



**bits from bob....**

**Examining Your Mission Paradigm  
August 2019**

For 50 years I have written short articles (“bits”) that point to profound truths. Perhaps you can endure one more!

I regularly post on Facebook – many of the items I share are mission reports. While I limit my personal posts on Facebook, I do post family items from time to time. Here is something I find surprising! The family posts get many more “likes” than the incredible mission news items that tell of the spread of the gospel, new churches, national churches planting more churches, hundreds of souls won for Christ! I ask myself, “Why?” Why is it hard for folks to hit the “like” button for mission news?

This is not a research project report. I have not done a survey. I am thinking, contemplating possibilities, wondering. Is it hard to “like” a post when the information shared does not fit into our thought patterns? Is it hard to “like” a mission post when it does not fit my mission paradigm?

Consider three sets of contrasts.

(1a) The New Testament model is that missionaries visited a city, preached the gospel, and within a few weeks or months left a church that had to function on its own. (Paul spent 18 months in Corinth and about 3 years in Ephesus, but these are the exceptions to Paul’s usual practice.)

(1b) The typical model today sends foreign missionaries (mostly North Americans) to distant lands for extended periods of time. The missionaries often go to places where the gospel has already gone and is being spread by nationals. Inserted foreign missionaries often leave churches that are barely functional.

(2a) The New Testament model is that those infant churches were encouraged, strengthened, and taught by continued visits and correspondence. (Certainly, we do not have a record of all of the visits and correspondence that occurred in the first century church.)

(2b) The typical model today is missionary-driven and requires a continued missionary presence. This model often does not allow room for spiritual growth and responsibility among the new Christians.

(3a) The New Testament model is that at least one infant church (Philippi) sent funds to a new mission point within a few weeks after being established.

(3b) The typical model today does not expect that new churches will be self-supporting, self-directed, self-edifying, and self-duplicating within a short time. In fact, many mission efforts are supported for 10 or 20 years, the mission church is still not functional, and the mission effort would likely disappear if the missionary presence were withdrawn!

Looking for help as you rethink and reinvent your mission paradigm? Here is a link to four articles that will provide a beginning point: <http://www.bobyongresources.com/missions/third-wave-of-mission-work.pdf>