENOUGH

BRUCE CAMPBELL MOYER

There is always a danger in being overly focused on a task. When this happens, we can fail to see other tasks or parallel tasks that are equally demanding. This paper focuses on some other “windows,” beyond the “10/40 Window,” that also call for serious attention, concerted prayer, specialized training, their own unique strategies, and a variety of personnel/gifts.

The best homes and the best hotels offer us the best views. We will often pay more money just to have a better view. And the window you look through determines the view you have. If you look out the wrong window, you will get the wrong perspective, or you may not see what is really important. For the past decade, Christians have been taught to look at the world-in-need through what we have called the 10/40 Window (Window of Opportunity 2004).

This 10/40 Window has now become a household term among mission specialists and in the churches. This figurative window actually reaches beyond the 10th and 40th parallels, across North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf States, Southern and Central Asia, to China and Southeast Asia. It is home to the vast majority of the world's unreached peoples (AD 2000 and Beyond 2001). It is historically, spiritually, and politically important. It is the home of

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is also the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, among others. The 10/40 Window certainly commands great interest and attention. However, it may be time to ask if there are other windows that we need to look through as well. This article will explore seven other important windows through which people interested in mission need to view the world-in-need-of-Jesus.

The Urban Window

We are well beyond the point where 51% of the people in this world live in cities.¹ With the combined engines of in-migration and high birthrates, the cities of this world are exploding. The largest metropolitan area, Tokyo now contains over 31 million people (*World Gazetteer* 2004). The north-eastern seaboard of the United States is one large urban metropolitan area, often referred to as Boswash, stretching from Boston to well beyond Washington, D.C.

The projected growth rates of these metropolitan areas boggle the mind. By the year 2020, we are anticipating Bombay at 26 million, Lagos at 23 million, Cairo at 14 million, and Jakarta at 17 million. In many of these cities, the physical infrastructure is unable to keep up with the population growth. With the breakdown of roadways, sanitation, and the low level of education and job availability, these cities are becoming dangerous beds of disease, despair, and disaster.

If over 51% of the world lives in cities, the influence of these cities spreads out to a far wider population. People in the once-remote areas are now connected by mobile phones and satellite television. If being urban is to be *connected*, and rural is *disconnected*, probably less than 15% of the world's population is now rural. We can no longer think of reaching the cities from "outposts." The noise of the cities drowns out the whisper of the villages. The pathway to the world of necessity passes through the cities.

The difficulty is that most conservative, evangelical Christians have a distinctly anti-urban mentality that prevents us from feeling the needs of the cities and effectively working in them. With few exceptions, our pastors and evangelists are trained for village and town mission and ministry.

Urban mission and urban pastoral training programs are needed both because of the unique challenges of the cities and because of our anti-urban, rural mindset. This training must be carried out in the urban context. While it requires serious attention to the disciplines of urbanology, sociology, anthropol-

ogy, and church history, it must be equally experience-based. Effective urban training requires hands-on involvement, and active participant-reflection.

The Poverty Window

Connected to these cities is the plight of the poor. Better health programs, often provided by Christian missionary activity, have extended the life expectancy of most people, including the poor. Perhaps one-fourth of the world is crowded into *favellas*, shanty-towns, and slums, crowding in upon the burgeoning cities (Grigg 1992:25). North of Bombay, India, lies the largest of these with 5 to 6 million people. Mathere Valley and Kibulla in Nairobi, and large parts of West Africa, are home to millions with little or no electricity, no clean water, no jobs, no hope. One of the most common features of many of these shanty-towns is the presence of radical religious schools preaching a volatile mixture of religious fervor and hatred of those who have the riches that they can only see on the ubiquitous television screen.

How can the church become a redemptive presence in these uncomfortable contexts? Years ago, Ellen White wrote,

Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ's life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, *in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city*, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. *In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps.* (White 1964:640)

If the church fails these millions, ignoring their existence and their needs, can we say that we have seriously addressed "every kindred, people, and tongue"? Local-specific strategies must be developed, and committed workers must be found and trained for this difficult mission.

Relative to the urban poor, the church must ask and demand answers to the following questions:

- What is the church's responsibility to the urban poor? To what degree is the church a global community, and not simply a church of the affluent, with a large component of very poor and barely incorporated brothers and sisters? To what degree does the church reflect the political and economic divisions between the North and South, between the haves and have-nots?

- What are the walls that exist between the church and the urban poor? How were these walls built up? How can these walls be broken down?
- Which church structures lend themselves to outreach to the urban poor? How might all the church structures be put to the service of the urban poor, rather than its affluent and financially supportive minority?
- How can the wealthier western church learn lessons from the experience of and benefit from the gifts of the urban poor?
- How can leadership be developed among the urban poor without forcing them into more affluent structures and lifestyle?
- How can the church reach out to the urban poor without alienating them from the world of the urban poor, and thus destroying their own mission potential? How can the theological seminaries and colleges be put at the service of the urban poor, contributing to local and contextualized leadership development/
- The dominant style of the church reflects its affluent, cognitive, western worldview and resultant lifestyle. How can the church adapt or allow the urban poor to create their own urban outreach, nurture, and worship styles?
- For years the church has preferred to ignore the reality of urban “twelve o’clock Adventists”—members and would-be members who feel that they must work on Sabbath morning if their families are to survive. The urbanization of the world will only enlarge the number of these people who are dependent upon employers in an urban world of high unemployment. What structures can the church create to appropriately address this situation? How can the practice of the early (urban) Christian community (Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-5:11) inform the urban church of the 21st century?

How does the new Information Technology (IT) serve the poorest members, rather than leaving them as hitchhikers, at best, on the Information Superhighway? How can the IT structures of the church be democratized for the benefit of the church’s poor?

New forms of pastoral training must be developed that empower the poor without removing them from their context and connectedness. This training should include serious theological reflection as well as practical training. Perhaps one of the better models is found in the writings of Paulo Freire, specifically *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970).

It is also important to resist the “redeem and lift” factor that effectively separates converts from their roots. Converts must be encouraged to continue to live redemptively within their contexts.

The Wealthy Window

One of the socioeconomic people groups that has been largely untouched is the wealthy. Traditionally, the Adventist message has appealed to the middle and lower classes. It offers hope to these people and generally they have risen on the socioeconomic ladder as a result of committing their lives to Jesus and practicing an Adventist lifestyle. Our strong Sabbath School and educational program promote social uplift. But what do we have to offer to the people who feel that they need nothing? These people have the most to lose by adopting a conservative Christian lifestyle: friendships, social standing, prestige, and possibly much of their wealth.

Media extravaganzas rarely attract these people. However, they are often interested in moderate social justice issues, as long as their privileged status is not threatened. Asked to participate in major projects to benefit the less privileged, they will frequently respond positively. Wealth and fund management people may have easier access to this group. Entertainers may have access, particularly serious entertainers.

While this is not a large people group, it is a highly influential group to whom serious attention must be paid. Participation in professional and academic societies should be encouraged, as well as in such service organizations as Kiwanis and Rotary and even in political structures to the degree that is morally possible and does not conflict with a biblically-principled life. The Daniel and Joseph models are useful and instructive here.

The Global Youth Window

It is now a largely unquestioned observation that young people (ages 15-25) in Bogotá, Boston, Bombay, Buenos Aires, and Berlin have more in common with each other than they do with their parents (Heaven and Tubridy 2004). Heavily influenced by the 3Ms (Macintosh, McDonalds, and MTV—fast communication, fast food and fast music; Barber 1992:53-65), they share a common set of values, likes, and dislikes. These three forces have also heavily influenced their worldview, which is very urban and post-modern.

These young people are frequently drawn to forms of religion that reflect their urban reality and lifestyle. This worship is generally enthusiastic, participatory, loud and fast paced. In a word: “charismatic.” Largely disappointed by their parents’ generation and apparent failures, for them religion must be personal and offer a genuinely supportive community.

Too many churches have focused their youth programs on meeting the needs of preserving their own youth while ignoring this huge people group. Yet this is the period in life when most people make serious decisions about life and values. Over fifty percent of the people in Mexico City are under 18 years of age (Wikipedia 2004). This figure is reflected in most of the cities around the world.

Attention must be given to strategic means of communication, worship styles, music, etc. As missionaries study other socioeconomic groups, this group deserves similar attention. Missionary practitioners must study to learn the existing points of contact or hooks on which to hang the gospel. While this, as other strategies may be offensive to the very conservative wing of the church, it is essential missionary practice.

The Global Business Window

In the past decade, global business has mushroomed to cover most of the world. Few countries choose to remain outside this lucrative phenomenon. What had once been the domain of a limited number of multinational companies now includes moderately sized and even small businesses throughout the West and Asia. This opens vast opportunities for Christians to interact with business people in areas and on levels not open to conventional missions.²

Large numbers of Christians are engaging in “tentmaker” missions, using the global business arena as a fruitful area for Christian witness. They are opening businesses in emerging nations and what had previously been called “closed” countries.³ This has provided thousands of opportunities to teach English, the language of business, throughout China and many other regions once thought almost impenetrable.

The Refugee and Immigrant Window

We are currently living in the midst of the greatest mass-migration of peoples in human history.⁴ At no other time have so many people been on the move, either voluntarily or involuntarily. The south is moving north, the east is

moving west, dislocation is breaking up old systems of belonging and support, and new people groups are coming into existence as old groups merge into new coalitions based on special interests and voluntary choice. Where is the spiritual “welcome wagon” to meet these people? Who reaches out to the destitute, the orphans and widows, those for whom the biblical God has expressed preferential concern? (Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Psalm 10; Psalm 146:5-9; Ezekiel 16:49). Who is willing to enter their worlds and walk beside them? Can the Social Work departments of our colleges and universities assist us in developing understanding and strategies?

The Anti-American Window

Increasingly, for the past decade or more, the United States has become less and less popular among the global family of nations and societies. There are a number of reasons for this which go far beyond the concerns of Muslims, although these are very prominent (Friedman 2004:35).

For many people in the poorer parts of the world, the images on their television screens are of decadence and opulence beyond their imaginations. The chasm between the have and have-not nations is, to many, a living dramatization of James 2:15-16. “If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?’” Such conspicuous materialistic consumerism cannot generate warm feelings toward us in the West, and particularly not in the United States. The U.S. passport is becoming a liability in some parts of the world, particularly where our mission emphasis is most needed.

We may say that the problem is with their own corrupt governments that hold them in grinding poverty, but that ignores the political and economic strictures that U.S. policy places on these countries and our recognition of and support for those governments.

For whatever reason or reasons, it is becoming increasingly dangerous for U.S. citizens (and others) to travel in some parts of the world. International terrorism tends to scatter-shoot with a shotgun at any and all “western” targets. Since all missionaries in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are at least “honorary” U.S. citizens, working for a U.S.-based church, all are potential targets. One result may be the need for, and increasing reality of, non-white and/or non-American cross-cultural workers.

The window through which we view our horizon becomes part of that horizon. That window determines, limits, and possibly distorts our perspective. The 10/40 Window is a useful window, but it may prevent us from looking through other important windows and seeing the world in greater detail or in greater need.

Conclusions

There are a number of potential distortions to our missiological perspective that will call for new, often untried responses to the great commission. I will further comment on just a few.

- “Reflections in this mirror are closer than they appear.” This warning on our automobiles’ side mirrors says it well. In focusing on the distant literal 10/40 Window, we may fail to see the 10/40 people all around us. Life in the greatest mass migration in human history has brought people from the 10/40 close to our doorsteps (Bakke 1997; Klein 1987). In spite of this, our cloistered, compartmentalized lives may hide the “next-door” reality of these people from our senses. Greater community awareness is a missiological necessity.
- How can Christians overcome their tendency to view the world and Scripture through the distortion of rose-colored rural glasses? The Bible is far more urban than rural. Moses’ initial education was all urban. The majority of the prophets were urban dwellers.⁵ Much of the Old Testament revolves around Ur, Jerusalem, Samaria, Babylon, and Nineveh. The New Testament reflects the very urban background of Decapolis, Galilee, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome. Paul’s mission was to the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean basin, and the Book of Revelation contains seven letters to seven cities, culminating in the great conflict between Babylon and the New Jerusalem. The Bible begins in a garden but it ends in a city. Just as the cities of the 21st century are the centers of commerce, government, information, and the media, so the church must adapt itself to these urban realities. Influence, ideas, and movements flow from the cities to the countryside, not vice-versa.
- The “bottom line” of the church must be carefully defined. Return on the missiological dollar cannot be figured in tithe and offerings, but it is souls recruited for the kingdom of heaven. This is particularly true when we realize that much of the 10/40 Window and many of the “10/40 peoples”

are very, very poor and will probably be a continuous drain on the finances of the churches in the West. This becomes more serious when we consider the niche advertising and niche publishing that will be necessary to reach many people who do not speak any Christian-intensive languages or languages in which Christianity is regularly communicated.

- Seventh-day Adventists have long held that health-related programs are the “entering wedge” of missions (White 1951:495). For years the majority of our mission work either began or centered on hospitals or clinics.⁶ That metaphor may have changed today. In the new global economy, the “entering wedge” may be business, based on the global economy. It is certainly true that western businesses operate in numerous countries where missionaries are not allowed, and knowledgeable business people have access to the thought and culture shapers in these otherwise “closed” countries. A number of Christian organizations are taking advantage of this new entrepreneurial openness.⁷ Special attention needs to be given to this factor by the business departments of our colleges and universities, as well as by organizations such as Adventist Laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI).
- As suggested already, this is the century of migration and refugees. Many of our older churches in the West are being rejuvenated by or taken over by new migrants and refugees, and sometimes these are at least close to hostile takeovers.⁸ Intentional attention to this demographic phenomena would doubtless result in greater growth with less hostility or loss. Already the numbers reflect this new reality. More and more Adventist missionaries are coming from new sending countries such as the Philippines and Brazil.

Jesus said, “And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). Unless we carefully clarify the task before us, we cannot hope for success in our efforts. The final outcome of the Great Commission is not in doubt. What is not as clear may be our sense of vision and our participation in that commission.

Notes

¹ UN estimates 49%, but these numbers are very conservative. The urban population in the Highly Industrialized Countries (HIC) is projected to be 547 million, or 84% of the total population of 649 million, by 2020 (UN Secretariat 2004:11).

² See Rundle and Steffen 2003 for perhaps the best popular treatment of this mission strategy.

³ Preferably called “creative-access” countries.

⁴ There are currently 175 million migrants, of whom 16 million are refugees (UNHCR 2002).

⁵ Isaiah and Jeremiah of Jerusalem; Ezekiel and Daniel of Babylon; the “minor” prophets in Samaria and Jerusalem; Ezra and Nehemiah in the restored Jerusalem.

⁶ World travelers often noted that everywhere they traveled they found Coke-a-Cola and Adventist hospitals.

⁷ Centre for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (www.ceed-uofn.org); Business Professional Network (www.bpn.org); Chalmers Center for Economic Development (www.chalmers.org); Bethlehem Center (www.thebeth.org); Network935 (www.network935.org). See also, Tsukahira 2004; Swarr and Nordstrom 2004; Rundle and Steffen 2003; Yamamori and Eldred 2003.

⁸ The church in the United Kingdom is a classic example in which indigenous churches seemed to disappear in the waves of Caribbean immigration.

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