Following Jesus in a Glocalized World
Bearers of Blessing among Neighbors and Nations

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Just a few months ago, Florida pastor Terry Jones planned to commemorate 9/11 by burning Qurans. News of this ricocheted around the world, causing an uproar among Muslims locally and globally, drawing the attention of General David Petraeus, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, and even of President Barack Obama (Shahid and Siemaszko 2010, Goldman 2010). How could the pastor of a church with less than 50 members capture the attention of the world? Why was this such "hot" press?

We live in a post-9/11, pluralistic, globalized world. Jones's Quran burning plan, with the worldwide furor it incited, highlights the volatile connection between these three mega trends. This narrative powerfully portrays the interconnectedness of the world, or what many now refer to as "glocalization" — a neologism that combines the terms "global" and "local" to describe the vital connection between the two (Friedman 2005, 324-329, Roberts 2007, 13-29).

In light of these mega trends, Christian churches and organizations must think through afresh what it means to follow Jesus among our neighbors and nations in this glocalized world.

Three Mega Trends: Globalization, Terrorism and Pluralism

Three massive global trends, globalization, terrorism, and pluralism, have irrevocably altered how we live, think, and communicate in the 21st century.[1] As a consultant for Christian-Muslim Relations, most of my illustrations come from my work among Muslims. However, as I hope to demonstrate, the principles described and practices suggested have

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[1] Two other massive global trends that affect the expansion of God's kingdom are beyond the scope of this paper: the rise of the church in the global south, and post-modernity.

relevance for all ministry in the 21st century. Missional churches already grasp the significance of many of these issues, though they may not understand their full implications.[2] What I propose in this paper is the practical implementation of the Vineyard value of "culturally relevant mission" at a global level.

Globalization

Globalization is a massive and complex phenomenon. According to George Rupp, globalization "entails increasingly efficient transfers of money, goods and services, and ideas across every sort of social and cultural border. It puts us more frequently, more rapidly and more intensely in contact with others all over the world" (Rupp 2008). However, for our purposes, globalization means that the world is just a mouse click away. Perhaps the most powerful and relevant example of this is the Internet search engine "Google." In our "Google-ized" world, whenever we describe who we are, or what we do, or why we do it, our words move quickly beyond our intended audience and enter the global marketplace of ideas. Private communication becomes public knowledge. Add to this Facebook, blogs, YouTube, and Twitter, and the opportunities to communicate for good or evil are breathtaking.

Here's an example that illustrates the profound challenges of living in a "Google-ized" world. *The Chicago Tribune* searched a commercial online data service that supplied a directory of more than 2,600 CIA employees. One of the world's premier undercover organizations was outed by a simple online search! The article concludes: "Only recently has the CIA recognized

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[2] I use term "missional church" in a technical sense. It is apostolic in the two-fold sense noted by Jurgen Moltmann: "The historical church must be called a 'apostolic' in a double sense: its gospel and its doctrine are founded on the testimony of the first apostles, the eyewitnesses of the risen Christ, and it exists in the carrying out of the apostolic proclamation, the missionary charge. The expression 'apostolic' therefore denotes both the church's foundation and its commission" (quoted in Guder and Barrett 1998, 83). I note five distinctives of a missional church: 1) The whole church is sent (not just a few missionaries), so there are churches that actively send missionaries but are not themselves missional. 2) The focus is not primarily on the church gathered, but on the church scattered. One of the major goals of the pastoral team is to train their members to be "missional" in their jobs – in the market place and institutions of the world. 3) The focus of the missional church is primarily on laity, not preachers or professionals. 4) The focus is incarnational – church members understand that they represent Jesus's real presence in the world. 5) The focus is on understanding and communicating well with those outside the church.

The term "missional" was first coined by Dr. Francis DuBose, former professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, in his book *God Who Sends* (DuBose 1983).The concept of the missional church was popularized in the book, *Missional Church* (Guder 1998).

The Columbus Vineyard and the Redeemer Presbyterian Church are two excellent examples of a missional church. Note the vision of each: Columbus Vineyard … "Our vision as a church: to be a relevant church that does not exist for itself, but for Christ and for the world" (VineyardColumbus.org n.d.). "Redeemer Presbyterian Church: Seeking to Renew the City Spiritually, Socially and Culturally" (Reedemer Presbyterian Church n.d.). See also Keller 2001 and 2006, Wikipedia n.d., and Stetzer 2005.

that in the Internet age its traditional system of providing cover … is fraught with holes, a discovery that is said to have 'horrified' CIA Director Porter Goss" (Crewdson 2006).

If this happens to the CIA, how much more likely is this to happen among evangelicals living in restricted access countries? Followers of Jesus in restricted access countries usually procure secure email, encrypt their computers, develop a long list of code words and spend anxious moments thinking about the possibility of being "outed" as a missionary. I see two options for the future: Their anxious moments will increase, or they can start following Jesus with greater authenticity, in ways more fitting for the 21st century.

Timothy Tennent, president of Asbury Theological Seminary, has written about "Being a Glocal Preacher." He points out that "today the forces of globalization have created a new situation where there is no such thing as a mere local context. Today, every local context is informed by the larger global context. In short, whether we like it or not, we preach within the larger context of globalization" (Tennett 2009).

Bob Roberts, Jr., a Southern Baptist pastor of a mega church, writes about glocal ministry in his innovative book, *Glocalization: How Followers of Jesus Engage a Flat World* (Roberts 2007). Instead of putting on a traditional mission conference in his church, Roberts recently hosted a Global Faith Forum which he called "From a Conversation about Other Faiths to a Conversation with Other Faiths" (Global Faith Forum n.d. and Patel 2010). He invited several religious leaders, including Muslims and Jews, to speak to his church. As a Southern Baptist, Roberts remains passionate about the great commission and uncompromising regarding the gospel. But he also fervently models love of neighbor.[3] Roberts is reimagining the nature of the church's global mandate.

Terrorism
The horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11 have deeply marked this generation. The increasing cacophony of further terrorist strikes around the world has given Muslim terrorists a high

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[3] In his report on the Global Faith Forum, Mark Galli said: "I suspect Roberts's experiment will slowly catch on, because in the end, we may have no choice. The old evangelistic model—one-way communication framed by the effort to persuade—seems increasingly manipulative in the modern world. Instead, Roberts is trying to reimagine evangelism by (paradoxically) initially taking the Great Commission off the table and first working on the Great Commandment: listening to and serving those of other faiths. Roberts, in fact, says he has the most 'incredible' (his word) theological, even evangelistic, conversations in private with friends of other faiths. Surely he has gained entrance into their lives because of his generous spirit. To many evangelicals, Roberts's work feels as if it might be compromising evangelical faith. Then again, you have to wonder what has happened to our faith when we think that loving people in a way that makes them feel loved makes us think we have stopped following Jesus" (Galli 2010).

profile on the global stage. Because of this, Muslims of all stripes (not just the radical fringe of terrorists) are front page news every day. This media attention frequently results in Islamophobia – prejudice against, or an irrational fear of, Muslims. In addition, Westerners who live in the Muslim world are also of interest to the secular press. Before 9/11, few people outside church circles were interested to know what Christians were doing in the Muslim world. But now, anyone living and working among Muslims is of interest.

Terrorism has also raised the stakes of being publicly known as a Christian who bears witness to his faith with Muslims in Muslim lands. People seen as "missionaries" (whether they are or not) are no longer just at risk of being expelled from Muslim countries by their governments. Now they may be intentional targets of Islamic terrorists. Things are different in a post-9/11 world.

Pluralism

The third trend, pluralism, refers to the co-existence of diverse ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds within one society. Terms like "Eurabia" and "Londonistan" highlight the influx of Muslim people into European societies. The same is happening in the United States. According to Diana Eck, professor of comparative religions at Harvard, "The United States has become the most religiously diverse nation on earth" (Eck 1997, 4).

In the not-too-distant past, the world was neatly divided into sending countries and mission fields. This is no longer true. Significant populations from every major bloc of unreached peoples are now living in the nations that have historically been missionary sending countries. Of course, the nearness of the unreached world presents a wonderful opportunity to bear witness to Christ, but that same proximity produces challenges regarding the missionary's identity. In restricted access countries, many cross-cultural Christian workers live with dual identities. They are recognized as missionaries by sending churches at home, but in their adopted homelands, they are known by the type of work they do. Living with dual identities in a glocalized world often results in a kind of spiritual schizophrenia, undermining integrity and robbing workers of joy and boldness.

These mega trends challenge us to live and communicate with greater wisdom and integrity. If we adjust to these trends, kingdom influence increases and opportunities for Christ multiply. If we fail to adjust, our message will be misunderstood, our ministry will be hindered, and some of our messengers may be put at risk of expulsion and persecution.

Perhaps a look at one particular word would illustrate the challenge of communicating and living in a world shaped by globalism, terrorism, and pluralism. Churches have become

accustomed to hearing that they shouldn't use the word "missionary" in print for someone living in a restricted access country. But most churches (and perhaps many missionaries) misunderstand the reasons why. To the evangelical church members, and initially to the missionaries themselves, this word refers to someone who is compelled by Christ's love to give up family and friends, to move to a different culture to share the good news of Christ. But to the secular world, the word "missionary" refers to someone who arrogantly assumes they know better than everyone else. These missionaries are driven by fanaticism and intolerance to proselytize otherwise happy and innocent people who would be better off without all these religious conflicts being introduced. And how do Muslims understand the term "missionary?" Since colonialism coincided with missionary activity throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, Muslims understand a missionary to be someone who moves to their country to engage in brainwashing and culture-changing activities that pave the way for Western ideas, immoral lifestyles, and at times foreign governments, to conquer their lands and people. Obviously, missionaries do not aspire to be arrogant, intolerant, fanatic bearers of religious conflict. They want to represent Jesus, not their home country's government, and are discouraged when they learn how they are perceived.

Problems and Negative Consequences of Old Paradigms in a Glocalized World

In light of the different meanings that words (like "missionary") can communicate, the following examples of life in a glocalized world demonstrate that our words and identity can expose a lack of integrity and potentially undermine the very message we seek to bring.[4]

- A Christian professor with a Ph.D. in history lives in the Middle East. He has worked hard to lecture with excellence and serve with integrity as a professor. One day, he googles his own name and is shocked and disheartened to find himself described as a missionary. A well-meaning church where he had spoken posted their Sunday bulletin on their website.

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[4] Here are a few other examples: Christian pastors conduct a seminar about Islam at a church in Australia. In addition to encouraging church members to love Muslims and reach out in friendship, they read out verses from the Quran and other Islamic texts that describe how Muslims are instructed to treat infidels and women. Recent Australian converts to Islam are in attendance. They press a civil suit against the pastors under the state's new "hate speech" laws. The pastors are convicted of "vilifying Islam" (Pastors reject apology order over Koran comments 2005).

Short term workers are raising funds to join a church planting team in Central Asia. Their friend writes for a small newspaper in a tiny, predominantly Christian town in North America. Their story ends up on the Internet, describing the Central Asian relief and development agency as a missionary enterprise (Name Withheld 2003).

- A leader in a faith-based organization serving among Muslims allows a freelance journalist to attend a seminary course he is teaching. A negative, inflammatory article results. The article is translated and reprinted throughout the Muslim world. He is invited to respond to the article in many high profile venues such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, CNN and 60 Minutes, but is unprepared for such high profile media attention. Later, a community development NGO in Southeast Asia is exposed as being connected to this same faith-based organization. Soon afterwards, the NGO was expelled from this country.

- A family living with a work visa in a Southeast Asian Muslim country return to the US for a visit. They are invited to an international student's concert sponsored by their home church. Some students from the family's Southeast Asian country attend. With great enthusiasm, a member of the church missions committee introduces the family to the international students, saying, "We would like to introduce you to our missionaries to your country!"

- A worker in a Muslim country is speaking at a church in the West about what God is doing in the Muslim world. He is not aware that a high level official from a Muslim country is in the audience.

- Missionaries were recently imprisoned for a support email that was intercepted by the government of the country where they live (Wunderink 2009)! They were charged with sedition because of the following "tongue-in-cheek" paragraph: "Now how [a growing extremist element] should be dealt with, I don't know," the missionary wrote in an e-mail to supporters. "(I have suggested that we arm the Muslims with sticks and the Christians with machine guns and let them fight it out.)"

- Bonnie Witherall was gunned down in Lebanon. She was a nurse serving with Operation Mobilization as a relief and development worker. A few hours after her martyrdom, a journalist called the leader of her team and asked if Bonnie was engaged in proselytism. He said, "No she wasn't. She was doing relief and development." The journalist replied, "That's not what your website says about your work!"

Two or Three Dimensional Communication

The global interconnectedness of communication has many positive repercussions. But it also requires those who are spokespersons for ministry to think carefully about the way they communicate. Paul's exhortations to the Colossians prove relevant in the Internet age:

> Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person (Colossians 4:5-6).

Paul calls us to walk in wisdom toward those outside the church. He then describes the practical expression of wisdom in four ways.[5] First, he urges us to make the most of the opportunities before us. For us, that means we should assume outsiders are listening and should communicate accordingly. In other words, in the Internet age, we have greater opportunities to bear witness to Jesus.

Second, Paul urges us to communicate graciously (or winsomely). Always! Sadly, many Christian leaders have made statements about Muslims that have been far from gracious.[6] Third, our communication should be "seasoned with salt" – witty and judicious, creative and compelling.[7] Finally, we are to tailor our communication "to each person." In a glocalized world, that means we must seek to communicate well to multiple audiences.

How do we address these new global realities? Figure 1 (right) illustrates what I call three-dimensional (3D) communication. (This illustration relates to Christian-Muslim relations, but the concept transfers to our communication with any other religious groups.) Our communication is 3D because we communicate to three audiences simultaneously. We seek to express our core message in a way that the church (represented in the diagram by the letter "C"), the Muslim world (represented by the
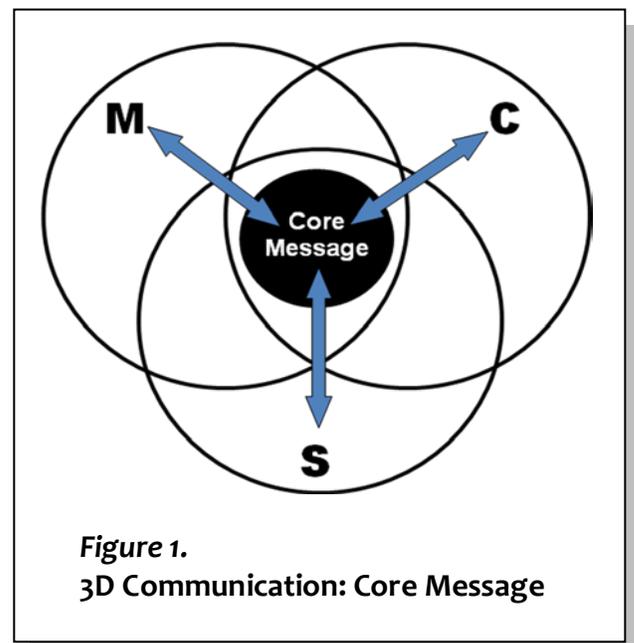

Figure 1.
3D Communication: Core Message

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[5] I interpret the participle exagorazo as a participle of manner or means.

[6] See Love 2008, especially pages 3-5.

[7] "Seasoned with salt" was used to refer to witty, amusing, clever, humorous speech. (Garland 1998) (Colossians/V. Appeal for Christian Living (3:1-4:6)/B. Guidelines for the Christian Life (3:5-4:6)/4. Religious duties to be faithfully performed (4:2-6)/b. The duty of witnessing (4:5, 6), n.d.).

letter "M" and the secular world (represented by the letter "S") can all understand. The interconnectedness of a glocal world means that we are increasingly challenged to do three things simultaneously: present the gospel, defend the gospel, and recruit for the gospel. The effects of living in a post-9/11, globalized, pluralistic world mean that we cannot communicate with each audience separately. What we say in any public setting can be heard or read around the world. In the past, we could tailor our message for a particular audience, but no longer. What is spoken to one audience is too often overheard by others.

How can we address the complexity of multiple audiences? In light of these cultural shifts, the church must re-evaluate three core concepts. We need to clarify a core message worth dying for, a core identity worthy living for, and a core mandate worth suffering for.

Our Core Message Worth Dying For

Our core message is what we convey publically to all three of our audiences: to people who have not heard of Jesus, to a suspicious onlooking secular world, and to the church. The core messages of different organizations and individuals may vary, but the core message for the church is clear: "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). We preach Jesus – not the religion of Christianity, not Western civilization, and not patriotism.

The 3D model of communication emphasizes a core message that is communicated to all audiences. (In Figure 1, this is illustrated in the center where the circles overlap.) At the same time, it acknowledges that we communicate contextualized applications of our core message to each audience (illustrated by the individual circles). Of course, our contextualized messages to each audience must connect clearly to our core message. (The arrow in the diagram extends from the core message to the three other audiences).

The concept of core message and contextualized message makes sense practically, especially in light of glocalization. However, there seems to be some Scriptural warrant for these distinctions as well. Jesus' core message was to announce the kingdom of God. Yet he usually did not publicly communicate the full nature of his kingdom. Jesus said to his disciples, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables" (Mark 4:11). In other words, one of the purposes of parables was to communicate the truth in a veiled fashion. Thus, I think we can draw a helpful parallel between Jesus's use of parables in public – which were his core message, and his private interpretation to his followers – which were his contextualized message (cf. Matthew 13; Mark

4).[8] Our public message – what we say anywhere to anyone – is our core message. This is what we say from our pulpits, websites, and emails. Our contextualized message is what we say in more private settings, as Jesus did with his disciples. If the contextualized message becomes public (for example, via the Internet), it can endanger the ministry and lives of his disciples serving in hostile contexts.

While it is difficult to communicate a core message to three audiences simultaneously, it is not impossible. More to the point, it is necessary in the 21st century. A few years ago I spoke at a church about what God is doing in the Muslim world. Doing my best to communicate in a way that would be sensitive to a secular or Muslim audience, I explained that many Muslims are now following Jesus, and I challenged the church to love Muslims. After I spoke, a Muslim who happened to be visiting the church came up to me and said, "Thank you so much for your word this morning. This message needs to be heard throughout the United States!"

A Core Identity Worth Living For

Anyone involved in following Jesus among the nations – especially those who live in contexts that are hostile to the Christian faith – will face identity issues. How do they explain why they have moved from their home country? In the past, many felt they could successfully maintain different identities in two worlds. To their Christian constituency (sending churches), they were known as missionaries. In their cross-cultural ministry context, they were business people, educators, relief workers, or "tentmakers" of some other sort. But today's interconnected world has heightened the tension of maintaining this dual identity.

Figure 2.
3D Communication: Core Identity

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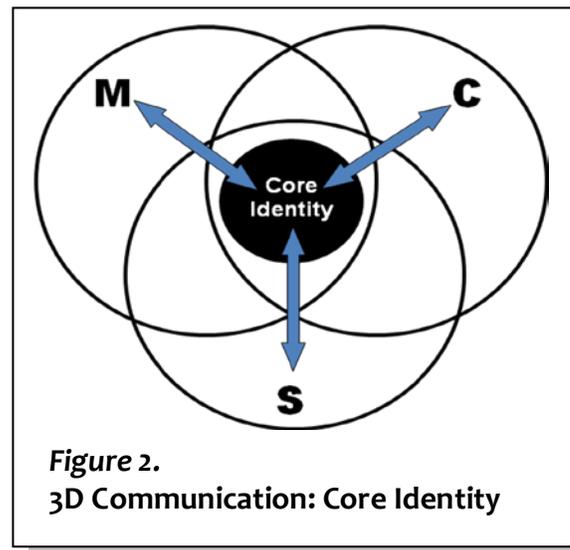
[8] Matthew 7:6 also has relevance: "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces." Admittedly, this is a difficult text to understand, but a few points seem clear. The context of this verse (Matthew 7:1-5) highlights the danger of being judgmental. Matthew 7:6 provides a counterpoint, highlighting the danger of being undiscerning. The contrast between the words "sacred … pearls" and "dogs … pigs" implies that there are hostile and unreceptive audiences, not worthy of the message of the kingdom. Thus, Jesus's disciples must be wary. "Disciples are to be discriminating in sharing the 'sacred things' of the gospel." The final clause, about being "trampled under feet and torn to pieces" highlights the danger Jesus's followers may encounter from hostile audiences (Carson n.d.). See also France 2007, Turner 2008, 207, and (Hagner 2002, S. 171).

A high profile example: Two American women were kidnapped in Afghanistan in 2001. After a dramatic release, they told a television reporter that they were aid workers who had not been proselytizing. Immediately, media worldwide broadcast a prayer card that identified them as missionaries. Again, to the secular and Muslim worlds, missionaries by definition proselytize, and the press does not recognize the distinction between positive proclamation of the gospel and coercive proselytism.[9] Two worlds collided, and these devout workers were caught in the clash between old and new paradigms of ministry.

Such a dual identity results in low-grade anxiety for some, who feel as though they are hiding their true identity in order to declare the truth about Christ. Nagging fears of appearing to be dishonest can muddle anyone's conscience, rob one's joy, and gradually erode boldness to share the gospel. A dual identity reflects not only a split personality but a split spirituality – a false understanding that spiritual aspects of our life or our work are more important than the practical parts of life. In other words, one of the underlying reasons for a split spirituality is the false and unbiblical dichotomy between the sacred and secular, the physical and spiritual. Most evangelicals would deny this theologically, but their heart and practice often model this bifurcated lifestyle. Many find it hard to internalize and practice the holistic demands of Scripture. [10]

A core identity speaks of "integrity" and "integration" – words that come from the same Latin root: to make whole. "Integrity" refers to consistency between inner convictions and outward actions. We walk in integrity when we have "truth in the innermost being" (Psalm 51:6). As Paul exclaims, "I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man" (Acts 24:16).[11] This kind of integrity is another way of speaking about living with authenticity.

Having an integrated identity worth living for means that we have aligned our motivation, our work, our personal gifting, and our calling to make disciples. In other words, moved by the love of Christ, we seek ways of living and serving that fit the way God has made us. This allows us to carry out the great commission with integrity and boldness.

No matter what role people take in order to bless the communities where they live, whether they live among their neighbors or among the nations, they need to be able to fulfill

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[9] See "Conversion, Respectful Witness and Freedom of Religion" (Love 2010, 5-8) for a discussion of the difference between positive proclamation and proselytism.

[10] See "The Cape Town Commitment" (The Lausanne Movement 2010) for a recent example of a holistic perspective on ministry. Note especially section 10, "We love the mission of God."

[11] "When the church engages society with no agenda, no strings attached, and no motivation other than love, it makes a huge difference, not only in the lives of the people they touch, but also in the hearts of those who witness their work" (Roberts, Real Time Connections: Linking Your Job with God's Global Work 2010, 152)

that role with heart-felt integrity: "I am an English teacher-follower of Jesus for the glory of God." "I am a businessman-follower of Jesus for the glory of God." "I am an aid worker-follower of Jesus for the glory of God." Their basic identity remains the same among all three audiences.

Even so, the liberating transparency of an integrated identity still requires wisdom. Jesus highlights this in his first commission to his disciples, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Jesus says that we are sent like defenseless sheep among ravenous wolves, vulnerable and in danger. Because of this, we need to imitate snake-like behavior. Snakes are camouflaged. They fit into their environment and maintain a low profile, not drawing attention to themselves.[12] However, Jesus' followers are not just called to be snake-like "undercover agents." They are also called to be like doves – guileless and innocent. The innocence of integrity must be balanced by the wisdom of discretion. Snake-like behavior alone can degrade to deviousness; dove-like behavior alone can turn into gullibility. Followers of Jesus are called to do both! Walking in integrity does not mean we reveal every aspect of our lives to everyone we meet. For even if we are wise, we may still face persecution and possibly death. We are, after all, sent as "sheep among wolves" (Matthew 10:16).

An integrated core identity has eluded many cross-cultural workers for multiple reasons. Outdated missionary paradigms, dualistic views of life, and inadequate training are some of the most obvious hindrances. Another problem is a distorted view of work (often referred to as "tentmaking" in Christian circles). An examination of the relationship between work and ministry in the New Testament can help remedy that problem.

A cursory reading of the New Testament may seem to indicate that Paul spent very little time actually making tents. Was he a full-time Christian worker who made tents only when he needed money? Actually, there is clear biblical evidence that he made tents on all three of his journeys and that tentmaking played a central role in his ministry.[13] The preeminent New Testament scholar Gordon Fee says this about Paul's tentmaking: "At least as early as the mission to Thessalonica, what was originally a necessity had developed into *a studied expression of his mission*" (Fee 1987, 179).

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[12] Biblical commentators show little understanding of snakes. They only note that the phrase "as shrewd as snakes," appears to be a well known aphorism. As an amateur herpetologist, I have owned more than one hundred snakes. I have studied and understand the behavior of snakes.

[13] See 1 Corinthians 9:6, Acts 18:1-5, 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9, and Acts 20:34-35. See also especially Lai and Love 2008. See also Barnett 1993, Everts 1993, and Hock 1978, 1979, and 1980.

Paul trained as a rabbi at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). As a rabbi, he was trained in both the scriptures and in a secular trade to support his ministry. He had an integrated view of work and ministry. Life, work, and ministry were all one — seamless and non-compartmentalized. [14]

Because of this integration of work and ministry, Paul's tentmaking was no "cover" or mere "platform" for his ministry. Certainly, his apostolic calling was the driving force of his life — "I do all things for the sake of the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:23). But just as certainly, his manual labor played a central role in the fulfillment of his calling. Paul's long-established paradigm of tentmaker-apostle offers surprising hope for new paradigms of ministry in a glocalized world.

In summary, how do we communicate our core message and how do we live out our core identity? The Apostle Peter's exhortation provides divine guidance:

> But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander (1 Peter 3:15-16).

First, we communicate our message with gentleness and respect. Our websites, sermons, and personal ministries should always display these twin virtues. Second, Peter points out that ministry demands integrity. Note that this passage begins with an exhortation to sanctify Christ as Lord "in our hearts" and ends with the plea to "keep a clear conscience." To communicate with integrity to all three of our audiences requires not just that we change our wording, but also that we change our being.

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[14] Thus, out of his own experience and example he could say: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. … Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Colossians 3:17, 23). "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

A Core Mandate Worth Suffering For

Modern missions have tended to focus on military metaphors and triumphal slogans to describe the church's global mandate (Consultation on Mission Language and Metaphors 2000). These metaphors and slogans not only miscommunicate, but they also shape the way we view the people we are supposed to love. Does our warfare imagery subconsciously lead us to perceive unreached people groups as the "enemy"? A horrendous example of this misuse of the metaphor is available on the website of a leading seminary. A video clip portrays the evangelization of their neighborhoods as a military operation with actual footage of people with guns! Watch the video "Taking the Hill" (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary n.d.). Imagine how the people living in the neighborhoods around the seminary might feel if they saw this video.

Figure 3.
3D Communication: Core Mandate
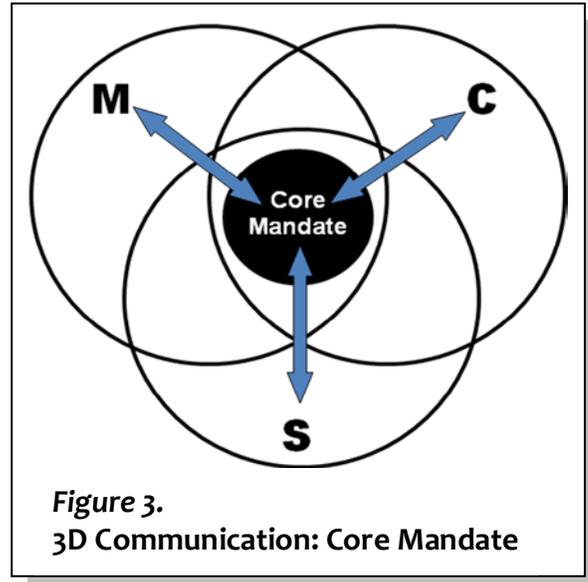
In our zeal to fulfill the great commission, we have often misrepresented Jesus. We have not reflected the radical humility of the cross. We have too often depersonalized the ministry of reconciliation and failed to model the audacious love and peace-pursuing ways of Jesus.

The scriptural theme of "blessing the nations" provides a profound way to explain the church's core mandate.[15] God's promises in Genesis[16] to bless all nations[17] through Abraham articulate the scope of our work and the proper heart attitude for ministry.[18] This expression of

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[15] One could argue that the Vineyard's mandate is the "kingdom." That is one of our values and it could function nicely as a core mandate. Experience shows that our emphasis on the kingdom powerfully motivates us for holistic ministry. We want to preach the gospel, heal the sick, feed the hungry, do justice and show mercy. However, it has not been as effective in galvanizing us to reach "all nations." Thus, we have developed a new mission statement, "Reaching the Unreached," because it is more descriptive of where we do kingdom ministry. It gives us greater focus and describes the scope of our mandate.

[16] These are repeated in Genesis 12:1-3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, and 28:14.

[17] "Nations" in the Abrahamic narrative, along with its fulfillment in the New Testament (cf. Galatians 3) does not refer to nation states as political entities, but rather to ethnic groups. Genesis 12:3 and 28:14 describe the scope of God's blessing as "all the families of the earth." The Hebrew is hx'P'v.mi referring to the extended family or clan (HALOT), while the LXX translation is fulh, normally translated as "tribe" (BDAG). Genesis 18:18, 22:18, and 26:4 describe the scope of God's blessing as "all the nations." In Hebrew, yAG is defined as "people" or "nation" (HALOT). The LXX uses the term e;qnoj–which describes a body of persons united by kinship, culture, and common traditions, nation, people (BDAG).

[18] There are five reasons we focus on blessing Muslims in the Vineyard: 1) Everyone else is cursing them! The media is full of negative images and critical words. We need to change the discourse, develop a new narrative,

God's global purposes refutes all forms of racism or tribalism. God's loving purpose includes all the ethnic groups of the earth.[19]

In the Old Testament, "blessing" refers to God's gracious favor and power bestowed on those who respond to him by faith.[20] The blessing of God's favor draws us into relationship with himself, resulting in peace, well-being, and salvation. The blessing of his power affects the practical realities of life, resulting in good harvests, long life, wealth, children, and miraculous works. Because of God's grace, non-believers can also experience the blessing of his power[21] – often through believers.[22] Thus the biblical concept of "blessing" is profoundly holistic.[23]

This promised blessing finds its fulfillment in Christ. In Christ, we find the fullness of God's loving favor. In Christ, we discover the demonstration of God's liberating power. Paul highlights the relational and power dimensions of blessing in Christ most explicitly in

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and model a new paradigm of relating to Muslims. Muslims are not our enemies, but even if they were we are still called to bless them (Luke 6:28, Romans 12:14). 2) The earliest account of God's global purpose (or the great commission) is found in Genesis 12:1-3, and that purpose is defined in terms of "blessing all nations." 3) Paul describes this mandate as the "gospel in advance" in Galatians 3:8, "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'" So the concept of blessing includes both our core message and core mandate. 4) The biblical concept of blessing is a "power term" and is profoundly holistic. 5) It fits Vineyard values: we value compassionate ministry and reconciling communities.

[19] See especially Wright 2006, 191-221 and Kaiser 1978, 84-99. See also Roberts 2010, 18-20 for an excellent discussion of blessing the nations from a pastoral perspective.

[20] See Genesis 15:6 and Psalm 67.

[21] See Matthew 5:45.

[22] For example, see Jacob in Genesis 30:27 and 33:11 or Joseph in Genesis 39:2-6.

[23] The concept of blessing is a rich, multifaceted reality. The Old Testament term for blessing, "*barak*" means "to endue someone with special power; to declare the object to be endued with special power; or to wish someone to have special power" (*HALOT 1456*)**.** *This is a power term* which is similarly used and understood throughout the Muslim world. It also speaks of what we would call *temporal or physical blessings*. This is evident in the story of Joseph: "The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field (Genesis 39:2-5). Psalm 67 describes the profound blend of spiritual and physical dimensions of blessing. The psalmist begins "God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us" (verse 1). It then concludes with the affirmation: "The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us" (verse 7). Therefore, Tate rightly concludes:

The blessing of God consists in his ongoing presence in life, his sustaining of the well-being of the world, and his providing family (Ps 128), food (Ps 132:15), dew (Ps 133:3), rain (Hos 6:3), etc. A. A. Anderson (478, on 66:20) remarks, "In a sense God's blessing was not an independent force, but rather the active help of God himself, so that one could not have the blessing without the giver." The presence of God comes with his blessing (Tate 1998).

Galatians.[24] In Galatians 3:8, Paul writes: "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'"[25] Thus, our core message of blessing the nations is described as "*the gospel in advance*" – describing an integrated message and mandate.

Some may argue that the concept of "blessing" is really only two dimensional (2D) because it is only purportedly relevant to Christians and Muslims.[26] It sounds too sentimental or heavenly minded for secularists. However, "the quest to attain a state of blessedness is a universal human longing" (Ryken, et al. 2000). I would argue that a concept that speaks powerfully to Muslims and Christians can be used as a part of our core message but explained in different terms in the context of addressing secularists. For example, the word "blessing" speaks of favor with others, abundance, and success in life. The secular person understands that! And the secular world does take notice of believers who truly live out a holistic gospel. Seeing the holistic ministry of evangelicals around the world has led secular journalist Nicolas Kristof of the New York Times to describe evangelicals positively as the "new internationalists" (Kristof 2002 and Kristof 2010)! (See also Hertz 2001.)

Imagining and Enacting the Kingdom in a Glocal World: Changes Needed

Following Jesus among our neighbors and among the nations in a glocalized world demands change in at least four areas. We need to:

- Review and revise all public communication.
- Focus on integrity and identity.
- Train workers and churches in "glocal" ministry.
- Make necessary organizational changes.

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[24] Galatians 3:5, 8, 9, 14.

[25] The New Testament describes the gospel in terms of blessing in five passages: (1) "And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:25–26). (2) "David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him'" (Romans 4:6–8). (3) "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you'" (Galatians 3:8). (4) "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.' He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Galatians 3:13). (5) "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

[26] Muslims everywhere long for "blessing," signified by the Arabic term, "*baraka.*"

Review and revise all public communication

We need to examine all vehicles of communication (especially our websites) to make sure the content, spirit, and terms used communicate most effectively to all audiences. To help me with this, I often imagine a Muslim and a secular person looking over my shoulder when I write or sitting in the audience when I speak. The use of once-cherished terms like "Christian," "missions," "missionary," and "church planting" have become stumbling blocks in many contexts, carrying unintended negative meanings.. As a result, in our attempts to bring blessing to the nations, we are too easily misunderstood. Sometimes, a change in terminology involves some re-theologizing. For example, our cherished term for ourselves – "Christian" – is actually only used three times in the New Testament. On the other hand, the term "disciple" is used more than 250 times. Which term communicates best? In many contexts, the term "disciple," or the dynamic equivalent "follower of Jesus," is much more descriptive and relevant.

The term "missions" was first coined by Ignatius Loyola in the 1500s (Bosch 1993, 228). Since then, sadly, the term has come to imply aggressive proselytism and cultural imperialism, rather than bearing witness with gentleness and respect. Is there a biblical term or concept that better communicates what we mean by "missions?" The chart below suggests a few possibilities.

Our word choice can make a profound difference in the way that our audiences receive our message, as well as the way we think about ourselves. Let me reiterate that a change in our being is equally important to the integrity of our identity. Nevertheless, here are some possible changes of terminology that may help us communicate more effectively.

Old Terms	New Terms
missions	blessing the nations, global engagement, God's global purposes, reconciliation, peacemaking
missionary	international staff, apostle, kingdom worker, cross-cultural worker, social entrepreneur, business person (relief and development, teacher, etc), living an intentional Christian life.
Christian	follower of Jesus, disciple
convert	follower of Jesus, disciple
church planting[27]	gospel planting, forming communities of Jesus followers
mission agency	faith-based organization, apostolic community, religious order
church	community of faith, community of Jesus followers, community of hope, community of reconciliation
church missions department	global engagement, global relations, international task force, international peacemaking and justice department, international reconciliation task force
pagans, non-Christians	unbelievers, pre-believers, God-seekers
field	adopted homeland, host country

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[27] What about the term, "church planting?" I believe it miscommunicates at a number of levels, so I prefer the term "gospel planting" for three reasons: (1) "Gospel planting" is more biblical and accurate. Nowhere does the New Testament imply that we plant the church. But it does teach that we plant the gospel. The parable of the sower makes this most clear. (2) "Gospel planting" helps us envision our task more clearly. The term "church planting" implies that we bring the church from the outside. To use another metaphor, "church planting" implies that we plant the gospel seed along with a flower pot. The church is then foreign rather than indigenous. "Gospel planting" implies that we sow the gospel seed, and churches spring up from indigenous soil. (3) "Gospel planting" is more Christ-centered than "church planting," since Jesus is the gospel.

Paul the apostle linked his apostolic aims and ambitions with the gospel. His "apostolic self-description" indicates that his goal was the gospel. His work resulted in communities of Jesus' followers. He loved and suffered for these communities of faith. But he linked his apostolic aims and ambitions with the gospel: "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1 NASB). "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace" (Acts 20:24 NIV). "And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20 NASB). "I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it" (1 Corinthians 9:23 NASB). "I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness … " (Colossians 1:25). "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace [of apostleship] was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8). "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear" (2 Timothy 4:17).

Focus on integrity and identity

Learning to communicate a core message and a core mandate in a Christ-like manner to all of our audiences, at all times, is challenging. As noted above, it demands change in both our wording and in our being. This is even more true about our core identity. Integrity means that our message, methods, and motives are congruent.[28] Blessing the nations in a glocalized world demands heart-felt repentance for many of us. I stepped down from my role as International Director of a mission agency because I personally could no longer live out my faith with integrity in that role, within that ministry paradigm. While the majority of people in missions do not struggle with this like I do, there are thousands of people like me who feel restricted by this paradigm. They feel that this model of ministry potentially undermines their integrity, robs them of joy, and quenches their boldness.

Train workers and churches in "glocal" ministry

Training workers like Paul – who have integrated identities and combine credible work (tentmaking) with fruitful disciple making – is the challenge of the 21st century. This is true whether we are serving among our neighbors or among the nations. Glocal ministry sees every member of the church as sent into the world. Every pastor wants the members of his or her church to incarnate the gospel in their jobs – in the market place and institutions of the world wherever they serve.[29]

The church tends to exacerbate a sense of dual identity in their international staff since they embrace old missionary paradigms (and terms) and in practice only understand the role of the classic, fully supported, non-tentmaking missionary. That was fine in the 18th-20th century, but no longer! Likewise, Bible school and theological seminaries have done little to train bi-vocational disciple makers with integrated identities because their focus has been on training those in pastoral work or full-time ministry. We need training models that are more holistic and relevant to following Jesus among our neighbors and among the nations.

Make necessary organizational changes

A number of disciples serving in the Muslim world have a well established, integrated identity in their adopted homelands. They readily identify themselves as followers of Jesus who are living cross-culturally as business people or another role. However, when they return to their sending country, they face the dual-identity tension as they identify with their

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[28] As Bob Roberts Jr. says, "Serve not to convert but because you have been converted. The motive of Jesus is serving others, not using the gospel as religious bait" (2007, 139). The entire chapter (pp 139-159) focuses on the importance of motives in ministry.

[29] See my summary of the missional church in footnote 2.

organization. As one brother told me, "Rick, I love my agency. But I am scared to death that one of my Muslim neighbors will find out that I am part of this agency!" It's time to end this duplicity and seek true integrity. It's time to change our organizations or start new ones that allow followers of Christ to walk in integrity and enjoy an integrated identity. It's time for some future-thinking church leaders to come up with new ways of thinking, communicating, and sending their members cross-culturally.[30]

In summary, following Jesus in a glocalized world is not about making our message acceptable to everyone or being "politically correct." It's not about seeking greater security or avoiding persecution. It's not about watering down our global mandate, nor does it affirm a naïve transparency with no sense wisdom or discretion.

Following Jesus in a glocalized world is about keeping Jesus central. It's about the advance of the gospel. It is about having a holistic view of life, work, and ministry. It is about personal and organizational integrity that is the basis for true authenticity. It is about embodying the Vineyard value of "culturally relevant mission" globally for the sake of our neighbors and the nations.

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[30] One friend of mine commented, "Right now, my sending church doesn't include me in their little 'missionary booklet.' But wouldn't it be amazing if that booklet were transformed and they had a catalog of 'members who are part of our church family though God has moved them on to new places.' … It could include a variety of people: traditional missionaries, people who've moved overseas for business, etc. – not just those who receive financial support from the church, but those for whom the church has intentionally committed to actively pray and send out from their midst in a variety of roles. Just a dream … I can even think of very real and pertinent prayer requests that could be publically displayed in my church that I would be proud to show to people in my adopted homeland."

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