
The Birth, Goals, and Activities of the Association of Anabaptist Missiologists, 2000–2015

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Introduction

The year 2000 was a tumultuous year for multiple reasons. It represented the last year of the second millennium and the first year of the twenty-first century. Often referred to as “Y2K”—where “K” stood for “kilo,” or “thousand”—there were considerable fears that computers would not shift from 1999 to 2000 correctly, resulting in a technological meltdown and subsequent chaos worldwide. Religious pundits were actively predicting everything from global wars, to the return of Christ, to the end of the world as we knew it. Some people hoarded their earthly possessions and hunkered down, expecting the worst to happen.

In North American Mennonite communities—particularly in the case of two historic binational denominations, the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church—a decade-long period of negotiations was moving toward a merger of the two, resulting in the creation of two new national entities, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. Structurally, Mennonite Church USA would be composed of four program agencies—education, publication, stewardship, and mission—the latter officially acquiring the new name in early 2002 of the “Mennonite Mission Network.”

In preparation for these new mission realities, multiple committees, task forces, and study groups were formed to review the legacies of merging commissions and agencies, to study current Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, and Evangelical trends in mission thinking and practice, and to identify key biblical and theological themes shaping Anabaptist missiology. As the time for merger approached in early 2000, consultants from the Church Innovations Institute in St. Paul, Minnesota, were hired to guide the “Mission Transformation Project”

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through the upcoming stages of the transition process. In a 2006 Mennonite Mission Network publication entitled *Together in Mission: Core Beliefs, Values and Commitments of Mennonite Mission Network*, nearly twenty separate documents, created primarily during the late 1990s and early 2000s, were listed as “sources that have shaped our vision.”¹ Titles of these documents included “A Guiding Theology of Missions: Final Report” (study group), “Emerging Trends in North American Mission Agencies” (study group report), “The Emerging Context in Missions” (study group report), and numerous others.

I was recruited by Stanley W. Green, the new executive director/CEO of what would become the Mennonite Mission Network, to give leadership to Global Ministries—the program division of the new agency, which was inheriting the rich legacy of its predecessor agencies’ ministry involvements in fifty-five countries and thirty-one states in the United States. In addition, I was asked to devote one quarter of my time to “missiological research”—a kind of research and development (R&D) function—through writing, preaching, teaching, and engaging mission-related conversations with Mennonite high school, college, and seminary educational institutions.

The Inaugural Gathering of the Association of Anabaptist Missiologists (AAM)

With this as background to the flurry of conversations happening at the time, I contacted a number of fellow binational and inter-Mennonite missiologists—Walter Sawatsky (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, IN), Nzash Lumeya and Mark Baker (Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, CA), Titus Guenther (Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, MB, Canada) and Linford Stutzman (Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, VA)—to test their interest in forming a working team to build a network of scholars and practitioners committed to exploring and promoting Anabaptist missiology. After several rounds of discussion by phone and hard-copy mail correspondence, and with group agreement on a working name for the network, the Association of Anabaptist Missiologists (AAM), we decided to call together people of potential interest from our various networks for a one-and-a-half-day consultation on January 20 and 21, 2000, at Techny Towers, north of Chicago. This would happen on the front end of the Council of International Ministries (CIM), the annual meeting of North American Anabaptist mission and service program administrators and executives.²

1 James R. Krabill, ed., *Together in Mission: Core Beliefs, Values and Commitments of Mennonite Mission Network*, Missio Dei no. 10 (Mennonite Mission Network), 16.

2 While the primary work of CIM was programmatic updating and collaborative brainstorming among administrators, the group did over the years publish pamphlets of a missiological nature and engage in discussions of common interest to participating

Letters went out to anyone who might be interested in such a gathering. By early January, fifty-five people had responded expressing their intention to be in attendance. Several others—including a few prominent Anabaptist mission thinkers or practitioners, like Hans Kasdorf, Neal Blough, C. Norman Kraus, Irene Weaver, David W. Shenk, Erwin Rempel, and Jacob A. Loewen—sent regrets due to prior commitments and words of encouragement nonetheless for such an initiative. “I am delighted with your plans,” wrote C. Norman Kraus. “I am very grateful that a meeting is being planned,” said David W. Shenk. “This meeting is long overdue. I will be there in spirit,” Jacob Loewen responded. It appeared, therefore—and a bit to our surprise—that there was significant interest in such a gathering, and we planned with that in mind.³

Three specific goals for the meeting were identified:

1. To bring together a group of Anabaptist-Mennonite mission thinkers, writers, professors, and practitioners to reflect on the particular contribution of Anabaptist missiology.
2. To explore what interest there might be in creating a regular, ongoing forum for discussing mission research projects, presenting new publications, and responding to oral or written presentations on Anabaptist missiological themes.
3. To celebrate the important contributions of an older generation of North American mission leaders who have significantly shaped Mennonite-Anabaptist mission vision, theology, policy, and praxis in the past few decades.

The meeting format for the gathering would include informal time, with space for acquainting, remembering, chatting, and connecting. The event would

agencies. At the January 20–24, 2000, meeting, for example, following the AAM gathering, two half-days with plenary sessions and workshops were devoted to the theme “Waging Spiritual Warfare for the Gospel of Peace.”

3 It would be a helpful exercise for someone to document similar mission-focused gatherings throughout the five centuries of Anabaptist history. There was, of course, the 1527 Augsburg consultation of fifty-some Anabaptist leaders designed to make plans for evangelizing Europe. Within a year, all but three—in what has become known as the Martyrs’ Synod—had been arrested, imprisoned, tortured, expelled, or killed. Many other less-dramatic gatherings could also be recorded. During my time as a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (Elkhart, IN) in the mid-1970s and continuing on into at least the 1980s, there existed an association of inter-Mennonite missiologists (professors, researchers, program directors, and administrators) who gathered annually at AMBS to compare notes on issues of current personal research, discuss new publications, interact with non-Mennonite guest speakers (e.g., Andrew Walls, Walter Hollenweger, Jim Wallis, David Bosch), and, in general, debate missiological matters of particular interest to members of the Mennonite/Anabaptist community.

begin with a common dinner on Thursday, January 20, then proceed throughout the program on Friday, January 21, and end with a celebrative banquet honoring a group of invited guests on Friday evening. The formal content of the gathering would be organized around four thirty-to-forty-minute “interpretive” presentations designed to set the stage for reflection and discussion among participants. The four topics would focus on issues related to Anabaptist missiology: (1) “biblical foundations” (presented by Calvin E. Shenk); (2) “anthropological perspectives” (Stan and Delores Friesen); (3) “ecclesiological considerations” (Lois Barrett); and “leadership trends” (Wilbert R. Shenk).

Worship times were interspersed throughout the gathering, and at the end small groups were formed to discuss and report to the larger group on five questions:

1. *What should be the future of a group such as this Association of Anabaptist Missiologists* (regular meetings, with what frequency, in connection with CIM or separate)?
2. *What themes might be treated in a future gathering?*
3. *Who should be invited to future AAM meetings, not on the mailing list for this gathering* (other Anabaptist-related missiologists, non-Anabaptist observer-participants, more women, missiologists focused on the North American context, international participants, more ethnic variety, college/seminary students in mission study programs, etc.)?
4. *What “projects” might a group like AAM work on together* (updated bibliographies, anthology of significant texts, syllabus-sharing, clearing house for useful teaching materials, collection of “mission stories that need to be told,” series of modest *Festschriften*, a “relevant Anabaptist missiology for the new millennium,” etc.)?
5. *What are your reflections on this first gathering of the AAM* (e.g., counsel, overall appraisal, suggestions for improvement)?

The evening ended with a banquet celebrating the lives and contributions to mission of a group of invited guests: Willard and Alice Roth, John A. Lapp, Theron Schlabach, Melvin Loewen, Don Jacobs, and David A. Shank. Special recognition certificates were presented to each of the guests with descriptions of their particular contributions.

In a news story about the event released by Mennonite Mission Network on February 23, 2000, it was reported that “participants discussed the distinctiveness of Anabaptist mission, the role of nonviolence and nonconformity in mission, the impact of religious pluralism . . . the future of mission . . . the future shape of the Association of Anabaptist Missiologists and ways to bring international voices

into the discussions.”⁴ Another prominent theme that pervaded the conversations, according to the press release, was “the desire to hold together theory and practice.”

Consultations

Based on the feedback from the survey conducted at the first AAM gathering in January 2000, the working team of organizers decided to hold a second gathering later in the same year, from December 7 to 9, this time at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. The multi-day event included two plenary presentations: “The contribution of Anabaptist mission thinking and practice to the larger church” (by Jonathan Bonk, with respondents Myron Augsburger, Nancy Heisey and Art McPhee) and “Methods and curriculum for teaching missions from an Anabaptist perspective” (by Linford Stuzman, with respondents C. Norman Kraus, Calvin Shenk, Walter Sawatsky, and Lawrence Yoder).

Other features included updates from participants on “half-baked” research or writing projects, newly-released publications, “videos I use in the classroom,” an update by Walter Sawatsky as editor of the Anabaptist missiological journal *Mission Focus: Annual Review* (“Eight years and a hundred articles later”), and a progress report on the expanding bibliography by and about Anabaptists involved in mission and service initiatives, *Anabaptism and Mission: A Bibliography, 1859–2000*.⁵

A third gathering happened a year later in connection with the CIM at Techny Towers, north of Chicago, from January 25 to 27, 2002. The featured speaker during a plenary session and again during the Saturday evening banquet was Samuel Escobar, who shared about his pilgrimage of faith and the impact of Anabaptism on his missiological thought and praxis. The banquet itself commemorated the lives and work of several Mennonite missiologists, with lifetime recognition certificates for Robert and Alice Ramseyer, John Driver, C. Norman Kraus, and Paul Hiebert. Research updates from attendees included work on early church/Christendom studies, worldview transformation, peace and the gospel,

4 Mennonite Mission Network, “Missiologists Gather to Celebrate Past, Contemplate Future,” news release, February 23, 2000.

5 This was soon to be published under the above-mentioned title and was edited by Chad Mullet Bauman and James R. Krabill (Mennonite Mission Network, 2002). The listing, in alphabetical order by author, included more than 3,250 entries—books, journal articles, book reviews, unpublished documents, thesis titles, etc.—with references to documents in eight languages (English, German, Spanish, French, Dutch, Swedish, Russian, and Indonesian). The bibliography has been updated twice, in 2011 and 2025. A copy of the 2011 edition appears on the Mennonite World Conference website, and the 2025 update is scheduled for posting by the end of 2026; see “Anabaptism and Mission: An Online Bibliography 1859–2011,” Mennonite World Conference, <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/anabaptism-and-mission-online-bibliography-1859-2011/>.

youth and mission, biblical theology of mission, various translation projects, and a smattering of initiatives on the history and growth of Anabaptist-Mennonite churches in Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, the Congo, and eastern Europe.

Later that same year, from September 27 to 29, 2002, a fourth AAM meeting took place, this time hosted by Mark Baker and Nzash Lumeya on the campus of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California. The missiological work of Mennonite Brethren scholars was central to this gathering, with Paul Hiebert providing plenary input and Hans Kasdorf being honored for his important work on Anabaptist mission history and theology.

AAM gatherings took place once or twice a year for the next decade, many hosted by Mennonite seminaries in United States, but also at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba (2007) and Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California (2008). On several occasions (2005, 2009, and 2011), AAM partnered with and supported the (Wilbert) Shenk Mission Lectureship series hosted by Walter Sawatsky at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. The majority of the AAM gatherings were held in collaboration with the CIM during its annual meeting north of Chicago or elsewhere.

Nineteen AAM gatherings took place between 2000 and 2012, with smaller check-ins happening from 2013 to 2016. The times and places of these events were:

1. Chicago/CIM (January 2000)
2. Eastern Mennonite Seminary (December 2000)
3. Chicago/CIM (January 2002)
4. Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno (September 2002)
5. Chicago/CIM (January 2003)
6. Eastern Mennonite Seminary (October 2003)
7. Pittsburgh/CIM (2004)
8. Pittsburgh/CIM (January 2005)
9. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (November 2005)
10. Pittsburgh/CIM (2006)
11. Canadian Mennonite University (2007)
12. Chicago/CIM (January 2008)
13. Fuller Theological Seminary (October 2008)
14. Chicago/CIM (January 2009)
15. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (October 2009)
16. Chicago/CIM (2010)
17. Chicago/CIM (January 2011)
18. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (September 2011)
19. Chicago/CIM (2012)
20. Smaller check-ins at CIM (2013–2016)

Presentations and Publications

At nearly every AAM gathering, substantive papers were presented on issues related to Anabaptist missiology. With Walter Sawatsky as a member of the AAM planning committee and as editor of the journal *Mission Focus*, many of these presentations made their way into the compilation of articles appearing each year in the *Mission Focus: Annual Review*. While the AAM did not actually publish anything on its own, it did partner with and widely promote several publications of importance to Anabaptist missiology:

1. **Bibliography.** We have already referenced *Anabaptism and Mission: A Bibliography, 1859–2000*. The AAM network of members became an important resource for updating authors and writings that should be included.
2. **Anabaptist consultation on Islam.** From October 23 to 26, 2003, AAM participated in organizing, promoting, and seeing through to publication “An Anabaptist Consultation on Islam: The Church Meets the Muslim Community.” The gathering was held at Eastern Mennonite University, in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and was financially sponsored by Mennonite Mission Network, Eastern Mennonite Missions, and the John S. Coffman Center of Eastern Mennonite Seminary. About two hundred people registered for the consultation, with more than three hundred attending some plenary sessions. Some fifteen Mennonite agencies or church communities made presentations, and reports of “learnings” were shared from eighteen countries. In addition to plenary presentations—including two by non-Mennonite Islamicists, J. Dudley Woodberry (Fuller Theological Seminary) and Lamin Sanneh (Yale Divinity School)—fifteen seminars focused on core concerns that Mennonites encounter in meeting Muslims. The proceedings of the consultation were eventually published with the title *Anabaptists Meeting Muslims: A Calling for Presence in the Way of Christ*, edited by James R. Krabill, David W. Shenk, and Linford Stutzman (Herald Press, 2005), 566 pp.
3. **W. R. Shenk *Festschrift*.** Two members of the AAM planning committee, along with Charles Van Engen, Fuller Professor of Biblical Theology of Mission, worked together to produce a *Festschrift* in honor of the significant lifelong contribution of Anabaptist missiologist Wilbert R. Shenk. Shenk’s professional life had taken place working primarily for three institutions—Mennonite Board of Missions, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, and Fuller Theological Seminary—so writers were recruited from these various chapters of Shenk’s life to reflect on his key contributions to mission thought and practice. Twenty-six authors responded to the request of the editors, and a volume

came together with the title *Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation*, edited by James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky, and Charles E. Van Engen (Orbis Books, 2006), 336 pp. At the 2005 joint meeting of the AMBS Shenk Mission Lectureship and the Association of Anabaptist Missiologists held on the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries campus, AAM was able to present Shenk with a certificate of recognition for his considerable contribution to Anabaptist missiology.

4. **Selected writings of David A. Shank.** The presentation of one other important publication took place four years later in October 2009 at a joint gathering of AAM and AMBS's Shenk Mission Lectureship. In this case, it was the publication of a collection of writings by Anabaptist missiologist David A. Shank, who with his wife, Wilma, had spent a lifetime in ministry, first in Europe (1950–1973), then in West Africa (1979–1989), with the Mennonite Board of Missions. Shank's specialty was writing insightful articles, which had been published in a variety of places but never brought together in one volume as a compiled collection. This finally happened in the publication *Mission from the Margins: Selected Writings and the Life and Ministry of David A. Shank*, edited by James R. Krabill (Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2010), 351 pp. Shank was able to attend the presentation and make some comments, but passed away less than a year later.

AAM Membership and Certificates of Recognition

The Association of Anabaptist Missiologists was never a proper “institution.” It was a network of people passionate about exploring and promoting mission thinking and practice as seen, understood, and experienced through the lens of Anabaptism. AAM never had a budget; it functioned primarily on volunteer effort and through generous partners like Mennonite Mission Network, the Council of International Ministries, and the various universities and seminaries who graciously hosted the network gatherings. Two expert assistants at Mennonite Mission Network, first Karen Ritchie and then Marcella Hershberger, compiled materials and managed hard-copy mailings to a growing list of interested AAM members. Yes, hard-copy mailings—because even at the end of AAM activities in 2015, many members still did not have a personal email address.

At its peak, AAM had almost 150 subscribed “members” on the mailing list—people who received regular correspondence and who attended gatherings whenever and wherever they were able. An increasing number of those members wrote to AAM from international locations—from Colombia, Finland, the Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland, France, Botswana, Austria, Germany,

Lithuania, and China—wanting more information and wishing something similar would exist in their own countries.

In addition to this network of interested members, AAM regularly honored special guests in celebrative banquets of Anabaptist-Mennonites who had contributed in some unique way to the mission effort—as administrators, Bible translators, mission historians, medical personnel, authors, teachers, anthropologists, or church planters. An attempt was made to recognize workers, men and women, from various North American denominations and mission agencies—from the Mennonite Church, the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, the Brethren in Christ, the Conservative Mennonite mission efforts, Virginia Mennonite Missions, Eastern Mennonite Mission, and Mennonite Central Committee.

In 2011, the AMBS Shenk Mission Lectureship hosted a tribute to the Global Mennonite History Project of Mennonite World Conference. Edited by John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder, this initiative had produced five volumes of Anabaptist-Mennonite church history, written entirely by teams of local authors from the various regions and continents they represented—Africa (ten writers), Europe (nine), Latin America (five), Asia (fifteen), and North America (two). The three days of meeting were graced with reports and presentations from around the world: “The Dalit Character of Indian Churches” (I. P. Asheervadam); “Patterns from the Global South: Africa” (Barbara Nkala, Zimbabwe); “Peoplehood and/or Ethnicity in the Global Mennonite Story” (Jaime Prieto, Latin America); “Critical Issues Between Global South and North America” (with three presenters, Chiou-Lang (Paulus) Pan of Taiwan, Titus Guenther of Canada, and Getu Abeche of Ethiopia); and “New Mennonites and Mission: Whose Story to Tell?” (Juan Martinez). Several members of the AAM participated in the gathering, and at the end AAM certificates of recognition were given to the eighteen international writers in attendance.

Over the course of AAM’s existence (2000–2015) more than seventy-five mission workers, administrators, and scholars were honored with personalized certificates of recognition for their contribution to the Anabaptist-Mennonite mission effort.

Concluding Reflections

Launched in 2000 with a burst of energy, the Association of Anabaptist Missiologists gradually lost steam after a decade and a half of networking, gatherings, and other activities. There were probably multiple reasons for this, including the dwindling of volunteer staff to keep it alive. Now, ten years out, it would seem helpful to reflect back on the experience to see what lessons might be learned.

Celebrating a Generation of Pioneers

Wilbert R. Shenk observed in his presentation at the inaugural gathering of AAM in January 2000 that North American missions in the post-World War II era (1945–1960) was a time of rapid program development. “On these grounds,” said Shenk, “we can justifiably call this the ‘golden age’ of Mennonite missions.” He goes on to note that during this time “an unprecedented fifty-three new missions were founded with a view to the establishment of viable new churches.” The current worldwide reality we see today of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ faith communities, Shenk adds, “owes a great deal to this seminal period.”

Most of the seventy-five mission workers, administrators, and scholars honored by AAM with personalized certificates of recognition were the product of this dynamic period. It was not unusual for AAM organizers to receive emotional, sometimes tearful, words of deep-felt gratitude from recipients for recognizing their many years of commitment and service. By 2015, most of these folks had passed on, but the privilege of being able to celebrate in person their important contributions to the mission effort was more than gratifying at the time and perhaps one of the most important features of the AAM initiative.

Building Networks and Consolidating Resources

The AAM gatherings were rich experiences of bringing people together from multiple backgrounds, professions, and ministry contexts. There was an excitement about sharing new resources, presenting ongoing research projects, and discussing efforts regarding how best to teach mission courses in colleges and seminaries. Creating bibliographical resources and other documents on the history and theology of Anabaptist missions is a legacy that can be passed on to future generations interested in this field of reflection and praxis. An informal network of younger Anabaptist missiologists, in fact, currently meets occasionally online to discuss the future of the discipline and to share their research on migration studies, Muslim-Christian relations, peace and the Gospel, immigrant church realities, leadership challenges, and church-planting efforts in post-Christendom contexts.

The Deficit of Diverse Voices

From the very first gathering and throughout AAM’s history, it was obvious that much of the conversation was happening about and between North American white males. The lack of women’s voices—and particularly those from majority-world contexts—was a constant concern among AAM members and one that was never resolved. The emergence of social media and video-chat

6 Shenk’s 2000 presentation is reproduced in this current issue of *Anabaptist Witness* on pages 85–95.

connections in more recent times has revolutionized the church's capacity to encourage mutual exchanges and develop fruitful debates about what Anabaptist missiology can and should look like in the diverse contexts of the global Anabaptist family.

The Mission Commission of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) is aware of this challenge, and their work may help point the way to some solutions. During the period from 2009 to 2015, members of the commission from nine countries worked to identify key characteristics of mission thought and practice through an Anabaptist lens. Then, in 2014, they adopted ten missional statements, inspired and based on MWC's "Shared Convictions," under the title "God's People in Mission: An Anabaptist Perspective." To create more content, they invited writers from eight countries to reflect on these statements and write chapters for a book that was subsequently published by Mennonite World Conference in 2018.⁷ This is a great beginning, but so much more still needs to be done.

From the Study of "Missiology" to "World Christianity"

Truth be told, some of the waning interest in missiology as a discipline is the product of the relentless characterization within Western academic circles of the devastating effect of Christian mission activity as a partner in the imperialistic, colonizing activities of Euro-American hegemonic intent and reach in recent centuries. That reality and representation are an ongoing challenge with which missiologists—including Anabaptist ones—need to contend.

But there is another shift happening among Christian scholars due to world demographic shifts, globalization, and migration, resulting in Christianity, according to Catholic theologian Peter C. Phan, "becoming more than ever diverse, multiple, transnational, and polycentric in all aspects of its life."⁸ Still implicit for many Western scholars, claims Phan, "is the colonialist understanding of Christianity and the church as the West and mission as the rest. Church history then deals with the Western churches, dubbed 'historic churches,' and missiology with 'mission lands,' with their presumably immature 'younger churches,' beholden in every way, not least financially, to the historic churches."⁹ Phan encourages Christian scholars, including missiologists, to focus increasingly on World Christianity, "in which all churches are local churches, with none at the center and the others at the periphery, with none as the historic church and the

7 Stanley W. Green and Rafael Zarcho, eds., *God's People in Mission: An Anabaptist Perspective* (Mennonite World Conference, 2018). Available online at <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/gods-people-mission-anabaptist-perspective/>.

8 Peter C. Phan, "Teaching Missiology in and for World Christianity: Content and Method," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 42, no. 4 (October 2018): 360.

9 Ibid., 362.

rest younger churches, with no part of the world as Christian territory and the rest mission lands.”¹⁰

This shift became clear when the Overseas Ministries Study Center, for years located in New Haven, Connecticut, and focusing on missiology in a more traditional sense, moved in 2019/2020 to the Princeton Theological Seminary campus and began increasingly promoting dialogue around world Christianity, with the goal of amplifying the voices of the world Christian movement.

This does not mean, however, the demise of missiology as a discipline, though it *will* need to be reimagined and rearticulated in new and creative ways. For, without mission, says Phan, “theology is bound to become a tribal, provincial, sclerotic in-house shoptalk, often in air-conditioned university and seminary smart classrooms. By contrast, mission operates on the open and unfamiliar borders of countries, classes, ethnicities, genders, cultures, Christian denominations, and religions. Missionaries, as the etymology implies, are people being sent out. By vocation they are border-crossers, and border-crossers have the best opportunities to discover new and strange things. . . . Indeed, it is missionaries who alerted theologians to the emergence of World Christianity occurring under their very noses.”¹¹

I have attempted in this essay to capture a particular chapter in the ongoing development of missiology with an Anabaptist lens. The Association of Anabaptist Missiologists served an important purpose in a particular time and place. But times and foci change. If it is true that we can’t move forward into the future without knowing where we’ve been, then perhaps recounting the brief history of the AAM can help us in doing just that.

In the remainder of this issue of *Anabaptist Witness*, we will dip into the past to hear some of the voices that still speak truth to our contemporary reality, and then turn to new global voices that will increasingly shape conversations and practices for the Anabaptist faith family in the years ahead.

10 Ibid., 364.

11 Ibid., 361.