WRESTLING WITH ONESIMUS: MATURITY

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This is my penulitmate post interacting withÂ When Missions Becomes Toxic; or, Um, They Donâ€™t Need Us AnymoreÂ from Onesimus.

> *Thirdly, it is long past time for local Christians to take responsibility for their own churches and training and programs.Â This is happening in some places, like India for example, where for years missionaries were forbidden by the government from operating as â€˜missionaries.â€™Â Local Christians were forced to take responsibility for themselves.Â And while not perfect, there is a maturity among many Indian Christians that is refreshing.Â And if taking responsibility for oneâ€™s own Christian life and oneâ€™s own local church or â€˜ministryâ€™ means some churches and schools and programs fail, then it likely means that they were not viable to begin with, at least on the grandiose scales they were conceived when an open tap of resources from the West was assumed.Â And if it means that Christianity evaporates from some areas, then that should tell us that whatever â€˜Christianâ€™ things were going on there before were not making real contact with the lives of real people.Â There comes a point when local Christians must take responsibility for their own fellowship and mission.Â If something cannot happen without Western funding and staffing, then should it be happening at all?*

Once again, Onesimus has raised an important point, and once again he has pushed it too far. It is undeniable that "Â local Christians to take responsibility for their own churches and training and programs". Â But by implying that this isn't happening in Africa is simply not true. Yes, more could be done and the pace of change could be quicker. I have the privilege of knowing many African Christians who are leading churches, translation organisations and mission agencies in Africa. There are Western missionaries working for some of these organisations, but their programmes and activities are defined and managed by the African leadership under whom they serve.

Onesimus makes a good and important point; but it isn't the whole story.