

# A shift in mission giving?

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I had been quite busy the past few months with arrangements for the sessions of the Resource Mobilisation Working Group (RMWG) at the Lausanne Congress. It was not easy to put a program together for the sessions. However, the more I had been involved in the RMWG program, the more excited I became with what God is doing around resource mobilization around the world. To give you a taster of the RMWG's main session on Tuesday 19 October: 9 people from 8 different countries and 7 different Lausanne regions will each give a 5 minute presentation that will flow into the 90 minute session. I promise it is going to be excellent! I hope everybody reading this blog will attend the RMWG Multiplex Session and encourage others to come as well. You will miss something very special if you will not attend.

What is fascinating to me as I am working with the different speakers, is that we might start to see a shift in mission resourcing that will have a profound impact on mission in the years to come. A small indication of this shift is in the enthusiasm of the speakers to send their presentations. The first presentation that I received was not from the US but from Mali in Francophone West Africa! The second was from Brazil, the third from China and the fourth from Sri Lanka! I am still waiting for the 2 presentations from the US ? What struck me in the presentations is the passion, vision and Biblical understanding of stewardship from the presenters to see more resources mobilized from within their own countries and regions. Without giving away too much, God is doing a remarkable work in China around giving for mission. The testimony from Mali nearly got me in tears. Compare that to the trend that we start to see in for example Europe and a possible trend in the USA. At a recent global mission conference in Edinburgh, the European mission leaders admitted that they are not able to support mission initiatives financially as much as in the past. During a recent visit to the US donor leaders shared that increased taxes in the US might have very serious consequences on mission giving. One leader told me straight forward that many mission agencies in the US will not survive the expected decline in mission giving.

If these trends are correct we need to rethink how mission will be resourced in the future. North America, Western Europe and Australasia will not be the main regions to support mission financially in the future. They will remain important, but increasingly financial support will come (and have to come) from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Eurasia and Asia. A change in financial support base will have an impact in other areas of mission engagement including mission influence. Often in the past I've seen how mission agencies and churches in the West used financial support to influence indigenous ministries in the Global South. If this kind of 'passport funding' will not be available anymore, could it mean that these ministries will be 'freed' from outside influence and become more involved in what God is really calling them to do? Will they be engaged in different approaches in mission than the ones they copy so often from the West? Will people in the Global South become more generous in their support for mission? Will donors in the West give differently in the future? How will we resource world evangelization in the future in view of these trends?

The Resource Mobilisation Working Group will discuss these trends during a Dialogue Session at the Lausanne Congress. During that session we hope to discuss resourcing of world evangelization in the 21st Century, barriers to giving for world evangelization, how these barriers might be overcome and what steps are needed to support the spread of the whole Gospel to the whole World by the whole Body of Christ in the 21st Century. That is a session that should not be missed!