

OUR COMMON CONTEXTS

INTRODUCTION

Before a new business is launched there is often expensive market research done. This helps in the initial design as well as promotion. Four Brides Ministry cannot afford such an initial cost. However the following observations can serve as an initial orientation during the start up phase. Later there will be polls, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and other methods employed.

COMMENTS

Most people are caught up in the daily and weekly routines. They rarely take a few steps back and look at what is happening around them from an objective and detached perspective. The following statements are such initial observations. The purpose of these is to begin to provide an understanding of the setting inside of which the ordinary daily events happen.

Each of these observations can be investigated, researched and challenged in the coming months. But this is a good starting point for targeting Four Bridges Ministry. Note that this innovative collection of services is based on the web and therefore within the reach of all sorts of people in the USA and worldwide.

OBSERVATIONS

Society is changing rapidly. Advancing technology leads to new products and services. New products and services in turn impact all areas like: work, shopping, school and entertainment.

Americans and others worldwide feel stressed; there are often too many demands on their time, money, and energy. Excess stress can bring confusion, overwhelm and burnout.

Our American society is in moral decline. The Bible is no longer the moral compass. The popular media like movies, TV, books, Internet and magazines presents sex outside of marriage as normal. Yet the Bible still calls fornication and adultery sins.

Carnal pleasures dominate short-term choices as life seems to whirl along. Long-term consequences are seldom considered seriously when it comes to crossroads, plans or commitments.

The divorce rate is very high. Blended families have become the norm. Divorce always hurts each child. The institutions of marriage and family are under attack in the courts.

The younger generation (teens and twenties) experience more pressures and temptations toward promiscuity, drug addiction and alcohol abuse than their parents or grandparents.

It will be much more complicated and challenging for those that are currently children (and future children) to go through the teen years.

Today's parents, teachers and pastors are already stretched to the maximum.

The popular media and public schools have been presenting a distorted view of God, Jesus, the Bible, salvation and the Christian life.

There is a tragic drop out of 80% of young church members between high school graduation and college graduation. Some of these return when newly wed or when children arrive.

Factors like rapid changes, multiple pressures and uncertain future can lead to the sense of living in an emotional pressure cooker. Amidst the swirling chaos; people long for acceptance, unconditional love, respect, belonging and purpose.

Improvements in communications and transportation causes this planet become more of a global village every year. Peoples from all over the globe are moving to the USA and usually their birth rate is higher than Anglos. Unlike previous generations we need to understand and relate well in a pluralistic and global society.

Those involved in missions often focus their prayers and actions on the 10-40 window. This refers to 10 to the 40 parallel. This area spans North Africa, Middle East, India and Southeast Asia. In this small section of the planet there is the largest concentration of unreached people. A huge percentage of these millions of souls cannot read. They are in an oral-based society.

Christianity as a percentage of the population is increasing all over the world -- except in North America. In many developing countries millions are eagerly coming to faith in Christ but they rarely mature in the faith. There are one million pastors and five million lay leaders in remote rural churches of 50 to 100 who have had little or zero Bible education. Very few can afford to come to the USA or even a major city in their home country. There is a tragic shortage of Bibles and Christian educational resources. The Christianity that is practiced where the Bible is not understood is shallow and mixed with the local traditions and/or superstitions. This dishonors the name of Christ.

There are large areas of the USA where there are nearly zero churches within 50 miles that teach the truth of what the Bible proclaims.

Divorces and remarriages have created an increase of blended families. Relocations for the sake of career advancement and other reasons have caused much turn over in the workplace, neighborhoods, schools and churches. Such wide spread changes work against the sense of community and belonging that people are longing for today.

The Internet offers the good, the bad and the spiritually ugly to millions of people every day all over the globe. Businesses and educational institutions are developing new ways to adapt this technology for their purposes. However, the Body of Christ is sadly lagging far behind in leveraging the many communication possibilities for the glory of God.

Believers in the USA have been abundantly blessed in terms of spiritual resources, religious liberties and financial prosperity. The Bible says that to whom much is given much is required. In the typical suburban church the members are not passionately and frequently reminded that the fields are ripe unto harvest but the workers are few. They are generally not challenged by the facts that their prayers and funds go a very long ways overseas.

Believers rarely think in terms of spiritual legacy. Yet the world that we shall live in twenty to forty years from now (and pass on to the next generation) shall be shaped by how we respond to the current challenges.

CONCLUSION

The world of twenty years from now will be very different from what we see today. How can we get ready? How can we begin to take constructive steps of action? How can we pass along to the next generation a genuine and living faith in Jesus? Four Bridges Ministry will be asking such challenging questions of a wide range of people all over the globe. We will listen prayerfully. We will seek to be used by the Lord Jesus Christ to better connect the Partners, Workers and Fields. We will aim for the research, development, implementation, improvement and reproduction of sustainable solutions locally and globally.