



TWR and Faith Reliance

Promoting global, generous Christian living



Speaking Hope to the World

The background of the slide features a light blue world map centered in the upper half. In the top left corner, there is a circular inset showing a close-up of a bicycle wheel with a yellow rim. In the bottom left corner, there is a large, faint, grey silhouette of a bicycle. The overall color palette is light and airy, with various shades of blue and grey.

TWR and Faith Reliance

Promoting global, generous Christian living

Faith Reliance Philosophy Summarized:

- Recognize that the excitement and ownership of Christ's Great Commission belongs to all people groups as part of their Acts 1:6-8 strategy.
- Teach the joy and discipline of generous giving as part of the discipleship process.
- Give high priority to transparent accounting.
- Train and coach regional and local staff in culturally adapted fundraising efforts that are biblically based.



Speaking Hope to the World

Faith Reliance

Promoting global, generous Christian living



Much has been written and discarded over the centuries in the English language on the general topic of “unhealthy dependence on foreign funding” in missions. Specifically, Henry Venn and Hudson Taylor of England and Rufus Anderson and John Nevius of the United States were among a group of mid-19th-century mission practitioners in Asia who tested variations of the “Three-Self” principles of indigenous church planting. These biblically modeled principles specified that indigenous churches should be self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing.¹

Curiously, if Christians today are asked whether they have heard of the “Three-Self” principles, they are more likely to think of the church in China known as the Three-Self Patriotic Movement than to understand the principles as a foundational theory of indigenous church planting. The principles were adopted at an 1893 mission convention in Korea and later recognized as an important part of the framework that enabled the 1907 Great Revival in that nation.² Today, Operation World reports that six of the 10 largest churches in the world are in South Korea and that with more than 21,000 missionaries, South Korea is the second-largest foreign-mission-sending nation on earth.³

While some Nevius contemporaries regarded these “Three-Self” principles positively, others, particularly longtime missionaries and their mission sending agencies, did not. C.H. Carpenter documented the success of local funding of local ministries in Burma only to be told by his mission sending agency that it would not follow this “new method” in which new believers learned self-support but would retain a system the author described as “the [old] patronage system.”⁴

Briefly stated, these principles grew out of the challenge facing missionaries in past centuries to overcome the phenomenon of “rice Christians,” a term applied to those who were dependent on foreign handouts, with the obvious inference that their interest in Christianity was purely material. Unfortunately, we have reason to believe that in certain places this challenge remains today.



What happened and why were these foundational principles rejected? Was the rejection based only on finances? We can be assured that any financial dependence began with good intentions to charitably help those in physical need.

Carpenter wrote in 1883:

We look in vain to the New Testament for a precept or a precedent for this mode of evangelization. Great Britain and Germany were not thus converted to Christianity. Not thus were Christian churches and institutions planted and extended in North America. Individual missionaries there have been in every age sent forth by the home churches, and supported, to a greater or less extent, in heathen lands; but *in permanently successful missions, they have never subsidized their converts.* [Carpenter's emphasis] ... If there is not life enough in an infant church to take root and grow in the fresh soil where it is planted, from resources right at hand; if there is not life and energy enough in it to become a tree, yielding shade and fruit for others, – the husbandman's labor is in vain; decay and death are inevitable. Unless the churches we plant in heathen lands speedily become a new base of supplies, and a new base of aggressive warfare, all the money in Christendom will not galvanize them into more than artificial life.⁵

While a cultural adaptation of the “Three-Self” formula saw success in Korea, its lack of adaptation

elsewhere may be a contributing factor in our present-day search for a local, indigenous solution to dependency on foreign funding in missions. But as Carpenter obliquely suggests, perhaps there is a more fundamental problem in the issue of dependency than simply the matter of money. Perhaps we are missing a key factor.

Jean Johnson, a longtime missionary to Cambodia who now serves with World Mission Associates, explains the planting of Christian ministries this way:

What we do on day one affects day 100 and day 1,000 and day 10,000. The assumptions with which we begin are like small, self-fulfilling prophecies that point us toward success or failure in the long term.

If the church has a low self-image, the community will have a low self-image of Christ and the Body of Christ. If a church has a healthy self-image and knows how to make disciples who are giving and sacrificing, there will be more of an appeal and more of a healthy community image.⁶

What would give the local or national church in any country a healthy self-image? Henry Chadwick, a historian of the early church, stated, “The practical application of charity (that is, kindness in generosity) was probably the most potent single cause of Christian success.”⁷

Kindness goes further than money. Zechariah 7:9-10 is one of many verses in the Bible to explain the gracious nature of kindness as an attitude of giving time, talents and indeed our all to God: “Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” In kindness, our very lives are engaged with Christ’s purposes in our world, and Acts 1:8 reminds us that the Holy Spirit will assist us in those purposes, reaching others for Christ to the end of the age.

With this idea in mind, TWR (formerly Trans World Radio) now looks to disciple believers to be generous rather than merely teach them to be so, for generosity is but a means to the greater goal. The disciple needs to become a generous co-laborer in the ultimate vision of the Great Commission to reach the ends of the earth.





Those laboring in the Great Commission not only must receive Christlike kindness in all its forms but also must know how to give so that their communities and nations see Christ in the flesh.

Thus, what we are calling “Faith Reliance” is more than a message about giving money generously. The Western church will never, on its own, reach the ends of the earth. It will take every believer’s participation to accomplish the biblical goal of reaching every ethnic group with Christ’s message of love. As our forefathers in the faith knew, the local church in every community will need to practice and disciple others as examples of Christ.

Faith Reliance is a call not for dependence on funding plans administered abroad but for reliance on God for every kindness in every nation.



TWR's Funding History

TWR developed in the mid-20th century as a shortwave missionary radio conglomerate with initial funding from the U.S. and from European organizations Norea Mediemisjon of Norway and ERF Medien of Germany. These first European national partners had a dual focus of reaching their own nations as well as foreign nations with the Gospel. Thus, Norea and ERF built their Christian household names on the principles of local and missionary radio.

As TWR expanded, people were employed around the world to translate and adapt content from Western ministries for use in non-English-speaking settings. TWR found mother-tongue speakers to voice the Western content and looked for appropriate outlets to reach each language group. Typically, as new language content was created, a vision for further ministry in the language group was born. The ministries often, however, established their vision around the translation needed rather than setting a vision of their own. In some ways, therefore, TWR unintentionally adopted the old patronage system to fulfill its mission. The distinction that TWR was paying for translation and other specific services rendered and not merely handing out jobs to converts doesn't change the fact, common at the time, that a vision for resourcing from local means normally wasn't considered.

In the last years of the 20th century, TWR made a philosophical shift that, on the surface, had little to do with funding. The International Headquarters in the United States initiated "regionalization," which meant that indigenous leaders would be sought to enable regional or local (country and language-specific) offices to administer the decision-making of local ministries. Among these decisions: which language groups and types of programs would be undertaken; whether the regional offices would import foreign programs or create local ones; and which ones would diversify into FM and AM.

TWR's structure was already functioning with increasing numbers of international partners, but as indigenization expanded through this enabling servant-leadership policy, regional offices began opening autonomous local partner offices wherever needed. As of August 2012, TWR had more than 60 registered



Declare His glory
among the nations,
His marvelous works
among all the peoples!

I CHRONICLES 16:24 (ESV)



TRANS WORLD RADIO-ASIA
PARTNERS' CONFERENCE 2009



national partners and operations in about 160 countries. This dedicated global team of indigenous workers gives TWR the significant distinction of being the largest Christian broadcaster in the world, advancing the good news of Jesus in more than 230 languages and dialects.

While decision-making may have been turned over to regional or local levels, handing over the responsibility of *funding* those decisions was not always thought possible. In some cases, collecting money seemed like too trivial a chore with which to burden developing countries. In others, local people were considered too poor to sustain the ministries. There were seize-the-day moments, too, when long-term local financial sustainability was not even a consideration as available opportunities were simply and quickly snapped up to get important radio ministry started. TWR, after all, had plenty of North American and European offices that considered it a privilege to lend a hand in propagating the message of Christ over the radio.

Therefore, local partners could now determine their own Great Commission strategy, and the West could decide whether it would support the vision with ministry, technical and financial resources. If the West didn't come up with the resources, though, the strategy was frustrated. For, in most cases, whoever holds the purse strings also wants to set the direction of the initiative.

TWR's mission statement bears record that its goal is to "assist the church to fulfill the command of Jesus Christ to make disciples of all peoples, and to do so by using and making available mass media ..." In other words, TWR does not attempt to usurp the place of the local church or body of believers in any nation. By not discipling ministries birthed under the TWR banner to rely on God for their own local funding, though, TWR may have inadvertently stolen their birthright – the blessings and dignity that come from developing total faith in God to provide for their needs. The low self-image that Jean Johnson speaks of has penetrated many a nation's Christian culture, resulting in the formation of receiving nations and dependent cultures.

As Steve Saint, son of martyred missionary Nate Saint, explains in his book "The Great Omission" that those of us in full-time ministry are largely to blame for today's dependency, which undermines the efficiency of the Great Commission.

Dependency is not just a welfare condition. It becomes an insidious state of mind that can debilitate generation after generation once it gains a foothold. In fledgling new churches, it can be a debilitating and even fatal disease.

The purpose of missions is to plant Christ's church with a local flavor amongst indigenous people groups. *The purpose is not to transplant our flavor of Christ's church for indigenous people to get used to* [italics are Saint's]. Truly indigenous churches are self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting. The church is not truly indigenous until it can function on its own to carry out Christ's commission, without outside input.⁸

A natural byproduct of becoming dependent on foreign funders is having those foreign funders dictate the vision of the local ministry. Although many decisions need to be made based on God's provision of funding,



Bernard Oosterhoff, director of TWR Netherlands, emphasizes the importance of local vision when he says, “God provides ministry direction through the prayers of his people. And what God orders, he pays for.”

Many TWR initiatives cost a great deal because they require technology, airtime, and continual research and development in order to reach multiple languages and societies in culturally specific and appropriate ways. Foreign assistance, therefore, is needed for the long term since the Great Commission task is far from complete. For local needs, however, TWR has learned that long-term ministry results will come from local reliance on God’s provision. In other words, foreign funding is a short-term solution for the problem of scarce local resources, for which the only long-term solution is truly local fund development.

Can Local Ministries Be Successful at Fundraising?

Local ministries outside the West historically have little or no fundraising experience or tradition. When they look at Western-style fundraising, they understandably recoil from what is perceived as manipulative and perhaps ungodly ways of “begging” others for funds, resulting in the belief that it would be culturally impossible to raise funds in their own countries. Biblical fund development, however, is described this way by Henri Nouwen: “We must not let ourselves be tricked into thinking that fund-raising is only a secular activity. As a form of ministry, fund-raising is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry.”⁹

The ideals outlined in Gary Hoag and Scott Rodin’s book, “The Sower,”¹⁰ best reflect TWR’s own fund-development ideals, which are: measuring activities in donor relationships (planting a seed), spreading knowledge about the ministry (watering the seed) and letting God give the increase. TWR’s approach is not to push people into giving; we encourage supporting TWR ministries from hearts led by God in worship and thanksgiving.

Alternatively, church and ministry leaders in any country can possess a scarcity mentality, assuming



that they and God are drawing on a limited well of resources and that the use of funds for new purposes necessarily reduces funding for existing needs. Trusting God for our needs is a fundamental part of each believer's journey of faith in the provision of "daily bread," as outlined in what is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer. We all fall into doubt as we fall into need from time to time, but if we remove the practice of giving generously from our Christian lives, there will be great gaps in our faith journey as well as our theology.

In TWR, the autonomy of the national partner is of utmost importance and is practically supported through a corporate culture of servant leadership. Included in this mindset is partner-to-partner and shoulder-to-shoulder work in reaching those who have yet to hear the Gospel. If all communities and nations are to be reached with the Gospel, each country or culture in TWR's global family will need to make its own choices about methods for encouraging people to live and give generously. As fund-development methods are adapted to local cultures, local financial self-reliance becomes a natural byproduct.



The Faith Reliance Vision and Strategy

For its entire history, TWR has specialized in reaching out to people groups found in countries closed to traditional missionary activity. Consequently, TWR needs local partners not only to raise their own funds but also to join in the global vision statement – “To reach the world for Christ by mass media so that lasting fruit is produced” – if such a grand vision is to be realized.

In February 2012, the following was agreed to as global TWR policy:

Faith Reliance

- TWR is committed to a philosophy that we will refer to as Faith Reliance.
- This philosophy supports the TWR ethos of respecting local expertise in relating the Gospel and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) as it relates to their culture, their near cultures and their ability to take the Gospel to cultures foreign to them.
- Therefore, TWR will encourage local partners to demonstrate ownership of the local ministry and ownership of the Mandate of the Church (Acts 1:6-8). This ownership includes strategic ministry planning under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and strategic funding of those plans in faithful reliance on our Lord Jesus Christ to supply.
- The Global Fund Development team will work together to refine and regularly update the Faith Reliance curriculum so that it can be understood and taught in each region as we, together as mutual partners, assist the church in reaching the world for Christ by mass media so that lasting fruit is produced.
- In the case of resource development, TWR’s vision statement, which reflects John 15’s “lasting fruit,” means in our context fruit that is capable of multiplying disciples through the teaching of generosity and the healthy interdependence of Faith Reliance, rather than an unhealthy expectation of perpetual dependence on foreign funding.¹¹



Recognizing the size and scope of the challenge and the generations it might take to meet it, TWR calls on all believers to join in the global Christian generosity movement. On March 1, 2012, TWR signed the Generosity Declaration, which is promoted by the Global Generosity Network. The principles of the network, outlined by the Lausanne Movement, can be read in its purpose statement at www.generositymovement.org.¹²

As believers show their gratitude for God's gifts by being generous to others, they will praise God, and the cycle begins again with more gratitude, giving honor to our Lord and blessing to us.

Richard Bauckham describes it this way:

Blessing is God's provision for human flourishing. But it is also relational; to be blessed by God is not only to know God's good gifts but to know God himself in his generous giving. Because blessing is relational, the movement of the blessing is a movement that goes out from God and returns to him. God's blessing of people overflows in their blessing of others and those who experience blessing from God in turn bless God, which means that they give all that creatures really can give to God: thanksgiving and praise.¹³

As Faith Reliance works its way through global Christian culture, we pray that international interaction and local examples will emerge to continually serve as a practical testimony of God's blessing and grace to every nation



Speaking Hope to the World

Notes

All Scripture is taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

References Cited

1. Nevius, John L.

2003 reprint "The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches"

1886 original Shanghai, China: Presbyterian Press

Page 12, 1958 Preface by Bruce F. Hunt

2. Park, Dr. Young Hee

2008 "The Great Revival Movement of 1907 and its Historical Impact on Korean Church"

Presented to the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

Section II b. The Nevius Principle and Method

3. Mandryk, Jason

2010 Operation World, Seventh Edition

Colorado Springs, Colo.: Biblica Publishing

Page 510

4. Carpenter, Chapin Howard

1883 "Self-Support, Illustrated in the History of the Bassein Karen Mission from 1840-1880"

Boston: Rand, Avery, and Co.; The Franklin Press

Page 135

Carpenter's unsuccessful plea for "self-sufficiency" recorded in: Anderson, Gerald H. (editor)

1998 "Chapin Howard Carpenter"

Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions

Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing

Page 11

5. Carpenter, Chapin Howard

1883 "Self-Support, Illustrated in the History of the Bassein Karen Mission from 1840 -1880"

Boston: Rand, Avery, and Co.; The Franklin Press

Page 135

6. TWR

2011 "A Symposium: Unhealthy Dependency to Faith Reliance"
3-part DVD set of speakers Fikkert, Johnson, Martin, Seebeck
Disc 2: Jean Johnson

7. Reese, Robert

2010 "Roots & Remedies of the Dependency Syndrome in World Missions"
Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library
Page 183 (Reese quotes Chadwick)

8. Saint, Steve

2001 "The Great Omission"
Seattle: YWAM Publishing
Pages 66/67

9. Nouwen, Henri J.M.

2004 "The Spirituality of Fund-raising"
Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada: Upper Room Ministries
Page 6

10. Hoag, Gary G. and R. Scott Rodin

2010 "The Sower"
Winchester, Va.: ECFA Press

11. TWR

2012 "Global Policies and Practices"
Faith Reliance (Cary, N.C.)

12. Global Generosity Network

2011 Global Generosity Declaration
www.generositymovement.org

13. Bauckham, Richard

2009 "The Story of Blessing Prevailing Over Curse"
In "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader"
Edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne
Fourth Edition, Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library
Page 38



Global Generosity Network Generosity Declaration



Our commitment to Biblical based generosity

We affirm that:

- God is indescribably generous. We see this in his creation and experience it in his redemption plan through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ (John 3:16).
- God is creator, sustainer and owner of all things (Psalm 24:1). He has supplied His infinite resources to us to steward for His Kingdom purposes, including to reach the ends of the earth for the glory of His name (Luke 12:42-48, Revelation 7:9-12).
- Just as Jesus lived a truly and perfectly generous life to serve and save people (Mark 10:45, 2 Corinthians 9:8-9), it remains fundamental, therefore, that Christians model Biblical service, generosity and stewardship (Mark 10:45, 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2 Corinthians 9:8-9)

We, therefore, commit ourselves to foster a culture of Biblical generosity and stewardship that will transform individuals and communities as we:

- Recognize that generosity is made manifest in giving funds, resources, time, talents, gifts, prayer and our very presence.
- Practice holistic stewardship, generous living and gracious financial giving while encouraging these virtues within our spheres of influence through modeling, teaching and equipping.
- Engage openly with other Christians and their networks in a global movement in which the whole church lives out and takes the whole gospel to the whole world as effective and generous stewards.

Signed _____

Date _____

www.generositymovement.org



Speaking Hope to the World

TWR • P.O. Box 8700, Cary, NC 27512, USA
Phone: 919-460-3700 | 800-456-7897 (7TWR)

www.twr.org