



***Eliezer Magalhaes – Crossover Global
Spiritual Truths Necessary for Innovation***

Hi, greetings from Brazil. My name is Eliezer Magalhaes and I serve as the Vice President of Crossover Global and Executive Director of our office here in Brazil. I want to talk with you today about spiritual truths that I believe are necessary for us to be innovative in missions.

First, I want to start by asserting that **innovation should arise from above and not from below**. I believe with all my heart that our innovative ideas should be born in the room of prayer before it goes to the study room or the room of strategy. We easily consult leaders, experts, reasoning about innovative ways to solve problems when the first step should be to consult God, we need to seek light with the Father of lights before we go to enlightenment books or leaders. There is a need for knowledge, but without the wisdom, the power, the authority, the insights which only God provides, knowledge is powerless. The innovative effect generated by prayer in the lives of men like George Whitefield and John Wesley, for example, is extraordinary and exciting. The Holy Spirit guided them, moving the preaching from the pulpit to the coal mines as they learned that they should preach wherever people were. The Spirit innovated their hearts, their passion, their social perspective, their vision, areas that we need divine innovation.

Second, as innovation is a divine dynamic, we need to **develop a spiritual mentality that resembles God's creativity**. After all, we were fashioned after the image of the One who created everything from nothing, who brought order to a universe in disorder, beauty to a formless creation. God innovated by revealing His glory poetically in His creation where the heavens declare the glory of God. The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:10 that we are God's handiwork, and the Greek word used there is "poema" which means poem. We're God's poem to the world, created beautifully for good works, which means we were created to poetize. We're poems of God made to be poets for God. As the Lord chose the young poet David to innovate poetically in Israel for Him, we are also called to be His poets in a fallen and an ugly world affected by sin. I believe that no true innovation will be possible if we ignore God's aesthetic character, especially in Jesus' presence in the Gospels. For Christ attracted people with His poetic life, beautifully harmonized with the Father. Besides, Jesus taught through parables, telling stories to reach the hearts of people. Jesus' mission was practiced with great artistic creativity, and we must learn with Him. I believe that the world is hungry, longing for a beauty that only true Christianity can provide. I also believe that the glory of God is not only the end, the purpose of our mission, but the proper route that should take us there.

The third spiritual truth is that **we need to use our spiritual creativity as a lens to discern the problems and their solutions.** This reminds me of those men in Mark Chapter 2 bringing the person with paralysis to Jesus and the problem they faced when they reached the house crowded with people being many of them, Jesus' disciples. Not even the disciples gave space for them to enter. How rude! Sometimes the Church, when it's self-centered, not paying attention to the needs of those around. But, even in front of these obstacles, those men did not give up. Some missions and missionaries are giving up because of obstacles in the world, and sometimes unfortunately, in the church, unable to see the roof that can be opened, many missionaries, paralytic carriers, either abandoned ministry or get stuck. Those men invented the first engineering evangelistic idea by climbing the man on that roof and lowering him to Jesus.

If we want to innovate, we need to be creative using our mathematical, biological, philosophical skills to bring spiritual politics to Jesus. We need to engage different gifts and skills in the Church to address the problems. We need businesspeople, executives, doctors, nurses, farmers, engineers, teachers, everyone to look at the Great Commission with the unique gifts that God awarded them. William Carey is a good example. His creativity put at the service of God produced a great impact in India. He planted churches, created a printing company, translated and published the Bible into several languages, fought against social injustice, and even founded a university. The results of his creative ministry can be perceived until today. He was a simple shoemaker who, like those simple men who lowered demand with paralysis, saw how to unroof some obstacles in India to bring people for Christ.

The fourth spiritual truth is that **Jesus' ministry should be the model for us to innovate.** In his enlightening book entitled, "The Ministry Multiplication Cycle." Doctor Bill Jones presents us how Jesus developed his own ministry progressing through different stages. First, **He presents.** Jesus evangelized His disciples, inviting them to come and see by themselves if indeed He was the Messiah. After the disciples believed in Him, Jesus started **establishing them in faith**, inviting them to follow Him. And after establishing in faith, He **selected twelve to become leaders**, apostles to walk with Him. Focusing on the twelve, Jesus **equipped the apostles to become ministers**, walking side by side. In the end, He moved from the ministry and before ascending to heaven, **He gave the apostles the task of going to the ends of the world and making disciples.** If looked carefully, we can identify a movement in Jesus' ministry from **evangelism**, to the **establishment** in the faith of His disciples, and then to the **equipping** of leaders, and finally to the **extension** of the Kingdom by sending them to the ends of the world. **Evangelize, establish, equip and extend are important stages of Christ's ministry.**

Ralph Winter wrote something similar regarding the steps of the missionary work. Quoting Henry Venn, Winter divided the mission into four steps. The first step, the missionary is a **pioneer**. In the second, he is the **spiritual father**. In the third he is a **partner**. And in the fourth he **only participates** when requested. I believe that most of our problems in missions is because we neglect Jesus' example to be followed in our ministries.

You know, here and Crossover Global, we are operating with global mentality instead of an international one. We are definitely not perfect, but we want to glorify God in our innovations. Our global leadership is today made of key leaders from seven different countries, both Eastern and Western. Besides, our church-planting efforts throughout the world are led by leaders from twelve different countries. Our vision is not to send from the West to the East, but from the reached to the unreached. Moreover, to serve the churches and the church-planters, we developed different institutions all under our alliance.

As distinct institutions, they can move through different roads and strategies internationally and aligned with our organizational mission and ethos, serve the needs of the churches being planted. We organized the churches we planted in self-led networks, committed to planting new churches where they are and throughout the world. I believe our missionary organizations need to innovate from a centralized to a de-centralized mentality. From a western-eastern dichotomy to a multicultural, integrated perspective. If we empower local churches as Jesus did, nurturing them, equipping leaders, giving them structure, support, and mentoring, they can multiply and together with us, finish the task.

To conclude, I want to remind you of all the spiritual truths that I highlighted here. First, innovation comes from above, not below. We need to seek God's face for wisdom. Second, we need to develop a creative mentality, learning to look at the world poetically. Third, with creative mentality, approach the problems using the different gifts and skills already present in the church. Four, we need to follow Jesus' model of ministry, respecting the different stages, re-evaluating our own strategies. I hope our Lord will provide innovative strategies to you and your mission. May the Lord bless you.