

## Chapter Four

### Cyber mission

William Carey, often called "the father of the modern missionary movement" wrote a famous pamphlet calling people to "use means" for the completion of the Great Commission. One of these means, in our day, is the use the cyber space. Cyber space is a means of front-line missionary means for the ministry to the entire world.

According to the four gospels, the Lord made it clear that He expects us to go everywhere sharing and proclaiming the gospel. We should spread the Good News to those who will accept it and even to those who will not.

The Lord did not specify a particular way to share and proclaim the gospel. The apostles used every available means of transportation and communication to share and proclaim the gospel. The church's mission has also to use every available means for its ministry. The church has the same responsibility as the apostles for missions.

The internet is the most recent technological wonder, which God has provided us to help in the missionary ministry to spread the gospel. The internet began to affect the lives of people with the creation of the World Wide Web in 1994, and has become a common tool.

The cyber space has obvious potential for evangelism and mission as it has become part of the culture of daily life. Shortly after Christians began to share their faith with others in cyber space through the internet, internet evangelism and cyber missions were born. However, some people and organizations started to use cyber

space to share and proclaim the gospel even before the internet had become common knowledge.

But the development and expansion of the internet and the World Wide Web, official mission organizations have flocked to the cyber space, attempting to establish their presence, control, and authority over a growing and developing sphere.

The internet offers incredible opportunities to share the Good News. Christian believers of today are responsibility to the great commission, and the internet provides a means to deliver the gospel to the end of the earth.

Cyber mission can be called a "Information-Communication Mission" when understood as a kind of mission field. Cyber Mission is mission work that involves cross-cultural evangelism, discipleship, church-planting and training through the internet.

This section will analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the cyber mission, the theological understanding of the cyber mission, and the need for a cyber mission today. However, the advantages and disadvantages of cyber church will be discussing more in chapter 5.

#### **4.1. Advantages of cyber mission**

The cyber space has many unique features to reach into un-reached nations and people groups which are useful for mission. Some of its advantages are the following:

- **To reach the un-reached even in "closed" countries**

Many missionary and missionary organizations have been working at mission fields throughout the world. In many countries closed and semi-closed for Christianity are difficult to reach with conventional means. In some countries it is not allowed to spread the gospel, but many missionaries try to proclaim the gospel although it is dangerous because of war, terror, or prohibitions on evangelism.

The cyber mission is a way to do spread the gospel in closed countries and among persecuted believers. With the cyber space it is not necessary to go in to the closed countries and to the persecuted believers. With internet access in cyber space the gospel about Jesus Christ can be communicated. It can even target specific groups and people such as Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.

Through cyber space there can be a conversation and discussion with the people who live in the closed countries and with the persecuted.

- **No airfares needed**

Airfares are a burden to missionaries. But, with Cyber space, you can go anywhere in the world without airfares.

There are many South Korean missionaries in Africa. Their common struggle is expensive airfares. Airfares bars for instance visits to the home country for missionary families. It is better spent on the mission field. Holiday and special seasons are especially expensive. By using cyber space from home any mission field can be reached without airfares.

- **No visas required**

Many times missionaries give up and change mission fields because of visas, which are not easy obtained, especially for mission work. Many South Korean missionaries are spending time to obtain a visa for South Africa.

With cyber mission, no visas are required for any country or mission fields. It saves the time and money to obtain a visa, and only requires a computer connected to the internet network.

- **It works even when you sleep**

A beneficial characteristic of cyber mission is that it works while you are asleep. The conventional mission could not work while we were asleep. It travels around the world. Cyber mission is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

It is useful for contact between the missionary and his/her family despite time-gaps. Messages on a homepage or web-site can be read by anybody at any time and be used by God to speak to them

- **Ideal for retired missionaries**

Persons who retired from missionary work because of ill health or old-age can still help in mission work.

They have the experience of missions, even more than any text book. They can have conversations with young missionaries through cyber space, to help young missionaries to settle and work more effectively in the mission field. It can save time

and money in the field, because of the help of retired missionaries through the internet.

- **It reaches a wide audience at the same time.**

One of the characteristics of cyber mission is to bring individuals out of isolation into cyber space groups. Cyber space has the potential to deliver information concerning the good news of Jesus Christ to almost every man, woman, and child upon the earth who connects with it.

It can reach a mass audience with a clear message. Many people of different countries can read the message on a web page or video clip.

- **It communicates securely one-to-one**

Cyber mission can effectively take place in chat rooms. The chat room has a special option to join people in a one to one private conversation for a secure discussion with each other.

Anonymous or pseudonymous email addresses of believers makes evangelism possible to closed countries and persecuted believes without physical risk.

#### **4.2. Disadvantages of cyber mission**

Many Christians believe that the cyber space, internet, is a tool God has give us for evangelism and world mission. However, the internet can be used for bad or good. But the internet will often be used for evil purposes.

Cyber mission works in cyber space, a virtual world, but the dangers and temptations in cyber space are real. Because of the worldwide character of the internet, people have access anywhere and anything. God's protection in cyber mission is needed.

- **Dangers on the cyber mission: trust un-known people**

Many internet users use the cyber space in any context, including chat room evangelism, without caution or training. Christians credulously believe that the chat rooms on Christian Web sites are trustworthy. However, on-line internet users can contact anyone, although they have never yet met face to face, and unsuspecting exchange their personal information like their home address and cell phone number, which can be misused.

This disadvantage is a life wrecker and sometimes it spoils relationships with other people. The contact with other people met through the chat room must best be followed up with a personal meeting in a public place.

- **It easily spreads an untrue story**

Much of the information which passes through cyber space may not be true. Internet users tend to believe information that is passed on from a known search engine such as Yahoo or Google. An untrue story also spreads to the world in seconds. Anti-Christ can also use cyber space against Christianity.

### 4.3. The theological understanding of cyber mission.

The cyber space is a part of the present world. Jesus gave the "Great Commission" to his church. Cyber mission can help the church to carry out the great commission. God's sent One is also the sending One of his church, not just to all the cities of Israel, but to all nations. The focus of mission is "to all nations," "all the world," "all creation," "to the ends of the earth" (Act 1:8 supports this commands of the four Gospels with: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." NIV)

The relationship between cyber space and the "Great Commission" will be analyzed.

#### 4.3.1. Communication

Communication<sup>32</sup> is at the heart of God's mission (*missio Dei*), God's desire to relate in love to human beings who are God's creation (Van Engen, Whiteman, & Woodbetty 2008:43; Hesselgrave 1991:127-128).<sup>33</sup> In addition, from the beginning of humanity's existence communication has always played an important part.

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<sup>32</sup> Communication is: first, the act of transmitting; second, facts or information transmitted; third, written information, conversation, or talk; fourth, access between persons or places; or fifth, interchange of thoughts or opinions (Websters 1963).

<sup>33</sup> "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3), "God blessed them and said to them" (Genesis 1:28), "the Lord God commanded the man" (Genesis 2:16), "the word of the Lord came to [Jeremiah], saying..." (Jeremiah

Communication is a fundamental process of human beings, "speech is the most distinctive achievement of man" (Nida 1990:4). However, communication is not limited to speech.

Communication has a variety of forms, not only written and oral speech, but also music, the pictorial arts, the theater, and all of human behaviour: gestures, dance, drama, plastic art (Van Engen, Whiteman, & Woodbetty 2008:57; Nida 1990:4). Almost every discipline concerned with human society and human behaviour is concerned with communication.

The purpose<sup>34</sup> of communication is to convey information, and by this means to influence or control the behaviour of attitudes of others. Edward C. Stewart listed the representative functions of communication as follow (Hesselgrave 1991:87):

1. Referential - transmit information, knowledge
2. Emotive - expressiveness
3. Conative - intensional, motivational
4. Poetic - fusion of concrete perception and abstraction
5. Phatic - belongingness, affiliation
6. Metalingual - communication about communication

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1:4), and "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

<sup>34</sup> According to Berlo (1960:12), "Our basic purpose in communication is to become an affecting agent, to affect others, our physical environment, and ourselves, and to become a determining agent, to have a vote in how things are. In short, we communicate to influence - to affect with intent."

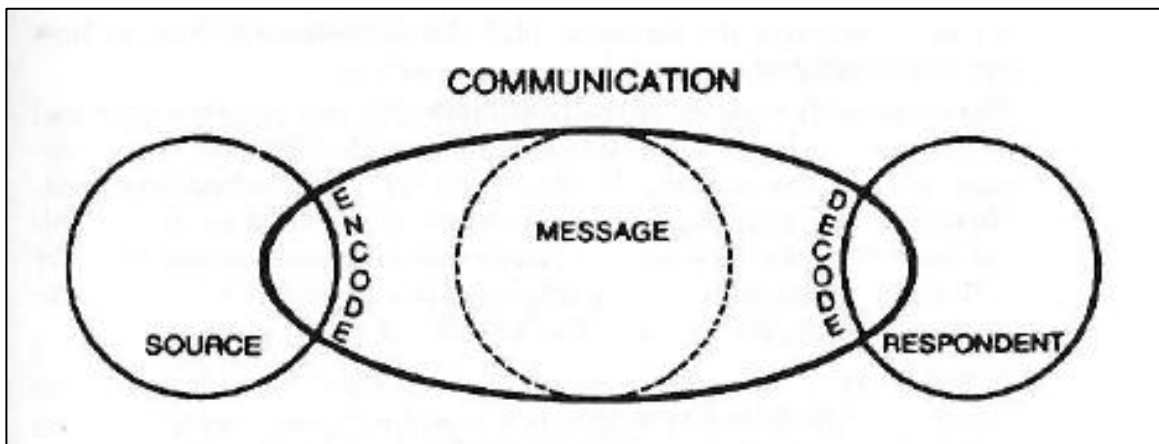


## 7. Metaphysical - world view

### 4.3.1.1. A basic model of the communication process

Aristotle viewed communication from its three points of reference: the speaker, the speech, and the audience. His three essential factors of communication has been the basis of many models of the communication theory ever since (Pretorius, Odendaal, Robinson, & Van der Merwe 1987:103; Van Engen, Whiteman, & Woodbetty 2008:58; Hesselgrave 1991:40-41). The essential features of communication can be diagrammed as:

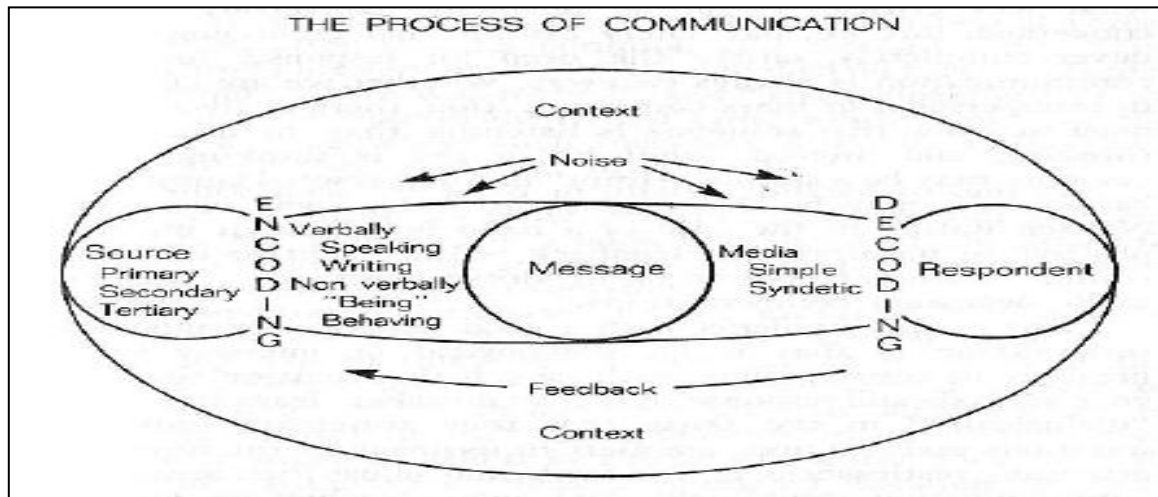
Source → Message → Receptor



**Figure 4.1. Communication process 1**

All three of these components are essential in communication. It is important to note that the message never exists independent. There can be no message unless there

is come source of communication, and there is no communication unless someone receives the message (Nida 1990:38).



**Figure 4.2 . Communication process 2**

#### 4.3.1.2. Internet and communication

The emergence of the internet has created a new channel for communication. E-mail, blogs, eBay, Facebook and MySpace, Skype and chat rooms are examples of communication through the internet.<sup>35</sup> The internet is about communication, building and maintaining relationships, through a worldwide network.

The internet offers everybody the opportunity to become a communicator and anybody an electronic publisher with access to a potential audience of millions. However, it doesn't mean that everybody who as the internet is automatically

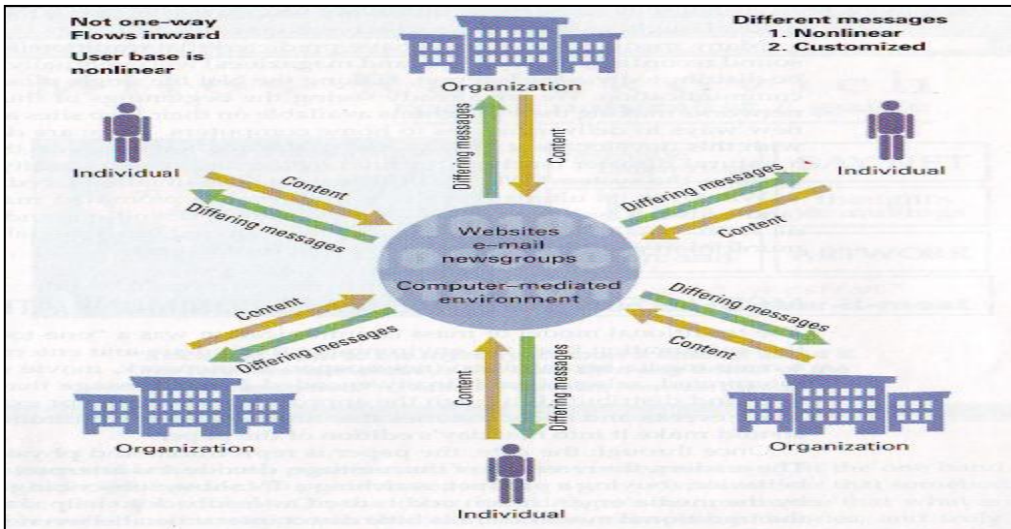
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<sup>35</sup> The new arrangement of communication in cyber space: "One source communicating with one receiver (e-mail), one source communicating with many receivers (CNN.com), a few sources communicating with a few receivers (chat rooms, blogs), and many sources communicating with many receivers (eBay)."

engaging in communication. That is to say, there is no communication unless someone visits the web sites (Dominick 2009:15-17).

The internet communication is available not only for the traditional pattern of one-to-many communication, but also for mass communication through the internet. The internet lowers the cost of communication to a level at which almost anybody can afford it.

This new communication channel has also necessitated rethinking fresh models of the communication process (Dominick 2009:18).



**Figure 4.3 . Internet communication model**

#### 4.3.1.3. Communication theory for missiology

The missionary task is fundamentally one of communication (Hesselgrave 1991:91), because mission is also proclamation. Christian missions are increasingly interested

to be effective, and relevant mission is inconceivable without paying careful attention to communication principles.

According to Van Engen, Whiteman, & Woodbetty (2008:62-65) the communication theory for missiology has to include the following elements:

- Missiological communication starts with the commission given by Christ.
- Missiological communication places the person at the center.
- Missiological communication is receptor oriented.
- Missiological communication is centered on the community.
- Missiological communication is a process.
- Missiological communication needs good research and information.

#### **4.3.1.4. Communication and the church**

According to the Scripture (Jn. 1:1) the Lord Jesus is the eternal Word of God. God sent Jesus to our world, and God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit sent the church to the world. His church is built upon the Word of God (Pretorius et al 1987:105-106).

Jesus gave the great commission<sup>36</sup> to the church to proclaim and communicate the Word of God to the all people in the world. Therefore, communication is a basic and essential factor of the church's existence.

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<sup>36</sup> "This good news about the kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all mankind; and then the end will come" (Mt. 24:14).

### 4.3.2. Relationship

A relationship is normally viewed as a connection between two individuals, such as a parent-child relationship, or a romantic, or an intimate relationship. Relationship connotes association, belonging, mutual dependence and co-operation. This relationship may be based on love, liking, business, and social commitment.

Examples of relationship in society are:

a relationship between individuals

a relationship between groups of people

a relationship between an individual and a group of people

These relationships take place in a variety of context, such as churches, work, marriage, friends and family. Through their relationship, they tend to influence each other (Wikipedia).

In South Africa the concept of *ubuntu*, to describe the relationship between people, has become popular. *Ubuntu* is seen as a traditional African concept. The concept of *ubuntu* defines the individual in their several relationships with others. The word “*ubuntu*” comes from the Zulu and Xhosa languages. The definition of *ubuntu* is: “a person is a person through other persons.” It comes from the Zulu maxim “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*.”

According to Tutu<sup>37</sup> (1999) a person with *ubuntu* is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, and willing to share. He emphasizes that a man can not exist as a

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<sup>37</sup> Desmond Mpilo Tutu (born 7 October 1931) is a South African activist and [Christian cleric](#) who rose to worldwide fame during the 1980s as an opponent of [apartheid](#). He was the first black South African [Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town](#),

human being in isolation. And he explained *ubuntu* is that “we are human because we belong”.

The principle of *ubuntu* is “the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity”, or “humanity towards others”. *Ubuntu* can be understood as a relationship with the other among all human beings in the whole world.

#### 4.3.2.1. The Christian understanding of relationship

The Christian understanding of relationship, however, cuts far deeper than this. It starts with our understanding of the Triune God.

As mentioned in chapter 3 (3.3.1.), mission is God’s mission, *missio Dei*. Our doctrine of God is that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons as One God that make up the blessed *Trinity*. The *trinity* is all about relationship. We see God as a community, because of our doctrine. God, Jesus and Holy Spirit are co-operating and coordinating in the mission of God.

In the Bible God says, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). Our God is a *Triune* God and exist in relationships, which is the basis of mission. The three distinct persons are equal, and present in every action of God. They are not separate, but distinct. The one as the Father, the other as the Son, and the other as the Holy Spirit. In the trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three individuals but three persons in relationship and mutual dependence.

In John chapter 15:26, Jesus said He would ask the Father to send us “another Helper (14:16)” – the Holy Spirit. According to Mark chapter 1, when Jesus was

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South Africa, and [primate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Tutu) of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (now the [Anglican Church of Southern Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Tutu)) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond\\_Tutu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Tutu)).

baptized God the Father speaks and sent the Holy Spirit like a dove. In the Bible the one true God revealed Himself to exist as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This *trinity* is the foundation of all of our relationships.

Our God live in relationship with one another. Their relationship is an eternal relationship, unlike the limited human relationships. The *trinity* is the perfect model of relationships. The three persons in one God have an unlimited relationship of giving and receiving, each one for and from the other.

Therefore, we can say, God is a God of relationships in his mission. The *Triune* God is a missionary God, opening Himself to mankind in love. The *triune* God initiates and participates in mission, the *triune* God creates his church and all expressions of his mission through spiritual relationships with and among humans. God has a very special type of relationship with believers in Christ. The relationship of faith is God's strategy for making the good news known to the world.

John (3:16) says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life". God loves this world, and he wants us to know him. Jesus came so that each of us could have a personal relationship with God. This relationship with God is the most important purpose in our life.

- **Relationship with God**

When it comes to God and man, the operative word is relationship. God wants to be our friend and he wants a fruitful relationship with us. God is a relational God who loves us through our relationship with his Son and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Through the communion of the Holy Spirit we are taken up in the relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:13). When the Bible says that we are created

in the image of God, it means we are created for relationship with one another. Therefore we must live in relationship like the *trinity*.

Our relationship to God is our most important relationship, and no other even comes close. Through our relationship with the Son of God we become children of God as our Father. Before Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they had a personal relationship with God. They walked with God and talked to God (Gen. 3).

However, after Adam and Eve have sinned, the personal relationship with God has broken down as a result of the sin of man. People became separated and disconnected from God by their sin.

Despite God's love for the world; the relationship between God and man was broken, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)". The result of sin in our lives is death, and it also breaks off our spiritual relationship with God. After the break in the relationship with God, people try to get close to God through their own efforts. However it is impossible to restore the relationship with God through our own effort. Our best efforts are not enough to cover up our sin (Isa 64:6).

While, we deserve eternal punishment for our sin, Jesus died in our place. Instead of us, Jesus took all of our sin on himself. By Jesus' death on the cross, we are reconciled to God and are living as children of God led by his spirit (Rom. 5:8-10; 8:14).

Through God's love, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we have a personal relationship with God - "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him (1 Jn. 4:9)". In other words, even though we were separated from God because of our sinful nature, God made a way for us to have a



relationship with Him as a free gift of his grace. In our life, there are one thing that never fails that is: God's love, and no one able to snatch us one of the hand of the Son and his Father (Jn. 10:28-30).

There are many ways to have a relationship with God in our daily lives. We should pray to God and, praise Him, and listen to hid Word. In this way we can have a spiritual relationship with God. This personal relationship with God is not hard to find and difficult to get it. If you confess that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Saviour, and believe in your heart through the Holy Spirit, that God raised Jesus from the dead, you are children of God, with a relationship with God (Rom. 10:9)

And this relationship, between God and us, is the door to success in every other relationship. Therefore, without good and right relationship with God, we cannot reach our potential of effectiveness in other important relationships.

#### • **Relationship of Jesus Christ in his ministry**

Today few people anywhere in the world can find themselves without relationships with others. Relationship is one of the most important elements of life. Without relationship with others, life is difficult and hard.

According to the Bible, Jesus' ministry was his relationship with others. He preached the gospel to others, prayed for their healing, ate with people, and taught the law of love to God and fellow humans. Jesus had a relationship with others.

It is helpful to observe Jesus' relationships in his ministry. A first principle of relationship in his ministry is that do not think about the condition of the people who want to have a relationship. According to the New Testament, Jesus had a relationship with Jews and gentiles, rich and poor, sick and healthy people. Their

condition did not matter to Jesus. This whole world is our mission field. Therefore, we must have a relationship with all kind of people who live in this world without distinction of status, age or sex in our unity with Christ (Gal. 3:28).

This principle is illustrated in the apostle Paul's testimony, found in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22. In his testimony, he saw the need to become something to someone, and the 'becoming' is basis for understanding of relationships. Therefore, when we have become something to a person, we have a relationship. We have to accommodate ourselves to whatever social setting we find ourselves in, so as to win as many as possible for Christ.

Second, principle is that we do not wait until people approach us, but to approach them first. In Luke 19:1-10 Jesus entered Jericho, and when Jesus reached Zacchaeus in the tree, he approach him instead saying; "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today (Lk 19:5)."

Usually most people are waiting for someone to come and say something, instead of approaching them. People today are characteristically self protective and individualistic. These characteristics make it difficult to have a relationship with others. Jesus' approaching relationship is the best way for mission work.

The third principle is to let the Holy Spirit lead our relationships. According to Matthew 3:16-4:1, after Jesus' baptism He went up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove, and Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit through out his life.

God is always with us, in any situation. God sent Jesus, God and Jesus sent the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit has been given to us as our Counselor. "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot

accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you (Jn. 14:15-17)". The *Triune* God is always with us to guide and help us in our relationships. We only have to trust Him.

The Holy Spirit counsels us and guides us into all the truth (Jn. 16:13). Without the Holy Spirit we would not overcome evil and temptations in our relationship. With the Holy Spirit, we have a personal relationship with God like Jesus in his ministry.

The fourth principle is prayer. The prayer is the way to talking to God. Through prayer we have a personal relationship with God. The Bible tells us that Jesus prayed to God many times in his ministry. Regular praying is necessary for our relationship with God. Paul says: pray constantly (1 Thess. 5:17).

#### •Relationship in the church

The church's nature and purpose is defined in relation to God's calling and its relation to the world. The church is also defined by its participation in the *missio Dei*. The church exists because God has this mission to redeem the creation. In other words, the mission of God has created the church. The *missio Dei* is using the church in its work as an instrument.

The church started of from the Great Commission. The church is the new community of Jesus Christ which began with the apostles. The church is the body of Christ in the world, the community of believers in Christ. The early church modeled its community on the inter-relationship of the trinity, as witnessed by Luke in Acts.

Jesus Christ is our bridge to the *trinity*. Jesus Christ is the one who has died and rose again for human beings. Through Jesus Christ, the relationship between God and human beings is put right. In other words, the church does not exist for itself but

for God and for the world as a body of Jesus Christ. The church has a relationship with God, not because of our own efforts, but because of Jesus Christ, in communion with Him.

God wants all people to be his witnesses through the unity with Christ. The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit for our spiritual relationship. The Holy Spirit constitutes by giving faith in Christ to the believer (Eph. 2:8), and the Holy Spirit is at work in the church. Through his Holy Spirit which God has given as a free gift to us, we can have a personal spiritual relationship with God in faith.

To conquer daily temptations is only possible when believers abide in relationship with Christ. When Christians come together as the body of Christ they are encouraging and edifying one another and all members take part in building up the church (Eph. 4:15-16).

We must reflect God's relational nature in our church. The church is a human community that does not exist for itself. Therefore, all of the church members are to use their gifts and abilities to help others grow spiritually through healthy relationships. The relationship in the church is important for our spiritual life. It is the helpful, useful and wonderful way to expand God's kingdom in this world.

#### **4.3.2.2. The internet and relationships**

Cyber space has become the new frontier in relationships. The internet is a means to sustain relationships. The internet devices help us maintain relationships with others.

While the relationships in cyber space are not really real, and cannot compare with real relationships. People are deeply involved in cyber relationships in today's world.

In cyber relationships people are also making friends, lovers, and sometimes enemies.

Using cyber space, internet, is a relatively new way to have a relationship with someone. A successful relationship enters our home (or office) without the person physically being there, which feels very magical.

Some of the people look for a cyber relationship for the same reasons they want to have a face-to-face relationship. Many cases of cyber relationship become a face-to-face relationship. Cyber relationships can indeed lead to true relationships.

But, most of the people who want to have a cyber relationship do not have a good relationship with others in real-life, and sometimes they are missing something in real-life relationships. Through the cyber relationship they may indeed find what they are missing.

The anonymity of cyber space is one reason why people use it to have a free relationship without shame and disgrace. On the internet, it is possible to have relationships with many kinds of people in the world, especially with the people whom you have never met before.

But the internet can harm relationships. There are several side effects to a cyber relationship:

**The relationship with strangers without precaution increases through the internet.**

A cyber relationship can develop in a short period of time. People can meet anonymous individuals or groups, and engage in unlimited conversation. They

become virtually close with one another very quickly, because it is not real, and internet users think it to be a onetime event for enjoyment.

However, it does not give enough time to know each other, and they can misrepresent their personal information. The anonymity of an internet relationship can be used for bad things. Therefore, when it moves from a virtual relationship to a face-to-face relationship contact without precaution can be experienced as very harmful..

### **The psychological dangers of a cyber relationship.**

Sometimes cyber relationships make internet users to continue physically distant from real relationship with others. The internet can be highly addictive. If over used it can limit real life relationships with other people, and finally lead to lose connection with others in real life. Over used cyber relationships can lead to a lack of sleep and ill health.

Internet relationships let people spend more and more time online at home. Therefore, cyber relationships, lead to depression and loneliness, along with declining satisfaction from their real-life relationships.

While many internet users are fully satisfied with cyber relationships, more than with real-life relationships, they may not want to meet each other face-to-face because the cyber relationship might be destroyed by the hard facts of reality. Most internet users confuse the cyber world with reality.

- **The use of the internet to communicate and strengthen relationships**

It's an easy and effective way to relationships at work, school or amongst friends and family. People from all around the world can be met to learn about their customs, lifestyle and what their society is like. There are also a lot of enjoyments from playing online games with others. Through online games a relationship with anyone who is connected through the internet is possible.

Most of this new way to build a relationship via the cyber space is available through typed-text. Typed-text relationships can record the interactions by saving the typed-text messages, which can be reviewed at a later stage. Through a review a misunderstood typed-text relationship can be rectified, to help a better understanding of one another better than in a real relationship.

Many 'chat rooms' on the web can be used to meet new people, make new friends, as well as to stay in touch with old friends through a typed-text relationship.

Many people see a big disadvantage of text driven relationships. There are no voices, no expressions, no body language to convey meaning and emotion. However, today cyber relationships are available, not only by typed-text, but also with seeing and hearing through computer devices, such as web-cam and headphone sets. Cyber relationships are possible with both sound and sight.

#### **4.3.3. Contextualization**

The word contextualization was made popular in the early 1970's by the WCC's (World Council of Churches) Theological Education Fund entitled "*Ministry in Context*". It was coined particularly with a view to the task of education and

formation of people for the church's ministry. It became a blanket term for a variety of theological models (Bosch 1991: 420-421). Ever since the word contextualization was coined, there has been many writings, thinking, and talking about it.

Before the term contextualization was coined, there were various ways missiologists used terms for the process of interaction between the gospel and a particular culture, like accommodation, adaptation and indigenization. The first two were used more by Catholics, and the last more by Protestants (Bosch 1991:448). By the 1970s, there were many advocates of a more dynamic approach to the relationship between Christianity and culture than the formal indigenization concept.

The term contextualization has not had a long history, but it displaced indigenization and other words. According to Thomas (1995:170), the new concept, contextualization, is more holistic, more global, and more dynamic. And the WCC consultation finally judged contextualization of the gospel to be a missiological necessity.

Contextualization means communicating the gospel in understandable terms appropriate to the audience. Today contextualization may be one of the most important issues in mission, even though the word of contextualization only dates back to the early 1970s. However, “contextualization” as a term and concept has become most popular in missiological circles, especially, for the missionary who are concerned about the relationship between Christian faith and culture.

The term contextualization has been interpreted and defined in various ways. Hesselgrave (1991:143-144) defined contextualization as “the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God’s revelation, especially as put forth in the teaching of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts”.



There are many cultures in the world, and culture surrounds our lives like water surrounds a fish. Christians faced it every time they communicated the gospel across cultural boundaries. Therefore, contextualization is concerned with how the gospel and culture relate to one another across cultural boundaries. However, contextualization does not mean, to compromise the gospel message in a cultural context. The Bible remains the only trustworthy guide, and the missionary must not reduce, mix (syncretism), or compromise the gospel.

#### **4.3.3.1. Different authors approach the issue of contextual theology from different perspectives.**

Bosch (1991:421) quotes Ukpong's article (1987:163) in showing the origins of the word contextualization. According to Ukpong he identifies two major types of contextual theology that are the indigenization model (translation model and inculturation model), and the socio-economic model (evolutionary or revolutionary). Bosch qualifies the two models from Ukpong as the inculturation model and the revolutionary model.

Bevans (1992:2) has sketched five models of contextual theology that are helpful in understanding the relationship between the gospel message and culture: the translation model, the anthropological model, the praxis model, the synthetic model, and the transcendental model.

Bevans also pointed out the characteristics that distinguish contextual theologies from traditional theologies:

situational theologies – The only one way to understand contextual theology is through the social, political, economic, cultural and pluralistic religious history of the

local country; political theologies – the people who suffer under oppressive regimes are committed to social, economic and political change; cultural theologies – can be understood through the religious and cultural heritage of the people; narrative theologies - the primary methodology of contextual theologies is story-telling. In other words, contextual theologies are concerned about events, experiences, drama, narratives and interaction between people.

According to Hiebert (1994:186-187), critical contextualization is a proactive way to effectively develop contextual theology. He suggests a four step concept for use by missionaries working as cross-culture:

- 1) Recognize the need to deal biblically with all areas of life.
- 2) For the congregation to meet and analyze the cultural issues they confront from an uncritical perspective.
- 3) Study the Bible in relation to the issue at hand, aware that we as leaders are also culturally biased.
- 4) For the congregation to evaluate critically their own past customs in the light of their new Biblical understandings and decide themselves what they think and will do.

The contextualization of theology implies an understanding of Christian faith from a specific context. Whoever the target audience, we should contextualize the message for them, as Jesus did.

#### **4.3.3.2. Contextual theology**

During the late of 20<sup>th</sup> century many contextual theologies have emerged from the perspectives of oppressed people. For instance, Liberation Theology in Latin

America<sup>38</sup>, Black Theology in the United States and Africa<sup>39</sup>, Minjung Theology in South Korea<sup>40</sup>, Pain of God Theology in Japan<sup>41</sup>, Water Buffalo Theology in Thailand<sup>42</sup>, Third-eye Theology in Taiwan<sup>43</sup> and so on. For the purpose of this study only the Minjung theology will be described briefly.

### • Minjung Theology

Minjung Theology (theology of the mass of the people) is a contextual theology of South Korea's social-economic and political situation in the 1970s. Minjung Theology emerged from the experience of South Korean Christians in their struggle for social justice and basic rights. It was developed and refined even further during the 1980s in the midst of the struggle for democracy.

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<sup>38</sup> The term "Liberation Theology" was coined by the Gustavo Gutiérrez in his book *"A Theology of Liberation"* (1971). This is a movement in Christian theology coming from unjust economic, political, or social conditions.

<sup>39</sup> Black Theology emerged after the beginning of the "Black Power" movement in 1996. It comes from the liberation of the marginalized, especially the injustice done towards Blacks in the South African and American context.

<sup>40</sup> The "Minjung Theology" is a South Korean version of Liberation Theology and teaches that Jesus Christ is the liberator of the oppressed people.

<sup>41</sup> The term "Pain of God Theology" was coined by the Kazoh Kitamori in his book *"The Theology of the Pain of God"*. It was published in Japan (1946) and in the United States (1965), and this book is used by Jurgen Moltmann.

<sup>42</sup> The term "Water Buffalo Theology" was coined by Kosume Koyama a former Japanese mission professor at Thailand Theological Seminary. It focuses on Buddhists rather than Buddhism. Koyama believed that every religion has positive as well as negative points; therefore, the Christian must accept the positive elements of other religions in order to change their life style.

<sup>43</sup> The "Third Eye Theology" is to see Christ through the perspectives other than the western eyes. Actually, the term "Third Eye" comes from Buddhism.

At the beginning, Minjung Theology focused on the deplorable economic and cultural conditions of minjung (people). However, as the context changed, Minjung Theology expanded to address political and social concerns as well. The Minjung Theology is a Korean version of liberation theology and teaches that Jesus Christ is the liberator of oppressed people.

The term minjung was first used in 1975 in an academic discourse by two scholars, Ahn and Suh. They described Jesus as one of the minjung (Ahn 1981).

For Minjung Theology, the major problem is “Han”. Han is the compressed feeling of suffering caused by injustice and oppression, anger and lamentation, helplessness and hopelessness. For Minjung Theology, salvation means creating a Han-less society.

#### **4.3.3.3. Contextualization in cyber mission**

##### **4.3.3.3.1. Cyber theology must be contextual**

The World Wide Web (internet) is a large collection of documents and information, and the internet is being used worldwide to spread the gospel. Web-pages, cyber space, are unlike typical documents in traditional databases. There are many differences between the cyber (internet) context and real-time context. The cyber context can be automatically generated in real-time (current news, the foreign exchange rate, etc.), and can be active (animations, video, sound etc.).

The internet is a new culture and a highly populated place. It is the church’s responsibility to ensure the Christian faith in cyber space by cyber contextualization.

Therefore, churches save to study the cyber culture in order to contextualize the gospel on the internet.

In cyber space, there are many cultures and various religious groups, and more than one billion people online from nearly every country and from every un-reached people group. So if we are to target them, we need to know their context. In other words, all cyber space, web-sites, should be contextualized to their target readership. Today, there is a big need for more web-sites to approach those of other cultures and religious groups in an appropriate way. Therefore, if we are to contextualize this cyber space by the gospel, it is very important to use an approach which uses their language and engages with their concepts. Before we contextualize the cyber space, we must know who they are, what they use.

In cyber space, there are many advantages and disadvantages of cyber contextualization. Cyber contextualization can seem easier than real-time contextualization in mission.

#### **4.3.3.3.2. Ingredients of cyber theology**

- **Language**

For a contextual mission it is necessary to acquire the language of the target people as communication of the gospel to the target people without proficiency in their age is difficult. To contextualize in the cyber world, its culture must be understood as well as its language, its world views, and its habits.

However, most internet search engines, such as Google, Yahoo and MSN, provided English translations for its information, and most of the web-sites are available in

English. Therefore, the difficulty of the language of the target people can be overcome easier than before through the cyber space.

Word, must be carefully chosen in communication with target people; but there are common words in cyber space which makes it easier to approach and to contextualize. For instance, sites for Muslims use Muslim/Arabic words (Isa Masih for Jesus Christ, Injil for Gospel, and Miriam for Mary).

- **Youth's answers**

The internet has become a place for searching for answers, particularly amongst the younger people. Through cyber space, the interests and needs of the target people can be understood through their questions. Search engines can also help hundreds of millions of people who are interested in searching God to find the gospel. When the people have a question, instead of asking someone like a teacher or family, they use the online to find an answer.

In cyber space a new context for mission can be built by using the target people's interests and needs. Internet has also provided the major pray-ground and outlet for the cyber generation. The goal of cyber contextualization is to be there when these seekers ask questions, and to lead them to faith and to integration in a local body of believers.

However, many people are using the internet for asking for answer among the adult internet users. In other words, today many people used internet for answer of their asking not only the young people, but also the old people someone life a father or grandfather. The percentage of adult users who want to use the internet for their answer is increasing.

- **Confusion of reality**

As a result of a highly developed cyber space, internet, we today living in a global village. Through the internet you can contact people whom you never met before. Irrespective of their culture and language, you can converse with them, and visit everywhere you want to through cyber space. With these advantages, you can contextualize cyber space easier than real-life.

When the internet users want to stay in their own context in the cyber world, they feel like kings or the creator. It can limit real life by disconnecting with others in real life and ultimately with the virtual life as well. It is possible to confuse their own reality in real life and in the virtual life.

For instance many internet users enjoy online games such as Star-craft and Blood War where the users are can easily kill a person or destroy the enemy. Eventually they follow what they did in the online game without knowing it, and try to control as in the online game thinking that a real crime is not real. In this way the begin to confuse reality with cyber world, and kill people like they did in the online game. Whenever they are in trouble some online game players think they can start a new life, as in an online game.

This specific aspect of cyber space handicap to cyber contextualization. Each of the internet users has a different cyber context in cyber space. They like to invite other users to their context, and to influence their cyber context. They do not want to change their context.

But if internet users are contextualized by the gospel, they can be strong soldiers of God. The cyber world must be effectively contextualized within various cyber cultures and religious groups through the gospel without changing its core essence.

#### **4.4. Dialogue**

According to the Bible, the communication of Jesus Christ has a dialogical character. Many modern missionary pioneers were masters of dialogue, such as William Carey and Henry Martyn (Verkuyl 1978: 362-363).

According to Bosch (1991: 483), today the Christians in the world find themselves in a situation of co-existence with other religionists in their daily life. Since Constantine's victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in AD 312, Christian theology is a theology of dialogue. The dialogue is a necessary to our co-existence life.

Dialogue is a widely used concept in missions today. Traditionally mission was often seen as a one-way traffic. However, the world has changed, and the mission has to interact with different religions and cultures. Dialogue is a new way of meeting the world in today's mission. Dialogue does not replace traditional proclamation, but is a new method of proclamation.

It is more than a new missionary model. It implies a readiness to be changed as well as to influence others. Dialogue is a process of mutual sharing, not always as its goal, but often only a quest for greater understanding.

##### **4.4.1. Max Warren's seven rules for dialogue**

According to Warren (1964: 35-43), there are seven rules for dialogue between Christians and non-Christians: acceptance of our common humanity, the principle of divine omnipresence, accepting the best in other religions, identification, courtesy, interpretation, and expectancy.



His first principle for dialogue between Christians and people of other faiths is the acceptance of our common humanity. It means that Christians cannot have any relationship with another religion, as two religions are not in dialogue with each other, but two people.

In the Bible says, our God is “the Father” (Ephesians 3:15), “who made the world” (Acts 27:24), and “made every race of men of one stock” (Acts 27:26); “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23-24). Bible says that all humans originate from the same source, whoever they are, all have sinned are only but right with God in Christ Jesus by the grace of God

Second principle for dialogue is the divine omnipresence. What he means is that wherever you meet with someone else, God is already present. Warren (1964:37) writes:

“When I go to meet the man of another faith I find that God is there to meet me. For He is at work already. I can never anticipate God. I may become his fellow-worker and by my faithful interpretation unveil the hidden Presence. But even if that should be my privilege my own face will shine with the reflection of His glory, I, as well as the other man, am the benefited. God is the benefactor. That is a truth for my humbling, and for my very great encouragement as an interpreter.

The third principle of dialogue is accepting the best in other religions. When you have a conversation with the people of another religion, you tend to focus on the negative of that religion and obviously tend to focus on the positive of Christianity. According to Max Warren, there are a lot of positive things to find in many religions

and all truth comes from God and the truth is in Jesus (Warren 1964: 38). When you deny the positive aspects of brother religion you will in no way advance the dialogue.

The fourth principle for dialogue is identification. It is a necessity for the interpreter to know the language of the heart. Max Warren refers to the prophet Ezekiel, who was sent to his own people. “I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Abib near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days – overwhelmed (Ezekiel 3:15).” God sent Ezekiel to his own people to stay with them. Finally he became overwhelmed by what he saw there, which means he started feeling what they were feeling. Therefore, when you want to enter in dialogue with a Buddhist, you have to become a Buddhist for the Buddhists, if you want to win them for Christ.

The fifth principle for dialogue is courtesy. The first step in courtesy is to listen rather than to speak. Gentleness and magnanimity are of the essence of courtesy (2 Cor. 10:1). Jesus is the model for the courtesy. He was willing to sacrifice his own honour and glory on our behalf (Phlp. 2:5-8).

“The cross was not a symbol of imperial domination, but of the imperium of sacrifice. The Christian faith has nothing to lose by suffering. In and through suffering it can perhaps speak home to the hearts and minds of suffering mankind better than in any other way (Warren 1959:10).”

The sixth principle for dialogue is interpretation. Through true dialogue, we can interpret the gospel to other people, especially to non-Christians. Instead of proclaiming the gospel to people, the gospel has to be interpreted so that they will really understand it. According to Warren (1964), “the interpretation can be expressed most simply and most profoundly in the New Testament verb *martureo*.”

The root meaning is “to bear witness to.” Therefore, the witness has a responsibility to interpret that the listener can understand.

His last principle for dialogue is expectancy. It focused of hope. The listener is by definition a person who expects to hear something. When you have a dialogue with a person of another religion, you expect not only the other person’s conversion but also much more to happen.

#### **4.4.2. Dialogue in cyber space**

We can have a dialogue with people through online conversation such as the online chat room. For example, a missionary can chat with connected people on the mission field before to going to that country. It can promote understanding of one another before to arrival on the mission field. A missionary can build useful relationships with non-believers or people of other religions through the online chat room to get a real experience of their viewpoint.<sup>44</sup>

Through cyber dialogue, you can have a personal relationship easier than before. It has never been easier to begin a natural conversation with people of quite different characters, and it is available to establish meaningful relationships with non-Christians.

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<sup>44</sup> There are excellent Christian responses to Islam on the Web. One of the best is Answering Islam ([www.anawering-islam.org](http://www.anawering-islam.org)), one of the first sites for Christian-Muslim dialogue. It is provided by anonymous but evangelical Christians. There are also many Christian sites for dialogue with non-Christian: Jews for Jesus ([www.jewsforjesus.org](http://www.jewsforjesus.org)); the goal ([www.thegoal.com](http://www.thegoal.com)), to speak to sports enthusiasts through stirring testimonies from famous athletes; Stonewall Revisited ([www.stonewall\\_revisited.com](http://www.stonewall_revisited.com)), focusing on the gay and lesbian community; and there are many others.

Through cyber dialogue anyone with a personal computer, modem and Web access, can today easily and naturally share the good news of Jesus Christ with others around the world.

One of the most important matters is commitment. Without sacrifice to the gospel dialogue becomes a mere chatter. The purpose of communication is the spreading of the good news of the gospel, and dialogue is a good means of *kerygma*.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing conclusion, it is clear that cyber mission in the global world is an important and necessary ministry. This chapter has attempted to indicate what cyber mission is, its advantages and disadvantages, and the need for a cyber mission for the twenty first century world mission.

The primary reason for a cyber mission in the 21st century is that people who live in this world are using cyber space, and it will be their primary form of communication.

Because official mission work is not possible in many closed and semi-closed countries of the world and in very few countries in the western world only 5% of their populations attend church regularly, the church needs to think about new missionary methods.

According to the Prensky<sup>45</sup>(2001), the people who are born after 1985 are digital natives, communicate naturally with others through digital technology. To digital natives cyber space is part of their life. They write text messages to their friends through the internet or cell phone. A large portion of their communication is

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<sup>45</sup> Marc Prensky is an internationally acclaimed thought leader, speaker, writer, consultant, and game designer in the critical areas of education and learning.

technology-mediated communication. They spend lots of their time on the cell phone, computer and iPod to communicate with others. Hundreds of millions of people connect every day through the internet without physically meeting. And in many of these encounters they may never meet in the flesh.

Although, there are still many people who prefer watching TV instead of using cyber space, because they only want to push a button to watch TV, and do not want to use the complicated technology of cyber space, the cyber world will eventually become common life.

The main reason why the 21st century mission must develop an understanding of cyber space is the growing popularity of the internet and the devices connected to it as a means of personal communication on planet Earth. Therefore Cyber mission will have to be used as a special means of personal witness in the 21st century world mission.

Chapter 5 will explore<sup>46</sup> specific instances in the cyber community and mission.

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<sup>46</sup> What is the Cyber church? A comparison between the advantages of a cyber church and its disadvantages. A proposition for a cyber church in the 21st century.