

New Challenges of Emerging Agencies

Prelude:

While we struggle to face challenges and initiatives in modern missions, it is critical that we must be able to define old challenges which we think have given way to 'NEW,' ones that now belabour us in the emerging agencies. We must have at the back of our mind the 'OLD' challenges before we come to term with the new ones in Emerging Missions. The major Scriptural bridge in this regard is hung on Jesus' expression of grief in Matthew 9:37-38.

Critical Issues and Challenges to New Initiatives in Missions

The missionary initiatives in the third world can be identified by how they originated. This will take us to types and models of missions initiatives.

In order to understand our use of new agencies, we have to categorize the emerging agencies by types and models of mission initiatives. Many of the types and models have their offshoots from western origin while national mission initiatives form what we called Emerging Mission Agencies. Categorizing all the models will help the participants to queue in as we unveil the new challenges that face emerging agencies.

Categorizing by Type:

1. Denominational
2. Non-Denominational
3. Mission Agency
4. Missions Department
5. Training Institutions
6. National, Regional and Continental Missions Association
7. Students/Youth movements

Category by Specialization: Missions related agencies

1. Mission Sending Model
2. Mission Training Model
3. Mission Mobilization Model
4. Mission Supporting Model
5. Mission Research Model
6. Mission Networking Model

These models face the same challenges as they emerge since they all have a common objective in the long run: making Christ known to the unreached.

New Challenges of Emerging Missions

1. Absence of national missions associations in many of the sending nations particularly third world nations. This is due to a lack of organized mission agencies in some places.
2. The rate of attrition outstrips the rate of recruitment; many training centers are short of trainees and trainers.
3. Absence of research data and findings in many countries make it almost impossible for emerging agencies to ascertain the state of the harvest. The result is that many agencies concentrate on already reached areas. When there is no idea on where and how to expose the vision of reaching unreached peoples, the agencies concentrate in already reached areas. When there are no ideas anywhere on how to explore the vision, the agencies in turn display a lack of progress.
4. Lack of appropriate means of tracking and recording operations, statistical and global events which shape the landscape of missions and determine the effectiveness of strategies.
5. Many emerging missions lack strategies in exploring and exploiting the various changing scenarios and social dynamics of the contemporary mission landscape. There are few or no specialized workings. When people are not fully prepared and disciplined for the task of missions, there is little that can be achieved apart from noise making.
6. Many new agencies fossilize into monuments rather than continuing as movements. This cuts short the existing vision.
7. Over-concentration in least resistant belts, avoiding the most needy and more resistant areas.
8. Being swayed by the increasing role of churches and denominations, thereby many new agencies lack the ability to resist the temptation to become denominations instead of adjusting to the changes and remaining committed to cross-cultural mission.
9. In attempt to copy past Western models, structures, approaches and patterns, many emerging agencies lack the ability to confront contemporary approaches in missions.
10. The pursuit of relevance has made many new agencies abandon their mission calling to greener pastures.
11. Islam remains a critical and major challenge to every initiative to fulfill the great commission in Africa and some other continents. Political machineries are used to undermine the evangelistic and missionary initiatives.
12. Momentary gains have taken over from eternal gains due to misplaced priorities. This imbalance is caused by the unbalanced gospel of prosperity which undermines mission initiatives. The majority of those who should go have misplaced their initial callings.
13. Socio-economic challenges, HIV/AIDS, ethnic rivalries, abject poverty, political instability, corruption and other vices have all become great factors that continue to stare at the face of every effort made by emerging initiatives.
14. The missionary initiative of the church in many countries is mostly driven by mission agencies. However, this has in many cases generated unnecessary tension between emerging agencies and denominations/local churches.