



EFCA February 2012 OBSTACLES FOR CRAFTING MISSION STRATEGY

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Dear Pastors and Mission Leaders,

Greetings in Christ. Last month, I wrote about the topic of God's Century and Mission Trends. These ideas were from the CrossGlobal Link webinar called "Religious Demography and Mission Strategy". This month, I want to continue the same theme, but look at the obstacles for Americans crafting mission strategy. This material is also from the webinar that Todd M. Johnson taught from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Which of these obstacles does your church need to address?

Obstacles for Americans Crafting Mission Strategy:

- 1) American evangelicals are less knowledgeable about world religions than are atheists or Jews. Evangelicals answered an average of 17 out of 32 questions about world religions correctly. Atheists/agnostics and Jews/Mormons answered 20 out of 32 correctly. Results can be seen at www.pewforum.org.
- 2) Evangelicals are less knowledgeable about solving the world's problems. It is not a priority for evangelicals, although it is seen as a mark of a good evangelical. For further study see Rick Warren's PEACE plan.
- 3) There is a poor knowledge of geography. Two-thirds of young Americans cannot find Iraq on a map. One-third couldn't find Louisiana on the map-even after Katrina. The National Geographic-Roper report said, "Taken together, these results suggest that young people in the United States...are unprepared for an increasing global future".
- 4) *Our Fading Heritage* report says that there is a lack of knowledge about history. We have poor understanding of American history, politics, civics, and economics. Of the 2,500 people surveyed, 71% failed with an average of 49 (out of 100). However, American politicians got only 44 (out of 100). Go to (www.americancivilliteracy.org/2008/summary_summary.html)
- 5) There is a lack of Bible knowledge. George Barna says that "The Christian body in America is immersed in a crisis of biblical illiteracy". The most widely held Bible verse among church – going Christians is "God helps those who help themselves" – which is not in the Bible at all. Go to Barna Research Online, "Religious Beliefs Vary Widely By Denomination," June 25, 2001.
- 6) There is an overemphasis on the clash of civilizations. Today the world's population of Christians and Muslims make up 55% of the world's population. Before 2100 it could grow to two-thirds of the world's population. There is a real need for good relations between Christians and Muslims, where possible.
- 7) There is a lack of hospitality and friendship with non-Christians. As has been stated, 86% of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists do not personally know a Christian. Many of these people are

now living in “Christian lands” and it is a great opportunity to show them the love of Christ. This is a big area of need to focus on. This task needs the help of the entire church.

Blessings,
Steve Austvold