



Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges

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While God's Word never changes, the world ever changes.

While the world changes daily and many global developments are influencing the way the world acts, interacts and reacts, the gospel is the truth once-for-all delivered to the saints. The question at hand is how missionaries can move with the times and embrace the modern realities and innovations while remaining faithful to God's Word.

This book is not another textbook or exhaustive treatment of the history, theology, philosophies, biblical exegesis or strategies of missions. Many basic evangelical positions and missiological assumptions guide my thinking, and I will point out some of them along the way, but I will refrain from indulging in biblical exegesis, rehearsing historical missiology or engaging in theological debate. I simply want to help missions students, new missionaries, career field missionaries, and their mission agencies ask and answer these questions: What can we learn from the ways past changes affected missions? What place should the future have in informing the ways we currently do missions?

Multinational corporations highly value the information yielded from well-researched trends, and use it to be proactive in product development, marketing and investment strategies. Missionaries and missions agencies must anticipate and prepare for world change just as diligently. Unfortunately, far too often the missions enterprise is more reactive than proactive.

What place does the future have in informing the ways we do missions? Many cultures around the world are crisis oriented while others are not. Those of a crisis orientation tend to look forward and anticipate the future in front of them. Other cultures consider what is in their past to be in front of them. After all, they would say, the only times of your life you can "see" are those that are past; the future is unknown and therefore behind you. Noncrisis cultures tend not to plan for future possibilities, such as purchasing life or health insurance policies, taking out warranties on automobiles, contributing to retirement plans, or saving for a rainy day. They do not consider such potential problems and so do not plan for them.

What does this have to do with understanding the challenges and concerns of missions today? Do you consider the weather forecast when making plans for a fishing trip or a picnic, or would you check forecasts of job markets for employment possibilities when choosing a college major? Many people anticipate and begin planning for their children's college education even when they are still young. Those of us seeking to impact nations for Christ should consider the trends that lead multinational corporations and the world's governments to adjust, redirect and refocus their efforts to influence nations for the coming decades. Often, hardworking and faithful missionaries are so engaged in their work that they fail to see what is going on in the world or what is coming down the road. It has often

Missions expert David Sills

- offers an overview of key issues facing global mission today
- addresses globalization, urbanization and the role of Western missionaries
- explains how to help without hurting or creating dependency
- assesses trends in short-term mission, churches as sending agencies, business as mission and more

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BOOK EXCERPT

"In these insightful pages, David Sills provides biblical, practical missiology for today. While his assumptions are anchored in Scripture, his understanding flows out of his rich global experience as a missionary leader and trainer. His passion for Jesus and his mission are both inspiring and contagious!"

— **Bob Fetherlin**, president,
One Mission Society

been said that the faithful pastor should conduct his ministry with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. Imagine the pastors who continue to minister and preach as they did thirty years ago, with no change in the music or leadership of their churches, or any awareness of either world events or local changes. While God's Word never changes, the world ever changes. To minister effectively, missionaries must engage the world that is, not the world that was. To know how missionaries should adjust for future trends and changes, we must first consider what our unchanging mission is.

— *From chapter one, "Competing and Conflicting Missions"*



M. David Sills, author of *Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges*

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"There's no one I trust more to mentor me in the practicalities of effective missions than Dr. Sills. In this book, his decades of experience and balanced wisdom help me navigate the hyperbole and overreactions that are so common. This will be a trusted resource I go back to often."

— **Bill Walsh**, director of international outreach, The Gospel Coalition

Missions Expert M. David Sills

M. David Sills (DMiss, PhD; Reformed Theological Seminary) is A. P. and Faye Stone Professor of Christian Missions and Cultural Anthropology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he also serves as director of global strategic initiatives and intercultural programs. He is the founder and president of Reaching & Teaching International Ministries, which serves people around the world through evangelism, discipleship, pastoral preparation, leadership training and theological education. Sills previously served long-term as a missionary in Ecuador. While with the International Mission Board, he served as a church planter and general evangelist among the Highland Quichua people in the Andes and as a seminary professor at the Ecuadorian Baptist Theological Seminary. He also served as rector and professor of the Baptist seminary as a missionary with Global Outreach International. He has planted and pastored churches in both the United States and Ecuador.

Sills has written several books and articles in both English and Spanish, including *The Missionary Call: Find Your Place in God's Plan for the World*, which has been translated into Spanish, Korean and Indonesian, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* and *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichuas*. His Spanish books include *Capacitación Cultural en la Cultura Quichua* and *Quichuas de la Sierra*. In addition, he has also coauthored or contributed to several books such as *Introduction to Global Missions* and *Introducción a la Misiología*.

A frequent speaker at conferences internationally, Sills has spoken for the Desiring God National Conference, Urbana Missions Conference, To Every Tribe, The Master's College and the Cross Conference. He and his wife Mary have been married for over thirty years and have two grown children and four grandchildren.

Follow David on Twitter (@David Sills) and visit reachingandteaching.org.