

## CHAPTER 5: TOWARD A BRAZILIAN THEOLOGY OF MISSION

### 5.1 Introduction

Building on the previous chapters, which have considered Brazil's missions sending history, the cultural experiences of Brazilian transcultural workers in Arab contexts, and Brazilian approaches to mission in the Arab world, let us explore how Brazilians are thinking theologically about mission, especially in the Arab world.

For Mordomo, this endeavor will be difficult because he argues that “there is no comprehensive Brazilian theology of mission to be found.”<sup>928</sup> While acknowledging the strides made by Latin American theologians and missiologists in the last forty years, Mordomo maintains that a distinctive Brazilian theology of mission has yet to be articulated. On the other hand, Valdir Steuernagel—a Lutheran missiologist who presently serves as minister at large with World Vision and has played an influential role in the Lausanne Movement—is persuaded that Brazilian missiologists continue to “drink from the streams of Padilla and Escobar.”<sup>929</sup> That is, they remain indebted to these innovative thinkers within the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL).<sup>930</sup> Hence, Steuernagel, a leading Brazilian missiologist who has been an active member of the FTL and regards himself as a disciple of Escobar,<sup>931</sup> sees more continuity between Brazilian and Latin American missiology than Mordomo does. Indeed, it is difficult to read an article by a Brazilian missiologist in which Padilla, Escobar, or Orlando Costas are not cited.

To be sure, Brazilian missiology, not unlike Latin American missiology in general, is continually emerging and is supported by the more well known works of Steuernagel and Ronaldo Lidório as well as through the reflections of missiologists

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<sup>928</sup> See Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, 224.

<sup>929</sup> Related in conversation with Steuernagel and Mordomo, July 22, 2009.

<sup>930</sup> Ironically, Padilla asserted in the 1980s that Latin America was without its own articulated theology. See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 95-96.

<sup>931</sup> See Steuernagel, “Learning from Escobar . . . and Beyond,” in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 123-25.

who contribute to journals such as *Capacitando*. While a Brazilian theology of mission can certainly be appreciated through articulated thought in published articles and books, it can be understood more strategically through the observed practice of Brazilian transcultural workers, which, in the present study, focuses on those serving in the Arab-Muslim world. Indeed, as Timothy Tennent has recently asserted, “missions and missiology each stimulate, support, and lead to the other.”<sup>932</sup> Similarly, Costas reflected, “[missiology] is a critical reflection that takes place in the praxis of mission” and that “it emerges out of mission and leads to mission.”<sup>933</sup> Perhaps Steuernagel best summarizes this approach by suggesting that theology of mission develops “at the kitchen table” and in the context of relationships—rather than in libraries.<sup>934</sup> In short, our approach to understanding Brazilian missiology, especially in the Arab-Muslim world context, will be informed through published articulated thought as well as through the observed practices of Brazilian evangelical missionaries—including that which has been summarized in the last chapter.

Any discussion of Brazilian missiology must first be understood in light of the general characteristics of Brazilian evangelicalism that were presented in chapter two. They include: a high view of Scripture, a call to genuine conversion, a visible faith, a missionary zeal, the priesthood of the believer, and a free church tendency. As Brazilian evangelical transcultural workers have gone from this matrix to serve in the Arab-Muslim world, four particular aspects of theology of mission have been

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<sup>932</sup> See Timothy Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2010), 496.

<sup>933</sup> Cited in Anthony Christopher Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology From the Evangelical Perspective of the ‘Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana,’” (PhD dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1983), 236, 241. Smith helpfully relates that the leading FTL thinkers all theologized from a place of practical ministry. Escobar was a Peruvian missionary to Argentina, Brazil, and Spain, while Padilla and Costas have both been pastors. See Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 304-305, 307-312, 320-35.

<sup>934</sup> See Steuernagel, “Learning from Escobar . . . and Beyond,” in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 124-25.

apparent and will be discussed in this chapter: *missão integral* (the whole Gospel), a church-centered missiology, missions from below, and a spiritually aware missiology.

## **5.2 *Missão Integral* (The Whole Gospel)**

The most prominent aspect of Brazilian theology of mission is *missão integral*, which can best be translated as the “whole Gospel” or “holistic mission.” As this aspect has been central to Latin American missiology in general, let us first recount how *missão integral* has developed historically through the work of the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL). Next, a theological overview of *missão integral* will be given based largely on the articulated thought of FTL theologians, including Brazilians and other Latin Americans. Finally, we will explore how *missão integral* is being reflected on and applied by Brazilian missions organizations and missionaries.

### **5.2.1 Historical Development of *Missão Integral***

For much of the twentieth century, Western evangelicals struggled to reconcile the relationship between kerygmatic proclamation and social action. Historically, evangelicals—including those who went to Latin America in the nineteenth century—were quite concerned with ministering to human needs.<sup>935</sup> However, beginning in the late nineteenth century, North American evangelicals in particular became preoccupied with the challenges of liberal theology, science, and modernity.<sup>936</sup> In addition, as North American evangelicals were becoming increasingly individualistic culturally and more premillennial theologically, this led to the so-called “great reversal” in which a dichotomy between proclamation and social action emerged, especially after World War I.<sup>937</sup> Hence, for many evangelicals, caring for social needs

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<sup>935</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 51.

<sup>936</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 46.

<sup>937</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 51-52, 60-65; also Oscar A. Campos, “Premillennial Tensions and Holistic Missiology: Latin American Evangelicalism,” in Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung, *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to “Left Behind” Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 150; Al Tizon,

meant compromising the Gospel and giving in to the aims of liberal theology. As a result, this North American contextual theology, which emphasized evangelism as mission, prevailed at global evangelization congresses in Berlin in 1966 and in Bogota (CLADE I) in 1969.<sup>938</sup>

Following the Bogota congress, the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL) was founded in 1970 and was nurtured by a diverse group of evangelical theologians, including Escobar, Costas, Padilla, Emilio Núñez, Pedro Arana, Peter Savage, Andrew Kirk, and later Steuernagel.<sup>939</sup> In reality, the FTL was initiated as a response to what was regarded as two unsatisfactory streams of thought—liberation theology, which developed in the Roman Catholic Latin American context, and evangelical fundamentalism, which, of course, originated in North America. In rejecting the hermeneutics and presuppositions of liberation theology, including an ecumenical theology that regarded Latin America as thoroughly Christian, the FTL thinkers maintained the noted evangelical distinctives of the need for genuine conversion, visible faith, and a high view of Scripture.<sup>940</sup> Observing the authoritative place of Scripture in the theological method of the FTL leaders, Bonino correctly notes, “Assent to the authority of the Bible could be considered as one of the most general features of the evangelical movement in Latin America.”<sup>941</sup> Summarizing

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*Transformation After Lausanne: Radical Evangelical Mission in Global-Local Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 23-26; and Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 88.

<sup>938</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 100-101, 104, 110, 126-27, 157, 160.

<sup>939</sup> See Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 119-20; and Bonino, 48. With the exception of Kirk—an Anglican missionary who spent many years in Latin America—each key FTL leader has been of Latin origin. Also, Smith’s dissertation, “The Essentials of Missiology From the Evangelical Perspective of the ‘Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana’” offers a thorough history of the movement until 1983.

<sup>940</sup> See Escobar, “Latin American Theology,” in John Corrie, ed., *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 204; also Bonino, 49. See Tizon, 53-55 for a brief and useful summary of liberation theology.

<sup>941</sup> See Bonino, 49; also Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 114; Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 20-21; and Orlando Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982), 33.

Escobar's critique of the ideological basis of liberation theology in light of his  
Biblicist convictions, Sharon Heaney writes:

Escobar is forced to ask whether liberation thinkers actually believe the Bible is the revealed and inspired fruit of divine initiative. If they do not believe in the true significance of the Bible and its subsequent authority, then Escobar makes the suggestion that the theology of liberation should concentrate on Marxist texts instead.<sup>942</sup>

This value is maintained by Steuernagel who, in a recent article, admonishes evangelical missiologists to recapture the primacy of Scripture in their missiological reflection.<sup>943</sup>

While the FTL rejected liberation theology for promoting ideology over authentic Christian faith, they also faulted North American evangelicals serving in Latin America for failing to develop a missiology that took the Latin American context seriously. Steuernagel wrote that mission could no longer be “an exercise in linear, one-way hermeneutics—from here to there, from the North to the South, from the individual missionary to an individual person, and from a verbal language to a single soul.”<sup>944</sup> Rather, Padilla affirmed that the “aim [of the FTL] was to offer a new open-ended reading of Scripture with a hermeneutic in which the biblical text and the historical situation become mutually engaged in a dialogue whose purpose is to place the church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in its particular context.”<sup>945</sup> Escobar added that what was needed was “a fresh exploration . . . into the depths of the biblical text, with the questions raised by the Latin American context.”<sup>946</sup> That is, Scripture should be read in light of Latin America's very real social problems,

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<sup>942</sup> See Sharon E. Heaney, *Contextual Theology for Latin America: Liberation Themes in Evangelical Perspective* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2008), 103. For further discussion of the FTL members' regard for Scripture and their hermeneutics, see Heaney, 94-125; Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 95-104; and Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 106-107.

<sup>943</sup> See Steuernagel, “Learning from Escobar . . . and Beyond,” in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 130.

<sup>944</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 17.

<sup>945</sup> Cited in Escobar, “Latin American Theology,” in Corrie, 204-205; see also Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 14-15; and Heaney, 84.

<sup>946</sup> See Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 114.

including poverty, injustice, and oppression—issues that have been addressed in Scripture and in the earthly ministry of Jesus.<sup>947</sup> Acknowledging the contextual concerns of liberation theologians—concerns largely ignored by North American evangelicals in the twentieth century—Padilla asserts, “The question for me is not how do I respond to liberation theology . . . but rather, how do I articulate my faith in the same context of poverty, regression, and hopelessness out of which liberation theology has emerged?”<sup>948</sup> The FTL’s commitment to proclaiming the kerygmatic Gospel and applying the authoritative Scriptures within the concrete Latin American context naturally led to an organic integration of proclamation and social action—a *missão integral*.<sup>949</sup>

As the FTL thinkers forged a holistic theology of mission for Latin America, they also began to influence some global conversations on evangelization—most notably the 1974 Lausanne Congress. As theology of mission—including the relationship between social action and proclamation—was among the planned topics at the meeting, Padilla and Escobar gave papers which raised difficult questions and challenged the delegates’ missiological paradigms.<sup>950</sup> In his paper, Padilla argued, “Concern for man’s reconciliation with God cannot be separated from concern for social justice . . . I refuse, therefore, to drive a wedge between a primary task, namely the proclamation of the Gospel, and a secondary (at best) or even optional (at worst)

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<sup>947</sup> See Escobar, “Latin American Theology,” in Corrie, 205; and Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 7.

<sup>948</sup> Cited in Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 117; see also Heaney, 46-47.

<sup>949</sup> This excerpt from the “Evangelical Declaration of Bogota” of 1969 shows the development of this missiology: “The process of evangelization must occur in concrete human situations . . . The time has come for us evangelicals to take seriously our social responsibility. In order to do this, we must build on a biblical foundation which implies evangelical doctrine and the example of Jesus Christ carried to its logical implications. Christ’s example must become incarnated in the critical Latin American situation of underdevelopment, injustice, hunger, violence, and despair. Men cannot build the Kingdom of God on earth, but evangelical action will contribute toward the creation of a better world as a foreshadowing of that Kingdom who coming we pray for daily.” Cited in Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 129; see also Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 194-202; and Bonino, 50.

<sup>950</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 136, 141.

task of the church.”<sup>951</sup> Warning against creating a false dichotomy between evangelism and social action, Escobar added, “To give only . . . spiritual content to God’s action in man or to give only a social and physical dimension to God’s salvation are both unbiblical heresies.”<sup>952</sup> Years after the 1974 Lausanne gathering, Steuernagel helpfully summarized the Latin American position by asserting, “Word and deed cannot be separated from each other at the cost of sacrificing the rich wholeness of the Gospel.”<sup>953</sup> The missiology presented by Padilla and Escobar encountered strong opposition from other evangelicals at Lausanne who championed the priority of proclamation. However, it seems that without the FTL influence at Lausanne, article five of the Lausanne Covenant (“Christian Social Responsibility”) would not have been drafted:

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all people. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The

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<sup>951</sup> Cited in Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 144.

<sup>952</sup> Cited in Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 212. The “Radical Discipleship” group which convened during Lausanne 1974 added this declaration (cited in Padilla, “Holistic Mission,” in Corrie, 157): “There is not a biblical dichotomy between the Word spoken and the Word made flesh in the lives of God’s people. Men will look as they listen and what they see must be at one with what they hear.”

<sup>953</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 257; see also Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 149-54.



salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.<sup>954</sup>

In the aftermath of the 1974 conference, the Lausanne Movement continued to struggle to strike a balance between proclamation and social action. In some cases, such as at the 1989 Lausanne Congress in Manila, social action was virtually ignored.<sup>955</sup> On the other hand, at the 1982 Grand Rapids gathering—a meeting chaired by John Stott, who had come to appreciate the FTL missiology—the delegates had a healthy discussion regarding the integral relationship between word and deed. At the conference, three possibilities were affirmed: first, social action could be regarded as a consequence of evangelism; second, that it could serve as a bridge to evangelism; third, that social action was an equal partner with evangelism.<sup>956</sup>

Over the last three decades, The FTL thinkers have continually argued for the theological legitimacy of the third possibility leading Padilla to affirm that “social involvement has finally been granted full citizenship in evangelical missiology, mainly under the influence of people from the Two-Thirds World.”<sup>957</sup> While holistic mission has been debated within the global church, it has been embraced much more by the Latin American and Brazil evangelical church. Steuernagel notes that following Lausanne 1974, Latin Americans delegates who gathered at Curitiba (Brazil) in 1976 engaged in rigorous and stimulating missiological reflection in light

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<sup>954</sup> See “The Lausanne Covenant,” *The Lausanne Movement* <http://www.lausanne.org/covenant> (accessed June 11, 2010); see also Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 143-44, 151, 169-70; Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 113; and Heaney, 212-14.

<sup>955</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 170-236.

<sup>956</sup> See John R.W. Stott, ed., “Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment,” (Lausanne Occasional Paper 21. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1982) *The Lausanne Movement* <http://www.lausanne.org/all-documents/lop-21.html> (accessed June 15, 2010); see also Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 403-408; Tizon, 43-49.

<sup>957</sup> Cited in Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 169; see also Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 213; and J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 62-64.



of their context.<sup>958</sup> Referring to the declaration adopted at Curitiba, Brazilian missiologist Antônia Van der Meer stated that in mission, “We are called to take the presence of Jesus Christ, proclaiming his redeeming Gospel, serving the world and changing it by his love, patient in the hope of a new creation that he will bring.”<sup>959</sup> Commenting on the work of the Brazilian Congress on Evangelization that met in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) in 1983, Steuernagel observed that “the commitment of the congress was to identify the needs of the Brazilians and present to them a word of ‘faith and hope through the redemptive cross of Christ.’”<sup>960</sup> Finally, following the 1992 CLADE III gathering in Quito, Ecuador, a definitive statement of Latin American theology of mission was drafted and given the descriptive title, “The Whole Gospel from Latin America for All Peoples.”<sup>961</sup>

### **5.2.2 *Missão Integral* Defined**

Given this historical development in which Brazilians and Latin Americans have labored to forge their own theology of mission, let us now move toward a definition of *missão integral*, which will be presented rather thickly as a tapestry of thought from Brazilian and Latin American thinkers. Padilla defines the whole Gospel as “a real integration of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of mission.”<sup>962</sup> He adds, “The salvation that the Gospel proclaims is not limited to man’s reconciliation to God. It involves the remaking of man in all the dimensions of his existence. It has to do with the recovery of the whole man according to God’s original purpose for His

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<sup>958</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 227.

<sup>959</sup> See Antônia Leonora Van der Meer, “The Scriptures, the Church, and Humanity, in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 154.

<sup>960</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 227.

<sup>961</sup> The statement has been published in English in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, eds., *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization II: Theological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 191-98.

<sup>962</sup> See Padilla, “Holistic Mission,” in Corrie, 157.

creation.”<sup>963</sup> Commenting with more color on these aspects of the Gospel, Van der Meer adds, “Mission is the fruit of the love of God, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son in order to redeem human beings from their blindness, oppression, captivity, and poverty, so that they can experience a new life of fullness given by his grace.”<sup>964</sup> Discussing *missão integral* on a more practical level, Steuernagel writes, “What is the whole Gospel? It’s putting ourselves aside and listening to the needs of the people who are crying for help. It’s following Jesus’s example.”<sup>965</sup> He adds that “mission and *diakonia* are inseparable on both theological and practical levels” and that “the mission of the church is expressed in *diakonia*.”<sup>966</sup> Illustrating the integral nature of the Gospel, Padilla concludes rather bluntly that “there is no place for statistics on ‘how many souls die without Christ every minute’ if they do not take into account how many of those who die are dying of hunger.”<sup>967</sup> Finally, asserting that the whole Gospel leads to the spiritual and physical transformation of communities, Steuernagel states, “[I] want to understand the mission of the church as intentional as possible and as broad as possible in order that Christ is recognized and affirmed, for life to be promoted, for community to be developed, and for justice to flow in God’s river as a sign of God’s eternal obsession with *shalom*.”<sup>968</sup>

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<sup>963</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 179; see also Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 22; Heaney, 225-26; and Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate*, 37-38.

<sup>964</sup> See Van der Meer, “The Scriptures, the Church, and Humanity, in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 153.

<sup>965</sup> See Steuernagel, “O Evangelho Integral” in Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, *Perspectivas*, 184. English translation by Barbara Hubbard.

<sup>966</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 35; see also Bevans and Schroeder, 394.

<sup>967</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 25; see also Heaney, 225.

<sup>968</sup> See Steuernagel, “To Seek to Transform Unjust Structures in Society,” in Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross, eds., *Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis), 64. Commenting further on *shalom* as a motif in mission, Kirk (Kirk, 63) writes, “The root meaning of the original [*shalom*] is ‘completeness,’ in the sense of possessing a fullness of welfare and health (Ps. 38:3; Is. 38:16-17), prosperity for the whole community (Job 15:21; Ps. 72:7; 37:11; 122:6), and security (Job 5:24).”

### 5.2.3 Theological Foundations of *Missão Integral*

In light of this working definition, what are the theological underpinnings of *missão integral*? First, the whole Gospel is founded on the integrated nature of the Triune God. Steuernagel writes, “The Gospel is complete in itself just as God is. God has not finished His work in us and the Gospel continues to call us to being complete.”<sup>969</sup> Second, Padilla asserts that the Holy Spirit, having brought diverse people together in caring community at Pentecost, continues to work powerfully and in a holistic manner.<sup>970</sup>

Third, arguably the most foundational aspect of *missão integral* is its Christology. That is, the whole Gospel stems from the life, person, and work of the God-Man Jesus Christ.<sup>971</sup> Escobar and other Latin American thinkers have expressed concern that, in failing to reflect on Christ’s concrete acts in history and focusing more on the eternal benefits of Christ’s work, North American evangelical theologians have actually presented a docetic Christ.<sup>972</sup> Emilio Núñez writes, “We were presented with a divine-human Christ in the theological formula; but in practice, He was far removed from the stage of the world, aloof to our social problems.”<sup>973</sup> Yet, as Jesus’s life included feeding, showing compassion, confronting, proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and suffering among other acts, His divinity and humanity come to

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<sup>969</sup> See Steuernagel, “O Evangelho Integral” in Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, *Perspectivas*, 184.

<sup>970</sup> See Padilla, “Holistic Mission,” in Corrie, 160.

<sup>971</sup> For a helpful summary of Latin American Christology, see Heaney, 170-82.

<sup>972</sup> Docetism is the ancient heresy that denied that Jesus had a physical body but only appeared (*dokeō*) to have.

<sup>973</sup> Cited in Heaney, 172; see also Escobar, “Latin American Theology,” in Corrie, 206; Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 118-20; Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 257; Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate*, 5-16; and Leonardo Boff, trans. Robert F. Barr, *New Evangelization: Good News to the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 16.

bear in His mission.<sup>974</sup> Ultimately, the whole Gospel acknowledges that Jesus is Savior and Lord of the universe.<sup>975</sup>

As Christ established the “definition of what it means to love God above all things and to love one’s neighbor as oneself,”<sup>976</sup> His approach to mission serves as a model for all Christians and for the church. Because of Christ, the church is to proclaim salvation, identify with the poor, confront social injustices, as well as suffer.<sup>977</sup> Steuernagel summarizes:

The whole gospel is to re-encounter Jesus. The mission of today’s churches lies in the authority and inspiration of the life of Jesus. Jesus sent out the disciples as God sent Him. Jesus went with them and taught them what to do. It is necessary to align our lives and our concept of missions to the strategies within the Gospels. It’s necessary to bring it all to Jesus and ask if our strategies, concepts and practices correspond to God’s methodology; if they correspond to God’s heart and His way of communicating with us and establishing His churches; if they correspond to the incarnational model of Jesus. If not, we are getting away from discipleship.<sup>978</sup>

A fourth theological foundation for *missão integral* is anthropology. That is, the whole Gospel is necessary because human beings have spiritual and physical needs. Padilla writes that holistic mission “takes into account that people are spiritual, social and bodily beings, made to live in relationship with God, with their neighbors, and with God’s creation” and it is concerned with “meeting . . . basic human needs, including the need of God, but also the need of food, love, housing, clothes, physical and mental health, and a sense of human dignity.”<sup>979</sup>

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<sup>974</sup> See Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 106-111, 143-45; also Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 124; Steuernagel, “To Seek to Transform Unjust Structures in Society,” in Walls and Ross, 67-68; and Boff, *New Evangelization*, 75.

<sup>975</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 9-11.

<sup>976</sup> See Padilla, “Holistic Mission,” in Corrie, 159.

<sup>977</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 130, 161; Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 177-78; Padilla, “Holistic Mission,” in Corrie, 159; and Heaney, 223.

<sup>978</sup> See Steuernagel, “O Evangelho Integral” in Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, *Perspectivas*, 184; also Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 399.

<sup>979</sup> See Padilla, “Holistic Mission,” in Corrie, 158; also Heaney, 129-30, 239.

Steuernagel and other FTL theologians have particularly reflected on how the Gospel should confront human poverty and social injustice. After describing conditions in Northeast Brazil where World Vision has begun some humanitarian work, Steuernagel wrote, “The challenge of the church, and even of an organization such as World Vision, is that it cannot rob itself of contributing with her drop of hope in the ocean of poverty and human suffering. Moreover, this drop has to have the face of Jesus and a call to meet this same Jesus who calls the poor and sinners to be part of His family.”<sup>980</sup> Others have affirmed this and argued that the global church must actively confront corrupt economic structures which oppress the poor. At the same time, the church should come alongside the poor to aid them in realizing economic transformation and to find solutions for problems such as clean water, hunger, community health, and sustainable agriculture.<sup>981</sup>

Regarding the human need for justice, Steuernagel argues that though evangelicals have historically focused their energies on ministries of compassion, the significant biblical motif of justice requires that the church become more engaged in confronting institutional and social sins.<sup>982</sup> Defining justice as “liberating the oppressed from the yoke of the oppressors and giving them the promise and the vision of a new land and a new life,”<sup>983</sup> Steuernagel asserts that justice is “a fundamental expression of God’s search for transformation.”<sup>984</sup> Arguing that confronting injustice should receive more emphasis in a holistic evangelical missiology, he concludes: “In

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<sup>980</sup> See Steuernagel, “O Menino Nu Na Rampa do Lixo,” in Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, *Perspectivas*, 612.

<sup>981</sup> See Evvy Hay Campbell, ed., “Holistic Mission,” (Lausanne Occasional Paper 33. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2005), 24-39, *The Lausanne Movement* [http://www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/LOP33\\_IG4.pdf](http://www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/LOP33_IG4.pdf) (accessed July 16, 2010); see also Heaney, 234-35.

<sup>982</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 242-44; also Steuernagel, “To Seek to Transform Unjust Structures in Society,” in Walls and Ross, 62-76; Steuernagel, “Learning from Escobar . . . and Beyond,” in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 131; Heaney, 133-35; and Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate*, 21-26.

<sup>983</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 243-44.

<sup>984</sup> See Steuernagel, “To Seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society,” in Walls and Ross, 64

our missionary journey, we need to listen, especially to those who are crying, who are suffering, and who are lonely. We must respond to their cry and go to those places where God is already present—places of the orphan, the widow, and the stranger . . . the abused children, the single mothers, and the refugees.”<sup>985</sup>

A fifth theological foundation for the whole Gospel is the Kingdom of God. This theological motif, which has figured prominently in the work of many theologians, has been especially meaningful to the FTL thinkers and has provided a hermeneutical framework for reading Scripture that has resulted in *missão integral*.<sup>986</sup> For Padilla, the New Testament emphasis on the Kingdom of God and the mission of Jesus is much more present than it is future, thus the Gospel is:

God’s good news in Jesus Christ; it is good news of the reign he proclaimed and embodies; of God’s mission of love to restore the world to wholeness through the cross of Christ and him alone; of his victory over the demonic powers of destruction and death; of his Lordship over the entire universe; it is good news of a new creation, a new humanity, a new birth through his by his life-giving Spirit.<sup>987</sup>

He adds that, by implication, the Gospel is “good news of liberation, of restoration, of wholeness, and of salvation that is personal, social, global, and cosmic.”<sup>988</sup> In light of this view of the Kingdom, Padilla makes social action an equal partner with proclamation. He writes, “Good works are not, therefore, a mere addendum to mission, rather they are an integral part of the present manifestation of the Kingdom: they point back to the Kingdom that has already come and forward to the Kingdom that is yet to come.”<sup>989</sup> Reflecting practically, Padilla concludes: “In actual practice, the question of whether evangelism or social action should come first is irrelevant. In

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<sup>985</sup> See Steuernagel, “To Seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society,” in Walls and Ross, 71.

<sup>986</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 260; also Kirk, 64-65; Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 31-32, 104-108; and Campos, “Premillennial Tensions and Holistic Missiology,” in Blomberg and Chung, 159-69.

<sup>987</sup> See Padilla, *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1976), 93; also Heaney, 174.

<sup>988</sup> See Padilla, *The New Face of Evangelicalism*, 93.

<sup>989</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 192-93; also Heaney, 179.

every concrete situation, the needs themselves provide the guidelines for the definition of priorities.”<sup>990</sup>

Finally, the whole Gospel is supported by and proclaimed by a missional church. While Padilla asserts that “the mission of the church . . . can be understood only in light of the Kingdom of God,”<sup>991</sup> Steuernagel goes farther and describes the church as the “display window” of the Kingdom.<sup>992</sup> Both Padilla and Steuernagel assert that a missional ecclesiology, in contrast to Western individualism that pervades the church, must be characterized by authentic and transformational community. Steuernagel writes, “To speak of the whole Gospel is to speak of the need we have to be corrected by the Gospel and by our interdependence. We need one another as we need to take in the Gospel in totality and integrality.”<sup>993</sup> While the local church experiences transformation from within as a true community, it is also an agent of holistic mission in which every member plays a role.<sup>994</sup> This vision of a missional church at work in Kingdom mission is helpfully summarized by the “Micah Declaration on Integral Mission” which states: “God by his grace has given local churches the task of integral mission [proclaiming and demonstrating the Gospel]. The future of integral mission is in planting and enabling local churches to transform the communities of which they are part. Churches as caring and inclusive communities are at the heart of what it means to be integral mission.”<sup>995</sup>

#### **5.2.4 *Missão Integral Applied***

In light of the historical development and theological foundations of *missão integral* in the Brazilian and Latin American contexts, how has this theology affected the work

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<sup>990</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 198.

<sup>991</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 186.

<sup>992</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 263-64.

<sup>993</sup> See Steuernagel, “O Evangelho Integral” in Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, *Perspectivas*, 184; also Padilla, “Holistic Mission” in Corrie, 161.

<sup>994</sup> See Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility,” 130-31; also Heaney, 205-207.

<sup>995</sup> Cited in Padilla, “Holistic Mission,” in Corrie, 160.



of Brazilian missions in the Arab-Muslim world? Let us first examine how some Brazilian missions organizations regard holistic ministry and then consider how Brazilian missionaries are applying this missiology in their contexts.

It seems that *missão integral* is becoming increasingly central to the vision of Missão Antioquia, Brazil's first indigenous mission, which has a growing presence in the Arab-Muslim world. In 2006, after doing some strategic planning and reflecting on its vision and mission, the organization articulated the following:

Our vision then would be to bring about transformation through the Gospel [in unreached areas] with the Word and good deeds. That certainly results in glory to God here and now. In practice, we didn't even consider the possibility of doing only good deeds. For us it is essential that the proclamation of the Gospel and good deeds go together. First and foremost, we believe that Jesus is the only one who can bring about transformation in this world.<sup>996</sup>

Following this statement in the same document, the Antioquia leadership expressed encouragement that more doors were being opened for sports ministry and community development—ministries that would be a partner and support to church planting.<sup>997</sup> Hence, with a great sense of humility and dependency on the Lord, the organization has communicated a clear strategy of holistic mission.

As Missão Antioquia personnel are increasingly entering fields in the Muslim world that are closed to conventional missions, Antioquia director Silas Tostes is convinced that each missionary should have a professional skill in order to gain employment and residency. On one hand, this approach gives the worker credibility in the eyes of those in the host culture—including neighbors and government officials—and it alleviates the worker's frustration and discouragement when their identity is questioned. On the other hand, such work is also an opportunity to testify to the Gospel through tangible deeds. For this reason, Tostes encourages Antioquia

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<sup>996</sup> See <http://www.missaoantioquia.com/visao.html> (accessed July 18, 2010). English translation by Cristina Boersma.

<sup>997</sup> See <http://www.missaoantioquia.com/visao.html> (accessed July 18, 2010).

personnel to develop skills and find work that corresponds with their gifts, abilities, and passions so that they can perform their job with joy. Indeed, Tostes's thoughts reveal a theology of work that regards labor as a viable act of worship—a winsome partner and support to kerygmatic proclamation. However, Tostes warns that social ministry alone is inadequate and that it must be deliberately integrated with a verbal witness and a plan for church planting.<sup>998</sup>

*Missão integral* is also evident in the work of PMI, the first Latin mission to focus on the Muslim world. Daniel Calze, the present director of PMI Brasil, is quick to assert that one's platform or tentmaking job is not merely a "cover" that allows a PMI worker an excuse to preach the Gospel. Rather, he argues that a nurse, for instance, must truly be a nurse and that he or she glorifies God and testifies to the Gospel in part through a job well done. When asked if the whole Gospel was especially strategic in the Arab-Muslim context where resistance to the Gospel is common, Calze admitted that while this approach did promote trust and helped relationships with Muslims, he asserted that they would pursue *missão integral* in any context because this was simply the ministry model of Jesus.<sup>999</sup> Similar perspectives were captured by Steven Downey in his interview with Marcos Amado, the former director of PMI:

"A good example is a PMI worker, an engineer by trade, who designs water purification systems for needy communities," Amado says. "This puts him in contact with people of various social levels, principally the needy, and gives him a chance to share his faith." PMI recognizes that to do ministry in poorer countries, one must engage in holistic witness. But Amado says, "We are not involved in community development projects only because they give us the opportunity to go into Muslim countries. We are involved in them because we believe that it is part of our mission as Christians. At the same time, we speak about Christ."<sup>1000</sup>

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<sup>998</sup> Related to me in personal conversation, July 23, 2009.

<sup>999</sup> Related to me in personal conversation, July 21, 2009.

<sup>1000</sup> See Downey, "Ibero-Americans Reaching Arab-Muslims," <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/worldpulse/325> (accessed March 23, 2010).

Calze added that while PMI workers certainly needed to be discerning about communicating their faith during the course of a work day, it was not unusual for Muslims to expect to discuss faith issues at work. Hence, a holistic approach in the Arab-Muslim world is important because Muslims tend not to compartmentalize faith from other parts of their lives.

Finally, like Tostes, Calze affirmed that humanitarian work was not the end of holistic mission. The goal of their mission was not to train good soccer players or small business owners who would then die without knowing Christ in a saving way. He added that pursuing *missão integral* meant that they were deliberate about every aspect of ministry—ministering to human needs, evangelism, and church planting.<sup>1001</sup>

In addition to Missão Antioquia and PMI, other Brazilian missions organizations have also demonstrated a conviction for holistic mission. As noted, the Junta de Missões Mundiais (global missions board) of the Brazilian Baptist Convention has developed ministries around the skills of educational specialists, health professionals (doctors, dentists, and nurses), and humanitarian aid workers—especially those trained to work with women and children. It has also developed a soccer school strategy that integrates teaching soccer skills while communicating the Gospel message.<sup>1002</sup> In addition, Interserve, with its stated vision “to proclaim by word and action, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all humanity,” has *missão integral* as a central focus. While offering formal training in holistic ministry through its partner mission school, the Centro Evangélico de Missões, Interserve Brasil has built its mission around Christians with medical, technical, and community development

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<sup>1001</sup> Related to me in personal conversation, July 21, 2009.

<sup>1002</sup> See *JMM: Missões Mundiais* (web site) <http://www.jmm.org.br/> (accessed April 21, 2010).

training who are able to care for real human needs and verbally proclaim the Gospel.<sup>1003</sup>

How have Brazilian transcultural workers demonstrated a commitment to *missão integral* in their field ministry in the Arab-Muslim world? First, as shown, nearly half of the forty-five Brazilian workers surveyed indicated that they were involved in some form of humanitarian work through existing NGOs or through ones that they have established. This has been a clear strength of the Brazilian missions movement among Arabs. Brazilian missionaries have cared for the physical needs of the handicapped, women, and refugees in a variety of Arab contexts. While these efforts have dignified the poor and marginalized in society and brought measurable improvements to their lives, they have also offered Brazilians the opportunity to share the reason for their service. As one Brazilian worker related, “God has opened doors to work with refugees and we have seen people healed and desiring to follow God.”<sup>1004</sup>

Second, Brazilians are also proclaiming the whole Gospel through medical work. One nurse recounted the great freedom that she had to pray for patients and communicate the Gospel as she visited patients and dispensed medicine. She shared that her medical work allowed her to be a tangible witness for Christ. Other Brazilians are beginning to adopt the Community Health Evangelism (CHE) strategy in order to integrate more into their community and minister in word and deed.

Third, Brazilian missionaries who have accessed the Arab world through business platforms have also shown a commitment to holistic ministry. As noted, one worker’s carpet export business enabled him to build a rich network of relationships in which it was quite natural to verbalize his faith. Another Brazilian, pursuing a

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<sup>1003</sup> See *Centro Evangélico de Missões* (web site) [http://www.cem.org.br/br/interserve\\_eng.php](http://www.cem.org.br/br/interserve_eng.php) (accessed April 30, 2010).

<sup>1004</sup> See Table 4.2.

Business as Mission (BAM) strategy, has endeavored to run his business according to biblical principles, to create jobs, and bring economic and spiritual transformation to his community. While committed to BAM principles, he is also burdened for faithful proclamation—a strategy that includes “good, godly business and sharing the Gospel.”<sup>1005</sup> Finally, another worker has opened a small business development center that offers Christian men training in the Scriptures and in running a business with skill and integrity. The strategy operates on the assumption that a business owner is strategically placed within a community where he can have a viable witness in word and deed and can also plant churches.

Fourth, *missão integral* has also been evident in the work of Brazilians who are ministering through sports. This includes those working as physical trainers, who spend meaningful time working with their clients and, within this environment of trust, are able to communicate the Gospel. It is probably most apparent in the ministry of those who coach soccer and organize soccer schools. While soccer is the number one sport in the Arab world and Brazilian players and coaches are quickly welcomed even in otherwise tense areas, the strategy of integrating soccer skills with biblical principles is quite holistic. One coach summarized his enthusiasm for this opportunity by sharing, “I love using sports—something I really enjoy—for ministry.”<sup>1006</sup>

Fifth, Brazilians have also ministered in a holistic manner through teaching English and Portuguese in Arab contexts. While one worker indicated that she had been able to present Christ during the course of lessons and tutorials, others have seen the work of teaching itself as a ministry. With that, one Brazilian added that an important part of her ministry was simply offering words of encouragement to her students.

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<sup>1005</sup> See Table 4.2.

<sup>1006</sup> See Table 4.2.

Finally, many Brazilians have ministered the whole Gospel through offering hospitality. As argued, hospitality is certainly an important shared cultural value for Brazilians and Arabs which affords Brazilian missionaries a natural opportunity to connect with their host culture. More than that, it is a biblical value in which Christians invite, serve, listen, and ultimately care for their guests. The kerygmatic Gospel is certainly not intrusive in this environment. One Brazilian couple offered this winsome description of the holistic ministry of hospitality: “Opening the doors of our home . . . seeking to always be available to our friends, spending time with them and helping them in what is needed.”<sup>1007</sup>

#### **5.2.5 The Missiological Significance of *Missão Integral* in the Arab World**

Given the theological foundations for the whole Gospel and consider how it is being applied currently, what is the missiological significance of a Brazilian *missão integral* for the Arab-Muslim world? First, it is relevant because the Arab world has many social problems and physical needs. Not unlike Latin America, where *missão integral* was nurtured, the Arab nations face poverty, unemployment, political corruption, abandoned children, violations against women, and educational deficiencies among others. Though Brazilian workers must, of course, maintain a posture of respect toward Arab governments and their infrastructures—including departments established to meet social needs that may not be functioning effectively—there remain many open doors for Brazilians to relieve suffering, show compassion, and facilitate development and transformation. In short, teachers, business people, medical professionals, soccer coaches, and humanitarian specialists are still welcomed in the Arab world to carry on this aspect of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

Second, Brazilian *missão integral* is peaceful and disarming in a region that has been resistant to Christian missions. Much of this resistance has come in response

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<sup>1007</sup> See Table 4.1.

to an overly polemical style of proclamation through the history of Christian work among Muslims. As a result, the Gospel has come to be regarded by many Arab-Muslims as simply another form of Western propaganda. While Brazilian evangelicals serving in the Arab world are clearly committed to proclaiming the kerygmatic Gospel—a message that will often be met with resistance and even violence—their verbal message receives credibility because of their tangible and useful service.<sup>1008</sup> Many Brazilian workers involved in humanitarian work reported that they were often invited by Arab friends to share their motivation for serving, which led to opportunities to communicate their faith.

Third, a Brazilian holistic approach is meaningful in the Arab-Muslim world because it is Brazilian and not North American or European. Though a discussion of “missions from below” is forthcoming, it should simply be noted that the humanitarian efforts of Brazilian workers are received with far less suspicion than that of their Western colleagues, who bring significant historical, political, and cultural “baggage” with them to the field simply because of their nationality. Reflecting on his experience in North Africa, Marcos Amado recalled sadly that “everything that the Americans attempted [in terms of humanitarian projects] was met with suspicion.”<sup>1009</sup>

Fourth, *missão integral* is important because Arab-Muslims are integrated peoples. That is, Arabs tend to think and talk about subjects like religion and politics even on the job. Therefore, it is not unusual for Brazilians working in the Arab marketplace to communicate spiritual matters during the course of their day. It also makes sense that a Brazilian nurse, while caring for sick patients, would pray for and even offer a spiritual word of encouragement to them. Though Arab-Muslims have

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<sup>1008</sup> Escobar advocates the effectiveness of service in resistant (i.e., Marxist, Muslim) contexts. See Smith, “The Essentials of Missiology,” 213.

<sup>1009</sup> Related to me in conversation, August 4, 2009.



resisted the Gospel historically, they would still expect Brazilians to be Christians (of some sort) who talk about their faith.

In summary, Brazilian *missão integral* is relevant in the Arab-Muslim context because it is an authentic expression of incarnational ministry. In following the model of Jesus's ministry, Brazilian holistic mission involves identifying with Arabs, living among them, loving and serving them, and proclaiming the Gospel message. Such incarnational ministry is perhaps best summarized by a Brazilian worker who shared, "During the past years, I've come to learn to look at my friends here as people created according to the image of God, people with human value and dignity, and not as 'contacts' or people to whom I'm trying to win for a specific faith. To love my friends who are part of the major [Muslim] religion is the basis for sharing the Gospel."<sup>1010</sup>

### **5.3 A Church-Centered Missiology**

Though a lack of local church support and involvement in Brazilian missions was listed as a challenge for Brazilian missions in the Arab world, the Brazilian missions movement remains committed to the local church as the center, source, and a goal of missions. Even Brazilian missionaries that struggled with their sending church's lack of support still expressed admiration for their congregation, regarding it as a concrete expression of God's Kingdom. In order to support this claim, let us explore further this church-centered focus, the role of the local church in missions, and the implications of this missiology for Brazilian work in the Arab world.

As it was argued in the discussion on *missão integral*, the church in Brazil and Latin America, through the influence of the FTL thinkers, has rejected the individualism characterized by North American evangelical missions and has

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<sup>1010</sup> See Table 4.1. Similar thoughts on incarnational ministry are related in Andres Guzmán and Angelica Guzmán, "Nós Como Servos: Os Obreiros Latino-Americanos no Oriente Médio," in Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, *Perspectivas*, 738-41.

celebrated the church as a place of community and transformation. Commenting on the relationship of the individual to the community, Escobar writes:

A holistic approach recognizes the need for a personal experience of God's saving grace, but at the same time it recovers the biblical vision of the human being [for whom] transformation takes place primarily in the context of a community that is itself an expression of God's reign and proclamation of the new creations. The church is where the personal and community dimensions of salvation are first experienced.<sup>1011</sup>

As it relates to sending missionaries, Ekström adds that this transformational community continues to play a vital role. He writes:

From a Latin American point of view, the local church plays an important role in the selection and sending process. There is very little real participation in missions apart from the local communities. Even the parachurch agencies understand, after a while, that the basis for the support of their mission work is the local church.<sup>1012</sup>

As a leader of a missions organization, Daniel Calze affirms this reality in stating, "We also understand that the local church is the main organization in charge of sending missionaries to the field."<sup>1013</sup> In contrast to the twentieth-century North American missions movement, which experienced a widening gap between mission societies and the local church because of volunteerism and individual initiative, the Brazilian movement has maintained a high regard for the church's role in missions.<sup>1014</sup> In fact, this church and mission connection can be observed physically as a number of Brazilian missions organizations actually share the same campus with a local church.<sup>1015</sup> While this arrangement is certainly in part due to the need to reduce

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<sup>1011</sup> See Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 43.

<sup>1012</sup> See Ekström, "The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries," in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 185.

<sup>1013</sup> See Appendix D, question 9 (participant 6).

<sup>1014</sup> For more on the North American gap between missions agencies and churches, see Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 438; see also Ekström, "The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries," in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 185.

<sup>1015</sup> For example, the offices of PMI Brasil are located in a Presbyterian Church in Curitiba which shares the same property with a theological seminary. Also, in Curitiba, Steuernagel directs a Lutheran seminary that shares facilities with a publishing house and a missions organization. Missão Antioquia's "valley of blessing" property near São Paulo includes a local church, foster care facility, and mission

the costs for facilities and offices, this physical proximity surely fosters a church-centered mission focus. Also, as noted the leadership of COMIBAM, Missão Antioquia, PMI, CCI Brasil and others strive to maintain a close relationship with the local churches of their personnel.

In light of this church-centered missiology, what are the specific roles of the Brazilian churches in missions sending? First, Ekström asserts that the local church is the place for spiritual nurture for potential missionary candidates.<sup>1016</sup> To this point, Steuernagel warns that the Brazilian church must uphold the value of authentic community in order to truly disciple Christians and, of course, prospective missionaries.<sup>1017</sup>

Second, Ekström sees the local church as a strategic place for potential missionaries to apprentice in ministry. He adds that, following a season of faithful apprenticeship, the pastor should be able to make an informed recommendation about the potential missionary's suitability for transcultural ministry.<sup>1018</sup> Indeed, many of the Brazilians interviewed for this study talked about investing years in their local church before going to their Arab world, while many also continue to serve in their churches while home on furlough. As Brazilian mission candidates have apprenticed in their local churches, they have certainly gained valuable training for ministry in the Arab world; however, at the same time, they have also helped to cultivate a vision for global missions in the hearts of their church leaders and members.

Third, Ekström asserts that the local church, the only biblically warranted missions agency, should not merely recommend candidates but should also oversee

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training center. Finally, Interserve shares the same property with its partnering school, the Centro Evangélico de Missões

<sup>1016</sup> See Ekström, "The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries," in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 185-86.

<sup>1017</sup> See Steuernagel, "Learning from Escobar . . . and Beyond," in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 130.

<sup>1018</sup> See Ekström, "The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries," in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 185-86.

the selection process.<sup>1019</sup> Because of its regard for the local church, Missão Antioquia enters into a covenant with the local church of each of its candidates once their training is completed. This statement of mutual commitment is articulated in a three-page document.<sup>1020</sup>

Finally, in the minds of many mission leaders, the local church should act as the primary means of financial support for Brazilian missionaries. While the problems with this view were discussed in the previous chapter, this position still points to the prominent role that the sending church plays in the life of the missionary.

What are the implications of this church-centered missiology for Brazilians serving in the Arab world? First, because Brazilians generally have a high regard for the church as an institution, it follows that they will take that conviction with them to the Arab world and be increasingly instrumental in planting churches. Second, because Brazilians and Arabs have similar values regarding relationships, community, and family—qualities that are important in the establishment of churches—Brazilians should pursue church planting in light of these advantages. Because many Arab-Muslims that embrace Christ will continue to be rejected by their own families, it is important that churches that have been planted and nurtured by Brazilians be prepared to meet these real needs for family and community. Indeed, one Brazilian church planter, perhaps recognizing the strategic relationship between the family and the church, asked for prayer that “[we would] be a blessing to the small Arab church in our city [that] we help lead and disciple [and that we would] be an example of a godly family.”<sup>1021</sup> Finally, as churches in Brazil, particularly Pentecostals, have integrated peoples from diverse ethnic backgrounds and have successfully overcome racial

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<sup>1019</sup> See Ekström, “The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries,” in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 185-86; see also Adiwardana, “Formal and Non-Formal Pre-Field Training: Perspective of the New Sending Countries,” in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 209.

<sup>1020</sup> Related to me in personal conversation, July 23, 2009.

<sup>1021</sup> Related in personal correspondence (ministry prayer letter), April, 2009.

barriers,<sup>1022</sup> Brazilian church planters should also plant transformational churches in the Arab world that will combat racism and other social sins.

#### 5.4 Missions from Below

A third area of Brazilian missiology that is significant, especially when considering mission in the Arab-Muslim world, is the idea of “missions from below” or missions from a place of vulnerability. While concepts like “missions” and “theology from below” employ the language of liberation theology,<sup>1023</sup> it is nevertheless valuable to consider the role that Brazilian missionaries play as they minister from a point of economic and political vulnerability.

Escobar boldly declares, “The poor of the world are the greatest missionary force of the present stage in mission history.”<sup>1024</sup> Reflecting on missions in light of the southward shift of global Christianity, he adds, “Missionary initiative expressed in numbers of people volunteering for missionary work seems to be passing from North to South at a time when the South is increasingly poor.”<sup>1025</sup> As noted, Escobar asserts that the majority of twentieth-century Latin American Christian workers actually went to the “mission field” in search of employment. That is, while immigrating abroad and surely struggling to make a living, they also managed to share their faith and even plant churches. Those who were sent out by their churches in an official missionary capacity were forced to live simply because of modest resources.<sup>1026</sup>

While Padilla admonishes Western missionaries to pursue simple lifestyles in their contexts of ministry, he also argues that poverty does not excuse a church from being involved in the mission of God.<sup>1027</sup> At least one *favela* (shanty) church near

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<sup>1022</sup> See Heaney, 208-209.

<sup>1023</sup> See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 439.

<sup>1024</sup> See Escobar, *New Global Mission*, 66.

<sup>1025</sup> See Escobar, *New Global Mission*, 66; also Escobar, “The Global Scenario,” in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 42; and Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 81.

<sup>1026</sup> See Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 163.

<sup>1027</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 136-37.

Porto Alegre, Brazil agrees with Padilla. After sending a sacrificial gift of \$ 300 to Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake, the church leadership stated, “We are working under the belief that no one has so little that he is unable to share. Moreover, we believe that the field is the world and that our aid will open doors for our missionaries on foreign soil.”<sup>1028</sup>

How then do Brazilian transcultural workers demonstrate a theology of missions from below and why is this significant in the Arab-Muslim context? As shown in the previous chapter, many Brazilian missionaries are forced to live on modest economic resources and this allows them to identify more effectively with the peoples in their host culture. In some cases, they are indeed the poor reaching the poor. Referring specifically to urban missions, Escobar argues, “The churches of the poor have learned to respond to the urban challenge: they speak the language of the masses.”<sup>1029</sup> As related in chapter 3, Amado testified, “Because of our background of relative poverty and economic crises and inflation, we can identify with [Arab] Muslims,” and that “[Arab] people perceive that and it is possible to bond with Arabs in a deep level of friendship.”<sup>1030</sup> Hence, mutual identification has resulted merely from the reality of the economic position of Brazilian workers—not in their choosing to take a vow of poverty or to live simply. Daniel Calze adds that being able to identify with the poor has also helped Brazilians to be more thoughtful and deliberate in humanitarian efforts, enabling Brazilians to do “excellent work in different areas, such as sports, health, and special needs.”<sup>1031</sup> Finally, it is interesting to note that in one Brazilian missions organization, which is more Pentecostal in orientation, that the majority of the personnel come from the Northeast of Brazil—the poorest part of the

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<sup>1028</sup> Related in correspondence with Patrick Hubbard of Living Bread Ministries working in Porto Alegre, February 23, 2010.

<sup>1029</sup> See Escobar, *New Global Mission*, 67.

<sup>1030</sup> See Table 3.2.

<sup>1031</sup> See Appendix D, question 13 (respondent 6).

country. One worker in the mission marveled at how God was truly raising up Brazil's poor to reach the poor in the Arab world.<sup>1032</sup>

Second, Brazilians exemplify missions from below because, in coming from a non-Western country that lacks "power, progress, and prestige,"<sup>1033</sup> they minister from a posture of political vulnerability. Padilla lamented that even in the post-colonial period and at the end of the twentieth century that "in many cases, missionary work continues to be done from a position of political and economic power and with the assumption of Western superiority in matters of culture and race."<sup>1034</sup> Discussing the outcomes of "missions from above," Leonardo Boff, a Brazilian Catholic theologian and contributor to liberation thought, helpfully asserts: "The link between Christianity and the ideology and practice of Western domination produces a cloud of ambiguity and complicity, enormously tarnishing the brilliance of the evangelical practice and the utterance of Jesus."<sup>1035</sup> Thus, Padilla has urged Western missionaries, especially those serving in Latin America, to see things from the "underside" and to resist ministering from a posture of power.<sup>1036</sup> Escobar adds that one of the realities of the post-colonial and post-Christendom world is that Western missionaries are beginning to lose protection from their governments and that they will need to learn from majority world missionaries on how to serve from a place of vulnerability.<sup>1037</sup> Bosch concludes with some conviction, "Only if we turn our backs on false power and false security can there be authentic Christian mission."<sup>1038</sup>

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<sup>1032</sup> Related to me in personal conversation, January 6, 2010.

<sup>1033</sup> See Escobar, "Missions from the Margins to the Margins: Two Case Studies from Latin America," *Missiology: An International Review* 26.1 (1998), 88.

<sup>1034</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 134.

<sup>1035</sup> See Boff, *New Evangelization*, 41; see also Bosch, "The Vulnerability of Mission," in Scherer and Bevans, 83-84.

<sup>1036</sup> Cited in Smith, "The Essentials of Missiology," 231.

<sup>1037</sup> See Escobar, "The Global Scenario at the End of the Twentieth Century," in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 35.

<sup>1038</sup> See Bosch, "The Vulnerability of Mission," in Scherer and Bevans, 85.



One of the advantages that Brazilian workers have in the Arab world is that they do approach their context from a posture of vulnerability. Costas has celebrated this reality and has even proposed a missiological model of “from the peripheries of society to the peripheries,” which is based on Jesus beginning his ministry among Galilean fisherman.<sup>1039</sup> This missiological posture has perhaps been best summarized by Antônia Van der Meer, a Brazilian missiologist who served as a single woman missionary in Southern Africa. She writes:

It is a great privilege to be a missionary who does not come from a country with a powerful economy, whose country does not represent any threat whatsoever, and who cannot be expected to solve all financial problems that arise . . . thus we are freer to serve as partners, as equals, as it was in the beginning when the apostles went out from the least significant countries of the Roman Empire.<sup>1040</sup>

In summary, the missiological implications for Brazilians approaching the Arab world from a missions from below posture seem quite evident. As noted, Brazilian workers with modest resources can identify with poor Arabs, while poor Arabs readily open their hearts to struggling Brazilians. Also, Brazilians are more likely to be accepted by Arabs on the basis of friendship alone, rather than for the material benefits that they might provide—a challenge that Western missionaries in the Arab world regularly face. Finally, as Brazilians approach mission from a place of political vulnerability, they can also identify with Arabs who are powerless, marginalized, and living in oppressive contexts. Bosch writes that “victim-missionaries,” in identifying with the struggles and vulnerabilities of their host people, are able to “lead people to freedom and community.”<sup>1041</sup> Also, as Bosch has noted, Brazilians are free to pursue authentic mission apart from the expectation that

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<sup>1039</sup> See Costas, *Liberating News* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 49, 67; also Escobar, “Missions from the Margins to the Margins,” 88.

<sup>1040</sup> See Van der Meer, “The Scriptures, the Church, and Humanity, in Taylor, *Global Missiology*, 154.

<sup>1041</sup> See Bosch, “The Vulnerability of Mission,” in Scherer and Bevans, 81.

political leverage would help their work. In this sense, they serve as a model to Western missionaries striving to minister in a post-Christendom world.

### **5.5 A Spiritually Aware Missiology**

A final notable aspect of Brazilian missiology is its awareness of the spiritual world.

While this was discussed at length in the previous chapter, it should simply be restated that Brazilians and Latin Americans generally have a sensitivity to and an explanation for the spiritual world. This includes the reality of the demonic world within the animistic practices of Brazilian Spiritism and Folk Islam. While declarations on spiritual warfare from the 1978 Willowbank Report were cited in the last chapter, Padilla, a Baptist theologian, also references similar thoughts in the Lausanne Covenant: “We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil, who are seeking to overthrow the church and frustrate its task of world evangelization.”<sup>1042</sup>

For many of the FTL theologians, an awareness of the spiritual world is a key element of holistic mission. Warning against an individualistic and rather compartmentalized view of salvation, Padilla argues, “We have lost sight of the demonic nature of the whole spiritual environment that conditions man’s thought and conduct.”<sup>1043</sup> Interpreting the Gospels and Acts in a functional manner in light of the present context, Escobar adds, “Today’s mission in Latin America also confronts the powers of darkness and needs the same empowering that made possible the mission of Jesus.”<sup>1044</sup> As shown, Brazilian missionaries have brought their spiritually aware backgrounds with them to the Arab world and have integrated kerygmatic proclamation with power encounters in mission.

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<sup>1042</sup> Cited in Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 45.

<sup>1043</sup> See Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 7.

<sup>1044</sup> See Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 144.

While Brazilians from the historic, non-Pentecostal churches have shown much sensitivity to the spiritual realities in Folk Muslim contexts, it seems that Brazilian Pentecostals have a special role to play in the Arab-Muslim world on account of their spiritual world view. Citing the general continuity that exists between animistic worldviews—including those that undergird Folk Islam—and a Pentecostal worldview, Miller and Yamamori conclude: “The major difference between Pentecostals and people in animistic cultures is that the former affirm that there is only *one* Spirit, the Holy Spirit.”<sup>1045</sup> Brazilian Pentecostals serving among Arabs are not unlike historic Pentecostal missionaries who also preached a whole Gospel. Anderson writes, “Pentecostal missionaries proclaimed a pragmatic Gospel that sought to address practical issues like sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits, witchcraft and sorcery” and that “healing, guidance, protection from evil, and success were some of the practical benefits offered.” Hence, while the Gospel is proclaimed verbally, attention is also given to other real needs, including deliverance from spiritual oppression.<sup>1046</sup>

In summary, the spiritual worldview of Brazilian transcultural workers serving among Arab-Muslims is quite relevant to the context. As the great majority of Arab-Muslims are adherents to Folk Islam, which seems to produce spiritual conflicts, the sensitivity of Brazilian workers toward these spiritual issues is important. While the majority of Brazilian missionaries are currently not from the Pentecostal tradition, it seems that as Brazilian Pentecostal missions involvement develops, that the Pentecostal worldview will also prove helpful in the Arab-Muslim context.

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<sup>1045</sup> See Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 25.

<sup>1046</sup> See Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 240; see also Anderson, “Towards a Pentecostal Missiology for the Majority World,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 8:1 (2005), 33-35; and Douglas Peterson, *Not By Might, Nor By Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum, 1996), 98-102, 225-26.

## 5.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, four aspects of Brazilian theology of mission have been discussed.

Understood in light of the history of Brazilian missions sending, the cultural experiences of Brazilians in the Arab world, as well Brazilian approaches to mission among Arabs, these elements seem to build upon the general characteristics of Brazilian evangelicalism presented in chapter two.

In terms of methodology, I have followed Steuernagel in recognizing that there is still much continuity between Brazilian and Latin American missiology and that the Brazilian church has gleaned much from the Latin American Theological Fraternity, which, of course, has included Brazilian voices from its earliest days. Also, while these four areas of missiology have been supported by works of articulated theology, it has also proven beneficial to observe them directly in the work of Brazilians serving among Arabs. Finally, it should be noted that as the Brazilian missions movement is a young one, its theology of mission is still in development. Yet, as the Brazilian missions movement grows, we expect that the literary output from Brazilian missiologists will only increase in the years to come.

The most prevalent aspect of theology presented in the chapter was *missão integral*—the whole Gospel or holistic mission. Because of its significance, it was important to discuss the historical development of *missão integral*, the key FTL theologians who helped articulate it, the essence of the theology itself, how *missão integral* has been reflected upon and applied in Arab contexts, and its missiological relevance for the Arab-Muslim world. While for the most part, *missão integral* has been discussed in isolation, it could be argued that the church-centered and spiritually aware aspects of Brazilian missiology actually flow from *missão integral*.

Second, it was shown that despite the shortcomings of the Brazilian local churches in global mission, Brazilian transcultural workers continue to be committed

to their churches. In addition, it was shown that the local church was cherished as the focal point for missions sending and that Brazilian evangelicalism has not experienced the gap between the local church and the mission agency that was observed in North America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By implication, it seems that this Brazilian conviction for the local church will result in more transformational churches being planted in the Arab world.

Third, I have argued that “missions from below” is an important theological motif for Brazilians serving among Arabs. Contrary to nineteenth and twentieth centuries Western missions, which originated from wealthy and powerful countries and moved to poorer and weaker ones, Brazilians have gone to the Arab world from a place of vulnerability. For some Brazilians, this means that they have pursued mission with very modest financial resources and have struggled. Yet, for all Brazilians, it means that their passport does not have the currency of a Western one, and that they do not benefit from the political protection enjoyed by many Westerners. In short, it has been argued that ministering from a place of economic and political vulnerability has enabled Brazilians to identify with their host peoples and to pursue authentic ministry.

Finally, I asserted that Brazilian missiology has a strong awareness of the spiritual world. Building largely on arguments made in chapter 4, it has been shown that Brazilian transcultural workers have an explanation for and response to the spiritual issues encountered in the Muslim world. While Brazilians from the Pentecostal tradition seem especially equipped for spiritual warfare ministry, non-Pentecostals are also quite in tune to the spiritual world of Muslims and have also responded appropriately to such needs.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In this work, I have endeavored to tell part of the story of the emerging Brazilian evangelical missions movement, specifically focusing on Brazilian work in the countries of the Arab-Muslim world since 1976. This has been accomplished first by recounting how Brazil was evangelized largely by North American missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From this narrative, it has become clear that while the Brazilian evangelical church does share common characteristics with North American and global evangelicalism, it has also begun to forge its own evangelical identity. An important part of this identity is in its concrete participation in global mission efforts. Indeed, Brazil has gone from being a mission field to being a missions sender.

In considering Brazilian mission efforts in the Arab-Muslim world, it has been valuable to reflect upon how Brazilians have adapted culturally by focusing on seven aspects of culture that have clear missiological implications. They include race, economics, time, communication, family, relationships, hospitality, and spiritual worldview have been discussed in both the Arab and Brazilian contexts. While a study of the relevant literature has been foundational, the theme analysis has been founded on the descriptions of Brazilian transcultural workers and mission leaders at work in the Arab-Muslim world. It has become evident that there are some definite differences in Arab and Brazilian culture—most notably in the areas of conflict resolution, personal hygiene as it relates to food and hospitality, and the role of women. On the other hand, some aspects of Arab and Brazilian culture are rather similar. The strongest areas seem to be hospitality, relationship building, and a general spiritual worldview that acknowledges the role of demons and spirits. It has also become apparent that transcultural workers from the Northeast of Brazil seem be

closest to the Arabs culturally. This was especially evident when considering the cultural aspects of economics, time, family, and relationships. In short, as Brazilians have described their experiences, it seems that there is some favorable continuity between the cultures of Brazilian evangelical workers and the Arab contexts in which they serve. Coupled with the reality that Brazilians seem to adapt well in other cultures, it seems that the contribution of Brazilian transcultural missionaries is important in the Arab world. It also appears that Brazilians, generally speaking, adapt better to ministry in the Arab-Muslim world than their North American and European colleagues.

It has also been profitable to offer a practical summary of Brazilian evangelical approaches to mission in the Arab-Muslim world. This included some prominent historic mission strategies (evangelism, discipleship, and church planting) as well as a summary of integrated support ministries, which include humanitarian work, medical work, sports ministry, and Business as Mission among others. In addition, the work and core values of six Brazilian missions organizations that work in the Arab world were considered. These included two groups that are indigenous to Brazil (Missão Antioquia, Missão Kairos), one that is indigenous to Latin America (PMI), one historic denomination (Junta de Missões Mundiais da Convenção Batista Brasileira), and two international organizations that have opened offices in Brazil (CCI Brasil, Interserve).

Based on this survey of Brazilian mission strategies in the Arab world, the apparent strengths (as described by Brazilians) were discussed. It was argued that Brazilian missionaries seem to be doing well at building relationships, adapting to culture, communicating the Gospel, planting churches, and offering humanitarian aid. It was further observed that Brazilian workers and missions organizations tend to



measure their success in terms of their ability to persevere and to build relationships. Finally, the chapter concluded by exploring the four most apparent challenges facing Brazilian evangelical missionaries in the Arab world—church support, language acquisition, financial support, and women’s issues. In each case, an effort was made to understand and define the problem clearly after which some suggestions—based largely on Brazilian reflections—were offered toward resolving the problem. In short, this chapter has demonstrated that after a few decades, Brazilian evangelical missions efforts the Arab world are focused, innovative, courageous, and still developing.

Finally, building upon the articulated thought of Brazilian and Latin American theologians as well as the observed practice of Brazilian workers in the Arab world, four key elements of Brazilian theology of mission were presented. While the most defining feature of Brazilian missiology is *missão integral* (the whole Gospel or holistic mission), other key areas included: a church-centered missiology, missions from below, and a spiritually aware missiology.

In summary, in this work, I have attempted to tell part of the story of Brazilian evangelical missions—a first generation movement that is still emerging—by focusing on efforts in the Arab world. Yet, amid the tensions and problems in the world, this majority world missions movement seems poised to lead the way in twenty-first century global mission, particularly in the Arab-Muslim world.

In light of this work, what other areas of study should be pursued? First, the issue of member care among Brazilian missionaries needs continual reflection. While a number of Brazilian mission leaders are making this a priority, this remains an important area for study, reflection, and adjustment. Second, it would be valuable to study the global missions efforts of the nearly 1000 Brazilian evangelical congregations in North America. What is their vision and strategy for missions

sending and how should the North American congregations relate to churches and missionaries in Brazil? Third, as the Brazilian Pentecostal churches continue to grow, it will be important to study their global mission efforts, including their theology and approaches to mission. Finally, during the course of this study, I met a Mexican missionary who was facilitating teams of Mexican transcultural workers in the Arab world. It would certainly be interesting to pursue a similar study focusing on Mexican missions in the Arab world.