

Connections

The Journal of the WEA Missions Commission

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RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

a global challenge

Connections

October 2003
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from the editor . . .

From the Editor . . .

by William D. Taylor

Editorial Reflections, Part One

Welcome to the 4th issue of our young journal. In this issue we focus on two major themes. First is the challenge of religious pluralism, from two perspectives—Buddhism, and the secular West. These essays are adaptations of two of the five (the others grappled with Hinduism, African traditional religion and Islam) morning Bible readings from Canada 2003, our recent international consultation that brought together some 230 participants from 51 nations. The 3rd issue gave a preview of our gathering with the focus on globalisation.

Secondly, you have the reports from the MC task forces and networks who worked sacrificially during those intense days.

“...our recent international consultation that brought together some 230 participants from 51 nations.”

As I reflect back on that focused week, many memories are engraved in my mind and heart. Some of them are echoed in the various quotes scattered through this issue of *Connections* from some of the consultation participants. But what I want to do in this editorial is to reiterate some of the concepts presented there, especially our core MC commitments.

Over the last 18 years, the MC has convened 8 strategic global events (more or less on 3 year cycle) that focused on issues, people, processes, outcomes, generating 6 singular books, all designed to help shape the worldwide mission movements. This is the list of locations and prime themes.

- ◆ Nigeria, 1985—“Third World Missions” (as it was called then)
- ◆ Manila, 1989—missionary training
- ◆ Manila, 1992—strategic partnerships

- ◆ England, 1996—attrition issues
- ◆ Canada, 1997—national mission movements
- ◆ Brazil, 1999—global missiological concerns
- ◆ Malaysia, 2001—the MC task forces and networks at work
- ◆ Canada, 2003—issues of globalisation, and religious pluralism

It is our desire to meet again at the proper time and place, when we have a sense of the guidance of the Spirit that emerges out of felt grassroots needs, and focusing on a vital issue that needs to be addressed by our networks and leadership.

But at Canada we worked from a framework of commitments which guided our selection of themes, plenarys, participants, programme, processes and outcomes. What are these:

The Missions Commission core commitments as articulated at Canada 2003:

1. We are committed to affirm the purposes of the living, Triune God, His creation, His covenants, His Gospel, His people, His future—historical and eternal. We exist to glorify God by enhancing the effectiveness of cross-cultural ministry of the global Evangelical community. Our goal is to help, establish and strengthen regional and national missions movements. The MC works to impact all mission movements, networks, organizations and churches who will participate to focus on our shared missionary task and for

which the entire global Church is responsible.

2. We are committed to the global people of God, the Church of Jesus Christ—both invisible and visible, local and denominational, national and international, of one culture and language or of many, from the South and the North, the East and the West, the mainlands and the islands. It is our passion to help nurture and strengthen the mission vision of churches and other mission structures around the world in their own cross-cultural vision and programme of missionaries: motivating and mobilizing, educating and interceding, screening and training, sending and strategizing, shepherding and supporting, reflecting and missiologizing...all with a keen eye on the task before us and in full obedience to the Great Commissions of our Lord.
3. We are committed to his people, the church, the Bride of Christ—invisible and visible, universal and local. We celebrate the church both gathered and the church scattered, both sodality and modality. And the MC offers a strong model on how both dimensions converge and serve together.
4. We are committed to world evangelization in full, Christocentric, Biblicalness. We affirm the fullness of the Great Commission, and reject the reductionism that sees it primarily or exclusively as proclamation.

5. We are committed to the reflective practitioners—women and men who consider and serve, who think and do, and do both. Theology can be thought of as “thinking through the faith”, and missiology can be thought of as “thinking through the faith that sends”. We are committed to doing both theology and missiology. But missiology must be done in community; and in Canada we had an intense, weeklong missiological community. We are in it together.
6. We are committed to the process and product of Christian contextualization: listening to the voices of the Word and our world, of Christian and universal/particular history, of community, of those gone before us and those here today. We want to serve our generation and those to come. Our contextualization must be Biblical, relevant, sensitive to culture and to the global voices of God. The study of globalisation that week was an example of this kind of contextualization—listening, disagreeing, seeking consensus, changing, implementing.
7. We are committed to the younger generations, to encourage, open space, release, mentor, critique, run risks. I will never forget my father’s example. He had been the president of a USA mission society, but he resigned at the age of 59 to move back into mission field with my mother, four years older than he. They then served under a much younger man who had joined the

mission under my father’s leadership. Dad consciously mentored and released the younger generation into ministry because he truly believed in them and had aspirations for them, in some cases beyond that of the people themselves. He personally and pastorally saved me from becoming a first term very sad attrition statistic. He wanted to finish well each stage of his life and mission career, and in late April of this year he did just that, and went Home, age 88.

In my own living, speaking, writing, serving, I issue the challenge to older mission leaders. In Canada I made a judgment call and divided the world, calling those over 40 years of age as “older” and those under 40 as “younger”. It was a perilous judgment! And I encourage each “older” reader of Connections to begin actively looking out for the younger leaders that God is raising up—and then to become available for mentoring, encouraging, opening up space and releasing them.

8. We in the leadership of the WEA Missions Commission are committed to project our work into the future, serving in collaborative ventures with like-minded colleagues and organisations, networks and task forces around the world. Our work is characterized by a combination of factors: descriptive and prescription; listening, learning and serving; convening, catalyzing, connecting

and communicating. We commit to engage new international mission networks as they emerge, and will invite them to appropriate “docking mechanisms” or “platforms” with the MC that allow us to strategically link to each other for the global church and world evangelization. With this in mind, it was a privilege for the MC Global Leadership Team to welcome TIE (Tentmakers International Exchange) as an official MC network.

9. During Canada 2003 we were committed first to worship, then to listen for the voice of God in quiet and prayer, then to learn from each other as an intense community of global faith, and only after that took place would we move to action and implementation. It is my conviction that when these factors combine in our mission work, we will be released to serve the eternal God in Christ through his empowering Spirit. My encouragement to our Canada 2003 colleagues was that as they met in focused working sessions, they should be willing to come to full stop, to be quiet, pray and thus

seek God. It was a joy to hear reports from at least two teams—Mission Mobilisation Network and the International Missionary Training Network—of that taking place...full stop, prayer, re-start.

10. Finally, we are committed to implement our praxis in 10 task forces and networks. All of them met during Canada 2003 to develop a long-term strategic plan to guide the MC into the future. Post Canada, close to 220 women and men from many nations are currently involved in these groups. These networks are increasing in number, and this will inevitably have an impact on the evangelisation of the unreached and under-reached peoples of the world.

The MC has established its capacity to convene, catalyze, connect, and communicate with world mission leaders. And this issue of Connections gives you a flavour of the richly textured team that God has brought to the MC. Read and be nourished!

William D. Taylor
Editor, Connections



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Editorial Reflections, Part Two

by K. Rajendran

Canada, 2003: Issues of Globalisation and Religious Pluralism

Reflecting over the different past WEA MC consultations, as Bill Taylor states in his editorial, Canada 2003 was planned to provide momentum and to build on all that was done before in order for Great Commissioners to obey and fulfill the Great Commission. We have witnessed significant movement towards synergizing and relating to national mission movements and networks that serve both evangelism and cross-cultural mission endeavours.

The themes of previous consultations were well chosen for the need of their hour, and to gather around the roundtable in order for missions' leaders to address relevant issues at hand. Each gathering was meaningful, and costly in terms of time, finance and human energy. They were not haphazard, urgent meetings marked by despair, but rather conscious effort to build from the past into the future. Thus I am personally grateful for the privilege of being involved with a dynamic movement which will continue to address relevant mission issues across the world and build inter-dependent relationship. This will keep us as MC Associates and the Church at large grappling with issues with a macro picture of the global body fulfilling the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our MC Associates from across the world share common concerns. However, we recognize that each issue may have its own local peculiarity which has to be dealt sensitively within our local regions. Thus the consultations have given us the needed friendship and assurance that we are facing many critical topics as a group, and not working alone in the task of building local and national mission movements. Thus Canada 2003 continued to give us the sense of moving forward, and of doing it together. The 10 commitments reflected by Bill give us handles to function and think through issues which would strengthen both local and global Great Commission movements.

From my own perspective, the following are some of the “ground-whispers” I picked up as I kept my ears sensitive during a week of dialogue on globalisation and religious pluralism topics. I observed:

A good feeling as together we broke down hierarchisms and regionalisms.

- ◆ A warm sense of friendship being built. Africans inviting Asians and visa versa. North and South, East and West serving each other.
- ◆ A good feeling as together we broke down hierarchisms and regionalisms. Our name tags had only our name and our country. Thus we addressed each other not with titles but by first names.
- ◆ A sense of recognising the needs and challenges of different parts of the world from the Great Commission shakers and movers.
- ◆ Senior mission leaders listening to the younger leaders of the changing world. Purposefully, all plenary sessions were addressed by younger people and many of them from the missions emerging world.
- ◆ In the midst of worship and Bible readings, repentance for missing the challenge of addressing the changing world with the Gospel, especially the globalised youth culture.
- ◆ A healthy sense of confusion to those who felt they were living ten years (or more) behind-the-times and needing to catch up. This happens either because of our own leadership positions or the way some countries themselves are crawling 10 years backwards.
- ◆ Challenges to each leader to upgrade themselves in many areas to address the changing world. If leadership does not upgrade itself, movements led by them also will lag behind and run the risk of missions irrelevancy.
- ◆ A great appreciation from brothers and sisters from the economically weaker nations who had consciously been invited to make sure that we are part of a global movement without paternalism. This was noticed in many ways.
- ◆ A sense of being flexible, perceptive and accommodative for the peoples of different cultures from 51 nations.
- ◆ An overwhelming realisation of the need to involve more women in leadership, as well as the need to be sensitive to the “hearts” as much as “minds” (and mindless strategies).
- ◆ A desire and commitment to understand local and global issues (including globalisation) and be relevant to contextualize the presentation of the Gospel without breaking down the integrity of the message that God’s way for salvation is through Jesus Christ.

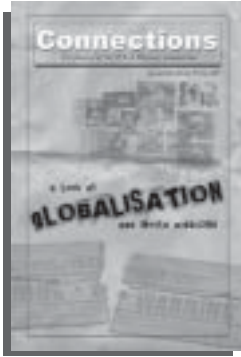
These are some of the products and by-products of Canada 2003. We pray that all the friendships nurtured, all the challenges heard, all the networks formed and strengthened would help transform peoples and nations with the Gospel of Christ.

I am grateful to be a part of a dynamic movement such as the WEA MC. Let us build momentum with flexible structures, avoiding hierarchism. Let us flow as the Lord is leading even as we serve one another.



K. Rajendran is the General Secretary of the India Missions Association and the Chair of the WEA Missions Commission Global Leadership Team. He can be contacted at ima@imaindia.org or rajendranwwf@eth.net

Letter to the Editor



Thank you for the last two publications of “Connections”. Member Care and Globalisation are two key issues for mission today, and your coverage was an excellent introduction and stimulus for all involved in mission and missionary training to pursue the issues further.

Having lost contact with the International Missionary Training Fellowship since I completed my doctoral studies with some assistance from them, I am grateful that we are ‘connected’ again and encouraged to know that the WEA Missions Commission has gone from strength to strength.

Keep up the good work!

Alan Pang
Worldview Centre for Intercultural Studies,
Tasmania, Australia

The consultation in Canada was very interesting for me. Now we are working very hard on behalf of the emerging Russian Evangelical Alliance. I witnessed a good inter-confessional atmosphere in Canada. Now I tell our Russian Christians about your work and about problems of globalisation faced in the whole world, including the “Christian” countries. Thank you very much for those wonderful days.

--Alexander Fiedichkin, President, Council of Christian Evangelical Churches in Russia, Moscow, Russia

The Challenge of Buddhism: Reflections from Genesis 1-11

by Kang-San Tan

Christian missions have had little success in developing indigenous communities in countries such as Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Japan. The focus of this essay is to present personal reflections, based on the creation account themes in Genesis 1-11, as it relates to the challenge of encountering Buddhist belief systems. The goal of this essay is to demonstrate how the themes of Genesis encounter Buddhist worldviews. Having engaged the biblical themes in Genesis 1-11, we will outline key elements that constitute a genuine and biblical missionary encounter with Buddhists.

I. Where are the Buddhists today?

Before we look at the creation account in Genesis, we need to briefly survey the world of Buddhism today. There is no country in Asia that has not been influenced at one time or another by Buddhism. Buddhism has been the prime inspiration behind many Asian civilisations.

Buddhism: A Global Religion?

“Buddhism is never as weak as it appears, and never as strong as it appears” (to adapt a famous adage attributed to Russia).

Buddhism, contrary to popular thinking, is a missionary religion, a spirit rooted from the Buddha’s earliest instructions to his disciples:

Go ye now, monks, and wander for the gain of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, and for the welfare of gods and man. Let not two of you go the same way. Preach, monks, the *Dharma*, which is lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely in the end, in the spirit and in the letter; proclaim a consummate, perfect, and pure life of holiness. There are beings whose mental eyes are covered by scarcely any dust,

“The existence
of God may be
the most
fundamental
difference
between
Christianity
and
Buddhism.”

but if the *Dharma* is not preached to them they cannot attain salvation.

The spread of Buddhism beyond Asia through Buddhist missionary activities and Asian migrations is now an accepted reality. Buddhism is the fastest growing religion in Australia, United States, and France (largely due to Asian migrations). Each year, 100 times as many Britons become Buddhists as they become Muslims. Whether the popularity of Buddhism in the West will grow is uncertain. Currently, the Buddhist Society Directory in UK lists over 250 Buddhist temples, and there is now a European Buddhist Union to provide forum for the discussion of Buddhist activities. According to David Burnett, author of *The Spirit of Buddhism*, in 1990 there were 5000 Buddhists in Britain. According to 2001 census, there are 151,816 Buddhists in Britain.¹ Much scholarly work has been done in universities in France and Germany. France has an estimated 600,000 Buddhist practitioners.² The largest Buddhist meditation center in the West is based in the region of Touraine, France. In Italy, Buddhism is taught in universities including the Roman Catholic Gregorian University. Buddhist temples are now established in Leningrad and the Buddhist Religious Board, recognised officially in Russia, coordinates Buddhist activities in the country.

Interest in Buddhism in the United States, became popular since the Parliament of World Religions in 1893, continue to grow unabated through Tibetan and Zen Buddhisms. Oriental studies faculties in Yale and Harvard

contributed to the development of Buddhism by publications and scholarships. Charles Prebish, Professor of religious studies at Pennsylvania State University, places an estimate of 3-4 million Buddhists in America, with about 800,000 American converts.³ With Asian migrations to Latin America (for example, the Japanese community in Brazil) and Africa (especially South Africa), Buddhism will find its place in the marketplace of religions in these two continents.⁴

II. Significance of Creation Account in Genesis for Buddhist Religiosity

In the creation account of Genesis 1-3, Israel's Elohim is presented as the universal, transcendent Creator who is distinct from creation. "God is the subject of the first sentence of the Bible." (Kidner, 1967: 43).

The Genesis account is set in contrast to other ancient Near Eastern gods, such as Baal or Marduk, who are united with nature. In Genesis, we are introduced to an Absolute Other, a Supreme Creator God who is above creation. The existence of God may be the most fundamental difference between Christianity and Buddhism. Paul Williams, President of the UK Association for Buddhist studies and Professor of Indian and Tibetan Philosophy at University of Bristol states it clearly:

Buddhists do not believe in the existence of God. There need be no debating about this. In practising Buddhism one never finds talk of God, there is no role for God and it is not difficult to find in Buddhist texts attacks on the existence

of an omniscient, omnipotent, all-good Creator of the universe. (Williams, *Unexpected Ways* 2002, 25)

In Mahayana Buddhism, there is a belief in a *bodhisattva*, one who takes the vow to delay his enlightenment, in order to help sentient beings find liberation. However, the Buddhist gods (*deva*) are part of the cycle of death and rebirth, more akin to Greek and Roman mythologies. In folk Buddhism, adherents do worship Buddhist deities. But none of these is seen as the Supreme Being, the Creator God, as presented in the Biblical revelation. In a genuine Christian-Buddhist encounter, sooner or later, both parties will discover that central to their different system of beliefs is the polarity between theism and atheism.

Understanding Buddhist Critique on Christian Theism

Paul J. Griffiths, in his book, *Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes*, quoted a famous story by Buddha about the man who uses a raft to cross the river. Having crossed the river, the monk says:

Now, this raft has been useful to me. I am depending on this raft, and striving with my hands and feet, crossed safely over to the beyond. Supposed now, that I, having put this raft on my head, or having lifted it up on my shoulder, should proceed as I desire? What do you think about this, monks? If that man does this, is he doing what should be done with that raft?

The expected answer, of course, is no. Rafts are for crossing rivers. If you continue to carry them on dry land your

progress will be slowed. Similarly, with Buddhist doctrines, when their use is fully utilised, they should be discarded. This is in contrast to Christian views of doctrines as unchanging and timeless truths to be held on to as life guides. We can then understand that Buddhists assess the “truthfulness” of Christian doctrines by their effects on self, society and peace of community.

For the Buddhist, one raft which eventually need to be discarded is the Christian doctrine of theism. Theism is useful up to a certain extent, they argue. Even in Mahayana Buddhism, theism is “tolerated” as something necessary for some people at certain stages of their lives. God is needed as a psychological crutch for the weak, but God is a stumbling block to achieve *nirvana*, where attachments hinder full liberation.

Christian attempts to present the existence of God have often been grounded in doctrines about God. However, at ground level, such arguments often fail to convince the Buddhist, irrespective of whether he or she is a philosophical or folk Buddhist. For the Buddhist, religious doctrines have utility rather than truth. As conditions of believers vary widely, similar doctrines will have different effects on each believer. Therefore, Buddhists are less concerned with doctrines because identical doctrines will not have identical effects on all believers. Buddhist philosophy often deals with incompatible truth claims without needing to reconcile all doctrines into one comprehensive, compatible truth system. It is perfectly acceptable for different individuals to

assent to incompatible truth claims (between Theravada and Mahayana sects) and to engage in incompatible religious practices such as atheistic self-dependence and idol worship. This paradoxical dimension is a real challenge to the Western mindset.

Buddhist Cosmology and the New Creation

What is the Buddhist answer to the origins of humanity and the creation of the universe? Buddha refused to give categorical answers but indicated that the universe began eons ago.⁵ The universe comprises not only humanity and animals but also various gods (*devas*) as part of “world systems” (*cakra-vada*). The early Nikaya-Agama texts talk in terms of “the thrice-thousandfold world systems.” One’s *karma* determines in which realm a being is born. One’s intentional actions of body, speech and mind (psychological states) are intimately related to the realms of existences. When one experiences unhappy mental states, then there is a sense that one makes a brief visit to lower realms of existence. When these unpleasant mental states are passed, one returns to human existence. But when such unhappy mental states such as greed, hatred become a habitual part of one’s character, then there is a danger that one dies and experiences rebirth into a lower level of existence altogether.

In order to avoid such unhappy states, both Christian and Buddhist traditions agree that we must renounce self. The way to renounce self in Buddhism is not to become attached to things. Buddhists teach emptiness (*syunyata*) where the ego is dissolved. Many of the causes of

suffering are avoided when the ego is not controlling the life and values of the person. But the “Apostle Paul writes: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20). Although both Buddhist and Christians agreed on the futility of selves, the negation of self in Christian teaching is centred on Christ taking over the throne of self. Instead of merely no-self, the Christian vision is for a new self, which is a Christ-filled life. The vision for a new self, for the Christian, must not be divorced, from the vision for the new world. Romans 8:17-27 is a good illustration that the church must not withdraw from the problems of the groaning creation. For the Buddhist, the vision of a better world, for social justice and alleviation of poverty, is one form of attachment to this world. How will a Buddhist identify and empathise with the sufferings of the world if he or she can only achieve salvation through non-attachments?

According to Masao Abe, the Buddhist doctrines of nirvana and the transcendence of all distinctions caused Buddhists to detach from concrete historical concern in the sense of involvement with social injustices and historical evils (Hendrik Vroom, 1996: 40). It is not possible to remove sufferings in the world if we do not become attached to the sufferings of the poor and marginalized. For the Buddhist, such attachment will hinder the path toward enlightenment.

In Buddhism, the cause of suffering is desire, attachment and ignorance. The Christian view is that suffering results from man’s desire to be like God-

“knowing good and evil.” Adam desires to achieve autonomy from God and live without law. Buddhism promotes self-effort in seeking nirvana through the observance of the eightfold noble path. The apostle Paul says, the “very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death” (Romans 7:10). “We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin... For what I want to do I do not do but what I hate I do.” (Romans 7:14-15) The laws, whether Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, or the best of human ideals, cannot bring true enlightenment. I alone as a human being can never make myself into a good person.

Christian and Buddhist ethics

Adam naturally longed for divine knowledge. Instead of enjoying God’s banqueting table of life as creature, Adam sought to become like God. From this desire for autonomy, self-rule and life without God, Adam and Eve rebelled against God’s rule. In Genesis 1-11, sin develops and escalates into societal proportions with chaotic consequences. Sin is more than personal alienation from God. It is comprehensive; man’s sense of moral, social and political justice is perverted without God’s law. God’s world is fully dependent on the Creator for sustenance, in contrast with the *Gaia* hypothesis, that the universe is self-regulating. The creation is not entirely evil, therefore, it should not to be simplistically renounced or rejected (Romans 8:17-27). Christian ethics is based on the belief that humans are accountable to God, for Yahweh is the God of ethics.

Dhamma, Truth as Ethics

The term “Buddha” is derived from the word “budh”, means, to be awakened. The aim of Buddhists in Theravada is to become an *Arahat*, a being who has attained Enlightenment and not being reborn.

For him who has completed the journey (Samsara, the cycle of life), for him who is sorrowless (completely eradicated ill will and attachment to sense desires) for him who from everything is wholly free, for him who has destroyed all ties, the fever of passion exists not.

The Dhammapada, v. 90

The ethical focus in Mahayana Buddhism is on the idea that a Buddhist should aspire to become a Buddha and an essential goal along this path is to help others on the same path. The first step is to generate *Bodhdhichitta* (Buddha mind). This mental attitude cannot come naturally but has to be achieved through ethical practice, meditation and compassion for all beings. Having achieved this, as the Buddha did, the Buddhist then resolves to practice the six perfections which form the path to Buddhahood. These are:

1. Generosity (*Dana*) – giving material things, money, service of all kinds, teaching of Dhamma, helping others;
2. Moral discipline (*Sila*) – living according to the ethical rules, restraining one’s senses and evil passions;
3. Patience (*Kshanti*) – overcoming anger, ill-will, and hatred, maintaining an inner peace and tranquillity, not retaliating;

4. Energy (*Viriya*) – abandoning laziness and postponement, being energetic, not being weak or discouraged;
5. Meditation (*Dhyana*) – developing mindfulness, concentration and insight;
6. Wisdom (*Prajna*) – understanding what is virtuous, and realizing emptiness and the truth.

Anil D. Goonewardne, *Buddhism*, 1996, 109

Christian witness among Buddhists must move beyond truth-validation. Sometimes, theoretical truth-validations can be problematic due to the nature of Buddhist thought that allows incompatible and paradoxical statements. The truthfulness of Buddhist (as well as Christian) doctrines is best tested in the crucible of life's trials and ethics. Principally, it can be tested in life's realities but it can also be validated through case studies of how both traditions will respond to specific ethical problems.⁶

III. From Lotus Sutra to the Cross

I come from a Buddhist family, which is not common as most Chinese practice a mixture of Buddhism with Confucianism, Taoism and folk belief systems. My eldest brother is a Buddhist monk who travelled to propagate Mahayana Buddhism, not only within Malaysia but also to Europe.

What was attractive in Buddhism and why I left?

1. In folk Buddhism, pragmatic charms, amulets, specific prayers for specific needs helped to connect the earthly needs with heavenly powers.

Before we sit for exams, we go to Buddhist temples to some help from the gods to bless our efforts. When children are sick, parents seek healing water to protect their children from the evil spirits. In my teenage rebellion years, I rebelled against such beliefs, which seemed superstitious and required "faith without scientific evidences."

2. Merits and demerits are easy to understand. Buddhists believe that good deeds earned merit and bad deeds earned demerits. When one earns sufficient merits, it improves one's chances for a better rebirth. Demerits cancel good merits and disturb the process toward enlightenment and could cause a lower rebirth. Gradually, I had a crisis of faith when I became aware that I could never earn enough points to achieve *nirvana*. I think the majority of Buddhists know that it will take many rebirths to be delivered from the sufferings of this world.
3. Salvation is dependent on self effort; without having to rely on others to decide on my destiny. Many Buddhists find it difficult to surrender their future salvation to a gospel of free grace. Self-reliance has always been part of human attraction but is increasingly appealing to a generation without God.
4. Being Chinese is to be identified with some variety of Buddhism. Personal family identity, kinship networks among wide web of relatives, social networks among Chinese business contacts, and temple acts are more than a place for

religious worship but also as a symbol of ethnic and racial identity. Buddhism is not just a religious term. It is a whole way of life. But genuine love and friendships can enter into these social support structures, if it proves to be part of the community. Most people come to Christ because of someone who consistently and genuinely cared. In my case, it was my secondary school biology teacher, a Chinese gentleman who patiently nurtured me from unbelief to belief.

5. Buddhist philosophy, which dates centuries before the Christian Era, and recent resurgence of Buddhist literatures have given a sense of intellectual superiority for Buddhists today. However, as more rigorous interactions take place, such comfortable assertions will be tested.

For a Buddhist to convert to Christianity, there must be a realisation that self-effort cannot bring about happiness, certainly not achieving salvation (or *nirvana*). The Holy Spirit must bring conviction that one must be born again through Christ into a new creation (John 3:3,5; 2 Cor. 5:17). The Christian must be willing to develop long term relationship with her or his Buddhist friend, and follow through their human efforts to become good and to fulfil all religious laws and ideals. After a period of relationship and law fulfilling, the

“The Holy Spirit must bring conviction that one must be born again through Christ into a new creation...”

honest Buddhist may come to term with his or her inability to fulfil religious ideals.

IV. Elements of a Genuine Missionary Encounter with Buddhists⁷

Christian missions have been active in Buddhist heartlands for centuries. Despite the relative freedom (compared to mission among Muslim), we have not seen major breakthroughs of Buddhists coming to Christ. Various approaches and strategies have been developed, mostly on how to penetrate the Buddhist world as people groups. To these approaches, I hope to contribute a more fundamental orientation, phrased by way of these two questions: Do these approaches reflect a genuine encounter with Buddhist worldviews?⁸

What constitute a genuine and biblical missionary encounter? In the remaining section, I will outline key elements of a Genuine Missionary Encounter between Christian and Buddhist.

Dialogical

If there is to be a genuine encounter between the Christian and Buddhist, the religious exchanges need to be dialogical, in contrast to being a one-sided presentation of the gospel. The Christian and the encounter partners interact as equals. Instead of the traditional image of the evangelist/missionary as the “teacher” who has all the answers and the Buddhist

as the “student” who has nothing to contribute, encounter takes “the subject and person seriously” (Stott 1975, 61). It recognizes that both the Christian and the Buddhist have something to contribute to the inter-religious encounter. Dominance and control are abandoned, and the Christian, in particular, does not determine the agenda of encounter.

If Christians take the dialogical element seriously, then studying Buddhist’s belief systems become essential prerequisites. Books such as *The Teaching of Buddha*, Rupert Gethin’s *Foundations of Buddhism*, and Ninian Smart and Richard D. Hecht’s *Sacred Texts of the World Universal Anthology* must become standard readings not only for potential missionaries but also the average thinking Christians. In addition, views on Jesus Christ and about Christianity from Buddhist’s perspectives are invaluable. In academic studies, the *Buddhist-Christian Studies Journal* is another example of essential readings.⁹ However, among Evangelical missions, there are very few attempts to understand and represent Buddhism on its own terms.

Person-centered

The dialogical approach is audience-sensitive in the sense that the unique qualities of individuals, not abstract theory, guide the process. In addition, it is flexible and acknowledges that there

is no one right method or strategy for encountering people of other faiths. Whenever the Christian-Buddhist encounter is person centered, the inter-religious exchange become dynamic rather than lockstep procedures. From the Asian context, how one encounters the overseas Chinese must be highly differentiated from the way that same individual interacts with Buddhists. Similarly, different evangelistic approaches are needed for reaching Theravada Buddhists than for reaching

“Whenever the Christian-Buddhist encounter is person centered, the inter-religious exchange become dynamic rather than lockstep procedures.”

Zen Buddhists; for reaching English-educated Chinese than for reaching Chinese-educated Chinese. Instead of applying a reductionistic approach, the Christian takes the individual person and his Buddhist worldviews seriously. Recognising the close identification of being Chinese with being a Buddhist, a person-

centered element will increase the sensitivities of the Christian partner.

Incarnational

Another element of a genuine encounter is incarnational. Incarnation takes seriously both Christianity and the Buddhist culture in the inter-religious encounter. Increasingly, mission theoreticians are realizing the intimate relationship between “culture” and “the Christian faith.” Christian faith needs to be expressed in people’s lives through symbols and modes native to the

Buddhist culture. Only then will the gospel be a source of transformation also for the Diaspora Chinese cultural context. The vision is for each Chinese cultural expression of the Christian faith capable of renewing and enriching the universal Christian community.

Verdict Oriented

Genuine missionary encounter is verdict oriented. The pluralist model that shuns evaluation of competing truth claims is not a genuine encounter because there is nothing at stake. Pluralist partners in dialogue do not engage in genuine dialogue but mere religious chatter. Paul J. Griffiths, Professor of Philosophy of Religions at the University of Chicago Divinity School proposes the principle of the Necessity of Inter-religious Apologetics defined as:

If representative intellectuals belonging to some specific religious community come to judge at a particular time that some or all of their own doctrine-expressing sentences are incompatible with some alien religious claim (s), then they should feel obliged to engage in both positive and negative apologetics vis-à-vis these alien religious claim(s) and their promulgators (1991:3)

For example, consider the seeming contradiction between the Buddhist claims that 1) there are no spiritual substances (soul) and 2) each person is reborn many times. Genuine encounter means the Christian must be willing to point the contradictions of some Buddhist beliefs. Too much pseudo-

dialogues are involved in mutual admiration exchanges rather than genuinely encouraging honest expressions of what we find troubling in the other religious traditions.

Religious encounter between the Christian and Buddhist will at some point require truth validation. Genuine and biblical encounter must include both elements of 1) *negative* (or defensive) *apologetics* whereby the Christian is concerned with the attacks upon the truth of Christianity and responding to show that such truths are defensible; and 2) *positive* (or offensive) *apologetics* whereby the Christian is concerned to show that non-Christian also ought to accept the truth claims of Christianity (Netland, 1994).

V. Issues Requiring Further Evangelical Reflections

- The study of Buddhism on its own terms. Widespread ignorance among Christians and caricatures of Buddhist beliefs are no longer tenable in multi-faith contexts where Christians can learn about Buddhism from work colleagues, friendships, the “street” as well as study centres.
- Key theological and biblical themes such as creation and salvation need to be explored through careful translations and dynamic equivalent of biblical meanings to Buddhist hearers. Indigenous illustrations, parables, analogies and stories are tools for communicating the gospel.
- Cultural, anthropological and worldview analysis on people groups vis a vis the dominant Buddhist worldviews (whether Theravada, Zen

or Tibetan) will foster more specific communication of the gospel message. What are their views on God, Christianity, the role of religion in society, and the impact of secularisation or globalisation? In particular, Christians need to interact with the numerous publications by members of Buddhist community in Asia that reveal actual conceptions and misconceptions of Christianity.

- What should be the shape of Christian communities, (churches) in comparison to Buddhist temples? How will they worship and fellowship? How can the church disciple believers from Buddhist societies in such a manner that they

remain embedded in their social contexts and not extracted from them? What is their contribution to the social networks outside the church? What is the quality and credibility of national believers and Christian communities in traditional Buddhist societies?

- Sociological, phenomenological and educational studies that relate to cross-cultural and inter-religious communication will be helpful. Models of dialogue, dialogical and listening skills, communication theories across religious worldviews, criteria for evaluating truth claims and grading of religious experiences are examples of possible studies.



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¹ Diana St. Ruth, *Buddhism in Britain*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/features/buddhism_in_britain/index.shtml. This figure does not include many Westerners who become Buddhists without undergoing official change of religious status.

² <http://www.gospelcom.net/apologeticsindex/rnb/archives/00001079.html>

³ “The Direction of Buddhism in America Today,” <http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma5/tension2.html>

⁴ See Wratten, Darrel, *Buddhism in South Africa: From Textual Imagination to Contextual Innovation*, Ph.D. thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town, 441 pp.

⁵ For a good summary of Buddhist cosmos, see Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, 112-132

⁶ One example of exploring world religion through ethical studies is Regina W. Wolfe and Christine E. Gudorf., eds. *Ethics and World Religions: Cross Cultural Case Studies* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001).

⁷ This section is taken from my article, “Elements of a Biblical and Genuine Missionary Encounter with Diaspora Chinese Buddhists in South East Asia” in David Lim and Steve Spaulding, *Sharing Jesus in the Buddhist World* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2003), pgs. 19-30. For this section, I am indebted to a lecture by the late Harvie M. Conn, Institute of Theological Studies (Grand Rapids: Outreach Inc., 1990)

⁸ For further study on worldviews, see David Burnett’s *Clash of Worlds* Crowborough: MARC, 1990.

⁹ Paul J. Griffiths *Christianity through non-Christian eyes* gives a selection of non-Christian perceptions of Christianity. The editors of *Buddhist-Christian Studies Journal*, Rita M. Gross and Terry C. Muck brought together contributions by 6 Buddhist and 6 Christian scholars’ perspectives in an excellent study, *Buddhists talk about Jesus and Christians talk about the Buddha* New York: Continuum, 2000.

Jesus' followers in the Secular West

by Paula Harris

During the fall of 2002, the semester began on a university campus in America with an interesting spiritual ceremony. In a large auditorium, on a government-funded, legally “secular” university campus, the anthropology department had invited a shaman to sacrifice an animal and perform a ceremonial ritual for beginnings. Almost the whole campus attended. I know the campus staff who serves there with InterVarsity. When she told me about the experience, I asked her, “Didn’t you protest? It’s a state school. That’s a religious ceremony. It’s against the law”. She laughed and said no. What did they do? They took a small group of Christians who would agree – about ten or fifteen – and had a prayer and worship time for the cleansing of their campus. *In secret*. So I said to her, “Why? Why didn’t you open it? Do it publicly? It would be an alternative”. She replied, “Paula, we would have been banned from campus if anyone found out what we did”.

“Within the political diversity, there are vastly different relationships between church and state, ranging from legally separated, to legally-supported.”

Here is a second story. I have a friend named Richard Twiss. He is a Native American, or First Nations person... an indigenous North American. He wears his hair very long, wears earrings, and lots of traditional jewelry. At any formal event, he will wear complete traditional regalia with feathers and formal beaded, fringed deerskin clothing. Richard is frequently invited to speak on “Indian religion” and each time he gives an evangelistic gospel testimony. Recently he was invited to a town council meeting to speak on the topic of reconciliation. These government leaders saw the Native American genocide as one of the deepest wounds of America and so invited a Native leader to guide them. Richard spoke, but he concluded to them that what you are trying to do is impossible without Jesus. They listened to him. Frequently when Richard preaches or gives testimony, people accept Christ.

These faithful followers of Jesus, both living as witnesses to Christ in a Western context, receive such different responses and have such different results. Why? What does scripture say to the spiritual questions coming out of the Western postmodern context? Where do Jesus' stories redirect Western people and our spiritualities?

The West is incredibly diverse. Geographically and culturally the West ranges from North America, to Australia/New Zealand and the wide range of Western European and UK cultures. Each country has its own language, history, and culture. Ethnically, the West includes only the historic Western cultures, but also we have generations of immigrants from the East and the South... so third generation UK Pakistanis may be as Western as I am. It has been argued, by Vinoth Ramachandra and other scholars, that the cultural *West* extends even to the Western-educated, media-shaped younger generations around the world — people who have been shaped by our values and worldviews through media, the internet and education systems.¹

In the geographical West itself, we have widely divergent political views... both nationally, as well as within our nation group. Talking about a group like “young people” — is that an intern at the World Bank, or a political protester outside their meetings? There are followers of Jesus on both sides. There are secular young people on both sides. Within the political diversity, there are vastly different relationships between church and state, ranging from legally

separated, to legally-supported. The relationship of spiritual and public, of religion and politics, has a great deal to do with the perception of Christians and the effectiveness of evangelism in a particular country.

Finally, we have widely divergent theological views. Whereas in parts of Europe, there may be a few major streams of churches to choose from: the state church, the evangelical and the Pentecostal; but in the UK, Canada or America, we have hundreds. I live in a small city of some 200,000 people. You could call it a town. We have sixty-three Christian denominations... each one has five to ten congregations, many of which can't agree on basic theological questions, much less the more arcane ones.²

One generalization we can easily make about Western churches, in the context of mission and globalization, is that they are dying. They are literally aging. They are losing members. Barna, Barrett, Johnson and Johnstone have all documented the decline. Mainline churches, but also evangelical churches are declining in membership. The primary growth in majority-culture white Western churches is membership transfer, and population growth.

However, the postmodern West is a spiritual society. I don't mean a sacred society, a Christian society or even a moral society. But even die-hard pagans are deeply spiritual people. God created humans to have spiritual longings. In his novel, *Life After God*, Canadian novelist Doug Coupland tells the story

of a young man's search for meaning and relationships. In the conclusion, he writes:

Now – here is my secret: I tell it to you with an openness of heart that I doubt I shall ever achieve again, so I pray that you are in a quiet room as you hear these words. My secret is that I need God – that I am sick and can no longer make it alone. I need God to help me give, because I no longer seem capable of giving; to help me be kind, as I no longer seem capable of kindness; to help me love, as I seem beyond being able to love.³

“spiritual questions”

You can't listen very long to a “secular” Western person talking about life's meaning without hearing them ask spiritual questions or make spiritual conclusions.

Last week I was talking about Jesus with a young woman I will call “Noelle”. Her family is ethnically from Iran, but she grew up in the West. Noelle is generations away from any Islamic practice. Neither her mother or father were Muslims, maybe even her grandparents were not practicing Muslims. There is no spiritual memory of monotheism in the family. Noelle doesn't believe in any particular religion. She told me she “takes the good” wherever she finds it. You might call her a secular person. But she knows I follow Jesus. Noelle asks me all sorts of deeply spiritual questions. When my father was dying, she asked, “Where do

you find peace? Where did you get the strength to keep caring for him through his illness.” She knew it was physically grueling to nurse him and care for him. But she also meant the spiritual and emotional strength. She didn't ask me doctrinal questions — where I think my father is, now that he's died.

The time before that she was equally interested in telling me about shamanistic rituals and the Buddha's teaching as she was in hearing about Jesus. Noelle couldn't understand, if I am a truly spiritual person, why I am so narrow-minded as to see Jesus as better than the other spiritual teachers. Of course she doesn't see these spiritual teachings as mutually exclusive. Western people don't. So when I talked to her that time, I used the metaphor of our spiritual lives as journeys... each one is a different path, and when we go far enough on our spiritual journey, the paths diverge and we can't easily go back and start another path. We must choose. “Through Jesus I know God”, I said. It's not great theology; it's a metaphor to help Noelle trust that Jesus is reliable. I think Jesus used it, when he said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

Noelle is a pretty typical “secular” Westerner. She wouldn't dream of stepping in a church. But she is a deeply spiritual person and has spiritual hungers. But she cannot hear the church. Why? A few months ago, Barna Research did a study asking non-Christians those questions. Barna concluded evangelical churches in America are not growing because of what non-Christians think of evangelicals. They think more highly of soldiers,

lawyers, and lesbians, than evangelicals. The only group that rated lower than evangelicals is prostitutes. Non-Christians in my generation, between 19 and 37, were three times more likely to think well of a homosexual than of an evangelical.⁴ Does that surprise you?

When Stuart McAllister writes about the spiritual fruit of the globalized economic system at work in our world, he describes an “idol factory” – quoting John Calvin. McAllister’s analysis is that when post moderns look at society, they see economics becoming a “totalizing discourse.”⁵ Money has become our idol. If I and my local congregation are calling ourselves Christian, but we live under the rule of money, how I can we call Noelle to choose the Jesus way to the exclusion of other spiritual paths?

Jewish philosopher Jacob Needleman has the same analysis. He wrote a fascinating book *The American Soul*. He describes the tension between the soul of America and the crimes of America.

*Obviously, no search for the meaning of America can turn away from the fact that America was built on the destruction of its native peoples and on the institution of slavery. These two massive crimes stand before us like the angels of Eden with their flaming swords.... To a great extent, the material success of America rests on these crimes and others like them.*⁶

His observation could be extended to any of the former colonial powers of the West. It may have come from the soul-searching work done in Europe and the UK. So many historians have documented the role of Christians in these two great crimes, as well as the ones we are currently perpetuating, the crimes of globalization. Western young people are well educated in this history — what people claiming to follow Christ have done.

Lesslie Newbigin wrote twenty years ago, that in the West the church is shrinking and the gospel falls on deaf ears.⁷ Why? What’s going on with our church congregations? A few years ago an extensive study was done on European values. It showed that 68% of Europeans considered themselves “Christian”. Most didn’t believe in the resurrection, only a handful in church, but they called themselves Christian.⁸ The 2001 Australian Census found similar numbers – 68% of the population called themselves “Christian.”⁹

“But everything functions under God’s reign and will be subject to God’s judgment.”

In North America, we have the impression that the church in Europe is really dead, but our churches are somehow hanging on. After all, four out of five people in America call themselves Christians.¹⁰ Lots of us go to church. Our last five Presidents have all called themselves Christian. Barna Research has done some analysis of Americans who call themselves Christians.

- Less than 7% said that spiritual growth is the factor, which will produce a successful life. A good job, a faithful spouse, family time, those will produce a successful life. Isn't that the opposite of what Jesus taught?¹¹
- Less than 6% of American Christians tithed last year. Admittedly, more gave in 2001; we had a 60% drop in giving after 9/11. Where is our security?¹²
- Most American Christians spend more time watching TV in one day than they spend on spiritual activity in a whole week.¹³

So as non-Christian young people raise spiritual questions, they see an idolatrous and syncretistic church, a *secular* church.

Secular means only this nonreligious sphere. It assumes that we separate religious and non-religious. It's a profoundly unbiblical concept. In God's economy, everything is sacred. I don't mean everything is good. Evil exists. But everything functions under God's reign and will be subject to God's judgment. Everything has a spiritual dynamic. The West is constructed around this unbiblical lie that we can divide the spiritual and the secular, the religious and the nonreligious. Political writer Michael Novak describes America as being built around an "empty shrine". A shrine we can fill with the religion of our choice. No particular religion is favored by the state, or persecuted by the state. Our money says, "in God we trust." Novak aptly observes, this doesn't mean any particular God. Each individual can

define "god" for herself. The empty shrine is a vacuum.¹⁴

Vinoth Ramachandra writes about this situation in his book *Faiths in Conflict*. He says:

...there is a secularism which, while not being hostile to religious truth-claims and often welcoming of religious cultures, nevertheless promotes a practical, rather than theoretical atheism. Belief in God, at the end of the day, is irrelevant to the daily affairs of the polis.... 'God' and other so-called 'traditional religious beliefs' are redundant, whether as explanations, as guides, or as sources of empowerment.

This type of secularism, the secular church, dominates Western religion. We have even redefined "religion" itself. Historically in Europe "religion" or "religio" meant spiritual practice, it meant liturgy and common worship, but now in the USA, it often means adherence to doctrine.¹⁵ This type of "religion" is simply personal conviction, it can exist separately from political action, from economics, from the other areas of life. This is a heretical idea. If we truly follow Jesus, we believe God rules everything. The Hebrew word for "believe" means also "obey." Believe-and-obey.

In our secular congregations, the evangelical doctrine we adhere to, may be accurate. It may be correct. But we give it limited authority over our lives. As Newbigin points out, scripture has no authority except the authority that the community of believers grants it over

our own lives.¹⁶ It cannot have an abstract authority. We cannot simply say scripture is authoritative, and expect someone like Noelle to believe us. We have to *show* how scripture rules our communities. Spiritual authority comes when we live as if God's word ought to define us. The danger of secularism is not so much what it does to nonbelievers, it is what it does to the church. It erodes our moral authority. It erodes our spiritual power, the only true power.

The story I see Jesus telling Western Christians, and elite nonwestern intellectuals who have been educated in the West, is in all three synoptic gospels.¹⁷ The rich young man is a powerful metaphor for Western Christians—having the form of religion, with secular, idolatrous souls. The ruler tells Jesus, he has obeyed the commandments. This man has lived by the rules of his religion. He is a ruler. He can say, "I have kept the commandments." I find it interesting that Jesus doesn't correct him. He looks steadily at him.¹⁸ You can sense Jesus testing his soul. And then, it says, Jesus loved him. With his challenge, Jesus gives him the opportunity to truly follow God, to keep the heart of the commandments.

In the encounter, Jesus is also shaping the disciples. As they watch the test and failure of the young ruler, Jesus is making observations about who is truly spiritual and powerful. The disciples don't get it – the story Jesus tells turns their ideas upside down. You notice the next thing in the text is a story of crucifixion. "Jesus didn't count equality with God a thing

to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave and was obedient, even unto death". Jesus is teaching them that the way of the cross is true spiritual power. I mean this literally, as doctrine. But also metaphorically. I mean it as a pattern. When we live by laying our lives down, when we walk the way of the cross, it is profoundly appealing. It brings spiritual life to others and grants us spiritual authority.

This story has a powerful movement between the ruler, the crucifixion, and the contrasting story of James and John, which follows (they are still looking for social power and material rule). Through it, Jesus speaks into the intersection of globalization and secularization – in a secular world, we invest power in money, and material reality. In a "secularized church," we measure reality the same way, financially, and with material reality. With the disciples we say, "But Jesus, we say, if the rich guy obeying the commandments can't be saved, who can be saved?" Jesus is teaching the opposite way. Godly power is not found in controlling material reality. Kingdom investments are made by hearing and obeying God.

In the West, we are like this rich young adult. We want our religion to be like an added blessing, something making our life more peaceful, more beautiful. This is the gospel we try to share with nonbelievers. We don't want a God who turns life upside down, who re-defines "normal" life.¹⁹ Craig Keener writes about this story in Matthew 19, "But the kingdom of God is not meant to be an

extra blessing tagged onto a comfortable life; it must be all-consuming, or it is no longer the kingdom.... It appeals more readily to those with less to lose.”²⁰

Last Urbana I met a young woman named Spike. She’s known God since she was a girl. She obeyed the commandments, she went to church; she loved to worship Jesus. But her life felt empty. During the conference, we taught the students that if we love God, worship means laying

d o w n
everything... true
worship means
laying down your
future, your
values, your
money. We
modeled it. We
sold very few
products. We
took no profit on
the products we
sold. We found
vendors who
treated their

“We all must
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Pluralism rules.”

workers fairly. So Spike made a very simple decision. She would stop shopping for a year. For a year, she fasted from new clothes, new music, and new books. And her life with Jesus woke up! When Spike stopped shopping, she prayed and read scripture and worshipped God with new vitality. Every day was an adventure with Jesus. *Spike could hear God’s voice again.* She woke up to missions and went to Ethiopia. She started speaking about Jesus to her friends.

Western cultures, and Western education create an obligation of choice for young people. In traditional or pre-modern

cultures, a person’s path is much more fixed. Many of his or her major decisions are proscribed in an integrated community context. The community holds one accountable to an expected pattern for work, leisure, a spouse, and an expected religion. Only a rare individual questions traditional framework of belief and action. That rare individual who dissents from the traditional culture is understood to be a heretic. But postmodern cultures are totally different—in an urban, media oriented culture, Western people & Western-educated young people are *required* to choose for themselves. Peter Berger called this the “Heretical Imperative”. When there is no accepted plausibility structure, we are all heretics. We all must choose our own spouse, our own work, our own leisure, finally, our own identity. Pluralism rules. Individuals must decide for themselves.²¹ It is natural in this kind of context that we also perceive religion as also something we must decide for ourselves.

So we have this second tension. Our cultures require that we choose. Our churches are perceived to be irrelevant. Of all the religions, Christianity is perceived to be something we in the West have already tried and discarded. A group where you can see this tension most clearly is the second generation of any immigrant population. Among Koreans, the first generation is deeply committed to Christ and the church. But they are losing the second generation at a disturbing rate. The same thing happened a few generations ago among the Caribbean immigrants to the UK... the first generation was churched;

the second and third was unchurched and in many ways “post Christian.” Resistant to the gospel.

A few years ago I organized a conference where the Holy Spirit brought a Native American pastor who danced in full regalia. It was gorgeous. In the midst of the audience was a small group of Native American students. Several told me the same story. Their fathers had walked the traditional way, adopting tribal values, speaking their own languages, and doing subsistence work on the land. Their mothers had tried to follow Jesus; their pastors and churches had taught them to learn English, cut their hair, wear Western clothes and live and work in a White way. These two students had never before seen an indigenous person trying to follow Jesus and keep his cultural traditions alive. So they came to believe that the two things could not be combined. When they saw an example of a person with a Native America identity following Christ it was profoundly appealing to them, and two decided to walk in the Jesus way.

Jesus speaks to people with this search for identity as well. In John 4, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman. A well can seem an ambiguous place though it's not. At wells, Moses met his wife Zipporah, Abraham's servant found Rebekah, God met Hagar, and Jacob met Rachel. This woman is there at noon, separated from the other women in her community. She presents the encounter in physical terms. “How is it, that you, a Jew? Ask me, a woman? Where is your bucket? It's a well, not a spring” — you can hear her tone correcting him. “Living” water meant fresh water, running water. How

can a well give *living* water? She expands to ethnic identity and geneology, still on a physical level: “Are you greater than Jacob, she asks? We worship on the mountain, she says”. The subtext is, “You Jews, you destroyed our temple two centuries ago.”²² We would worship, but you did this to us”.

Jesus helps her switch to a spiritual conversation. He gently shows her sin to her. He calls her to obedience, to testimony. He doesn't claim moral authority. It's interesting. He could make that claim. Yes, he is greater than Jacob. But he is silent when she asks him. Not until she makes a profession of faith “I know Messiah is coming”... it's then he says, “*I am.*” “I am the one.” Her community believes in Christ for themselves, when they meet Jesus in their context. This is the first and only time in John that Jesus is called “savior of the world.”

The woman's testimony is contrasting directly with Nicodemus, in John 3. He comes at night, she at noon. Jesus offers her the gift of living water, the water that will spring up from inside her soul. To Nicodemus he says, “you must be born again”. You must be born from above. It is such a passive instruction. Jesus is telling Nicodemus, this successful religious leader, “Let go. Let God the Holy Spirit be pregnant with you, bear you and birth you like a mother”. What initiative could Nicodemus take? It's a ridiculous idea. The *Holy Spirit* is the one who goes through labor for him. Jesus offers an invitation to Nicodemus, but still he refuses. Both of them, the woman and Nicodemus, at first see only the material, reductionist view, but Jesus

replies to them spiritually. Worship in spirit and truth. Be born of the spirit. Nicodemus is named, male, a leader, a Pharisee, a ruler, and teacher of Israel. The woman is in complete contrast. Unnamed, not Jewish, morally impure. But she is the one who is fruitful in evangelism. Why?

What is also interesting back at the well story is that the disciples are having their own material and physical interaction. They are seeing a woman. They are seeing a well. Things seem morally ambiguous, but they do not ask Jesus, scripture says. They are asking about food. Jesus is calling *them* out spiritually as well, as evangelists and missionaries, as harvesters of the seed he sowed, as eaters of the bread of God's will. They think that holiness is in Jesus' behavior and their behavior. To be holy they should talk to some people, not others. The woman will defile him. But holiness is in his

identity. We Christians make a similar mistake – thinking holiness and moral authority is certain behavior. We forget that holiness; true righteousness is something Jesus gives us. Our holiness is in our identity as Jesus' followers. It is in our obedience to him. By the end, the whole Samaritan village is reached. The promise of Jesus to his disciples is clear...the harvest is ripe and needs only laborers to harvest. Samaria didn't seem ripe. The Samaritans didn't think Jews

had anything to offer them spiritually. No one thought the woman had anything to say. Her obedience, and Jesus' power granted her spiritual authority. Because Jesus was free from sin in his relationships, he could see the spiritual ripeness. He could cross the racial and cultural line. He could cross the gender line, in a place freighted with relational tension.

We are witnessing the loss of spiritual authority in the West. The problem is at once profoundly complex and incredibly simple. We have not been faithful to the one we follow. God is the only one who

“No one thought the woman had anything to say. Her obedience, and Jesus' power granted her spiritual authority.”

grants spiritual authority. When Jesus preached his first sermon, the listeners observed his authority. Before he began his ministry, he was tested in three ways: with bread, to live by material things; with glory, to rule the world's kingdoms; with security, expecting God to do miracles to keep him safe. We have failed all three tests. This is nothing new to humanity.

So here are three stories. We can be like the rich young ruler. We can keep the rules of Christianity and let the system work for us. But Jesus looks, and has compassion, and says “No, be radical. Then follow me”. Simplicity would restore spiritual authority, as he followed Jesus.

We can be like Nicodemus, knowing it's true, following secretly, at a distance, never publicly admitting we follow

Jesus. But Jesus says, “Be born again! Let the Holy Spirit be pregnant with you! Let go in God’s presence. The Holy Spirit can restore spiritual authority”.

Or we can be like the woman, receiving the promise of living water, of spiritual, truthful worship. Jesus restores both her spiritual and her cultural authority.

Which will it be? Where is God inviting you? What will you say to the invitation?

What is our response to the challenge of the secular, yet strangely spiritual West? Because it is not in the 10/40 Window, do we disregard or discard it? What would it take for the wind of God’s empowering presence to significantly impact this segment of the God-loved world?



Paula Harris has a variety of ministries, leading program development for the Urbana Student Mission Convention, as a single mother of two children, a part time writer and student of missiology. With her local congregation, she is seeking God’s discernment about being ordained in the Episcopal church and/or Anglican communion. pharris@ivcf.org

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²Madison phone book, p —.

³Coupland, Doug. *Life After God*, p 359.

⁴“Surprisingly Few Adults Outside of Christianity Have Positive Views of Christians.” December 3, 2002. (www.barna.org/cgi-bin)

⁵McAllister, p 9.

⁶Needleman, Jacob. *The American Soul*:, p 191.

⁷Newbiggin, Leslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 3.

⁸Ramachandra, p 141.

⁹Langmead, Ross. “Not Quite Established: The Gospel and Australian Culture” in *The Gospel and Our Culture Vol 14*, Nos. 3-4 (September/December 2002), 7-10.

¹⁰www.barna.com

¹¹“Barna Identifies Seven Paradoxes Regarding America’s Faith.” December 17, 2002. (www.barna.org)

¹²“Tithing Down 62% in the Past Year.” May 19, 2003 (www.barna.org)

¹³“Barna Identifies Seven Paradoxes”

¹⁴Novak, Michael. *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*

¹⁵Ramachandra, 149

¹⁶Newbiggin, p —

¹⁷Matt. 19.16-30, Mark 10.17-31, and Luke 18.18-30

¹⁸Mark 10.21

¹⁹Acts 5?

²⁰Keener, 98

²¹Berger, *Heretical Imperative*

²²Keener, note on John 4

Proverbial Perspectives on Pluralism

by Stan Nussbaum

“The words of the wise are like goads” Ecc. 12:11

Here are some Swahili proverbs to stimulate your thought and action as you consider the other articles about pluralism in this issue.

Rice is one; the ways of cooking it are many. For the pluralist, the differences between religions are superficial. They are only a matter of different personal preferences for dealing with the same underlying reality, God. (Contrast Ex. 20:2-6).

In order to be strong, a house needs a center pole. Like a traditional East African house, every religion has one central idea that supports the whole thing. Different religions are not different only in superficial matters but actually in their central, non-negotiable idea(s) about reality. If those central “truths” are not completely true, the entire structure will eventually collapse under the storms of life and history. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-5).

“A person
converting from
one religion to
another should
not settle down
on the bridge
between
them.”

Not all that have claws are lions. As all clawed animals are not the same simply because they have claws (some are lions and some are mere pussycats), so all religions are not the same simply because they have something they call a “god.” (Cf. Is. 45:20-21).

He who rides two horses splits in half. Because religions involve our ultimate loyalty, trying to belong to two or more religions is impossible. We cannot have two ultimate loyalties. They will tear us apart as surely and as violently as two horses we try to ride at the same time. (Cf. Jas. 1:6-8).

A bridge is not a dwelling place. A person converting from one religion to another should not settle down on the bridge between them. Bridges were never meant to be houses. Pluralism is a form of permanently camping out on a bridge, refusing to enter and live in the land on either side. (Cf. Josh. 24:14-15).

He who is here in the world has not yet been totally created. In this life there is never room for pride and always room for learning. God is not finished transforming us into the people he intended us to be. We are God's work in progress. (Cf. 2 Cor. 3:18).

He who reads alone makes no mistakes.

People who keep to themselves in their own religion will assume that their religion is correct. Only when they allow others to challenge them they do discover the real strengths and weaknesses of their faith. As witnesses of Jesus, we plunge straight in to the challenges of the real world (Cf. Acts 17:16-17).

"We cannot have two ultimate loyalties."

A careful man usually accomplishes more than a violent person. We want to open the eyes and win the hearts of people of other religions. Carefulness is a much better tool for that than violence.

He says, "No! No!" and nevertheless his heart is there. Even those who are objecting to the gospel may find that their hearts are being mysteriously

drawn to Jesus. As we witness, we should tune in to people's hearts and not always take their spoken objections as accurate signs of what is going on inside.



Stan Nussbaum is the staff missiologist for Global Mapping International in Colorado Springs, USA, and a member of the Global Missiology Task Force of the Missions Commission. He can be contacted at stan@gmi.org, or at GMI, 15435 Gleneagle Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921, USA.

Do you have a proverb to add to the list?

If you have a choice proverb from your country which throws some additional light on religious pluralism or other mission issues, please send it to us with one or two sentences of application. Email to [<stan@gmi.org>](mailto:stan@gmi.org) or post to Stan Nussbaum, GMI, 15435 Gleneagle Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921, USA

Global Member Care Resources (MemCa)

Summary of Canada 2003 Consultation, June 1-6, 2003

by Kelly O'Donnell

The purpose of MemCa is to help develop member care internationally, prioritising personnel from the Newer Sending Countries and those working among the least evangelised.

“...India is developing well under the leadership of the India Missions Association and others.”

We had 30 member care colleagues meeting together over six days in Canada for our MemCa Consultation. This consultation was part of a broader conference on the impact of globalisation on world missions, sponsored by the WEA Missions Commission. This was our fourth such consultation since MemCa was launched in 1998. Our purpose for meeting in Vancouver included:

Relationships—building closer friendships among ourselves, and the Missions Commission Reports—exchanging updates of our respective regions/ministries and reviewing our goals

Restructure—adjusting our structure to be more effective

Resources—sharing about tools and projects to help develop member care in different areas

Renewal—seeking the Lord together as a group and praying for each other

Participants

- *Africa*: Karen Carr, Darlene Jerome (Ghana), Naomi Famonure (Nigeria), Dirk Visser (RSA)
- *Asia*: Pramila Rajendran (India), Belinda Ng, Gracia Wiarda (Singapore), Harry Hoffmann (Thailand), Philip Chang (Malaysia), Byun-Moon Kang, Grace KS Lim (Korea)
- *Australasia*: Murray Winn (New Zealand)

- *Europe*: Anke Tissingh, Rosangela Amado (Spain), Kelly O'Donnell (France), Siny Widmer (Switzerland), Annemie Grossshausser, Hartmut and Friedhilde Stricker (Germany), Marion Knell, Marjory Foyle (UK), Arie Baak (The Netherlands)
- *The Americas*: Marcia Tostes (Brasil), Dave Pollock, Brent Lindquist, Richard and Laura Mae Gardner, Bruce and Kathy Narramore, Denny Milgate (USA)

"Hubs and centres are an important way forward for member care."

2. Regional Interagency Member Care Affiliations (RIMAs)

We spent several hours listening to different members share updates and issues about member care within their regions. Europe is very strong (with 20 members and bi-annual member care consultations) and India is developing well under the leadership of the India Missions Association and others. Latin America via COMIBAM is in the process of regrouping their RIMA. We also heard updates from Africa and Asia in general (the RIMAs for these two continents are in the process of regrouping in order to be more viable), , as well as from South Africa, Brazil, Korea, China, Central Asia, Oceania, North Africa, and West Africa.

Some of the Main Topics We Covered

1. MemCa Structure

The core group for MemCa involves three subgroups: a) two Coordinators who are point people with the Missions Commission and who represent MemCa to other groups (David Pollock and Kelly O'Donnell); b) a Leadership Team consisting of seven people who help provide practical and spiritual oversight for MemCa and our projects (Pramila Rajendran, Laura Mae Gardner, Marion Knell, Harry Hoffmann, and others to be appointed); and c) Links—Liaisons/Leaders of Interagency/International NetworKs. Our central group will remain between 25-35 people, and will primarily include respected colleagues who represent regional or speciality member care networks. We described the essence of MemCa as being a *core-alition* (a core group of friends and a coalition of networks).

3. Member Care and Religious Liberty

We watched a brief video from Open Doors about the persecuted church. We also prayed for Christians and Christian workers who are subject to disinformation, discrimination, and persecution.

4. Theology of Suffering and Biblical Basis for Member Care

We discussed these subjects, and agreed that it would be good to assemble some core papers. Writing a summary/overview of a Biblical basis for member care would be very helpful and could pave the way for a greater understanding and acceptance of member care. It was noted that Dave Pollock and Glenn Taylor have written helpful foundational

pieces (in *Doing Member Care Well* and *Enhancing Missionary Vitality*, respectively).

5. Developing Member Care Hubs and Centres

A *hub* is a strategic location where member care colleagues in proximity voluntarily associate/meet in order to provide personal/professional support and engage in joint projects when possible. A *centre* refers to an actual facility in a strategic location which works at the interagency and interdisciplinary levels. Hubs and centres are an important way forward for member care. In general it would seem that costs are justified for centres when such centres have a diversity of staff/services, work with a diversity of mission personnel, are well-networked, and are situated in central locations. It was suggested that an article be written on this subject, possibly based on an updated version of Brent Lindquist's helpful article on Missions Support Centres in *Missionary Care* (1992). We looked at a grid to help guide our thinking and investment in such centres and hubs:

- Set up—practicalities, location, costs
- Structure—board, leadership team, terms of reference
- Support—finances, support staff, equipment
- Service providers—types of people and disciplines represented
- Services—resources offered, languages
- Service receivers—focus of the services, location of the services

- Standards—ethical codes, policies, best practice principles

6. Guidelines for Member Care Workers (MCWs)

Probably the topic that generated the most discussion was the need for and appropriateness of some general standards for MCWs. Any guidelines that we formed would need to reflect diversity—generational, gender, organisational, cultural, and disciplinary. Most agreed that such guidelines were necessary to help inform both service providers and service receivers alike as to what is expected in the competencies, character, and training of MCWs. We also looked at a chart differentiating the training and roles of human resource personnel, therapists, pastoral counsellors, and member care facilitators.

“...Member Care by Radio programme is one of the major member care projects currently being done anywhere...”

MemCa will be producing a brief paper consisting of 15 principles—commitments—for MCWs. We plan to publish this in the next issue of *Connections*. These principles serve to complement the existing professional standards or ethical codes that MCWs embrace already.

The basic premise is that: “MCWs are committed to provide the best services possible in the best interests of the people with whom they work.”

7. Member Care by Radio

Every day a special 15 minute programme is sent into Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and bordering areas. This ministry is part of Trans World Radio, and is designed to encourage Christian workers who speak English. The next important step in its development is to further organise member care practitioners who can record short programmes on various, relevant topics. The thought is that different groupings or even hubs of people in different areas could take responsibility (with some training) for recording these programmes. Several from MemCa offered to be involved, a subsequent meeting was held, and a radio working group was formed under the direction of Siny Widmer. It was noted that this Member Care by Radio programme is one of the major member care projects currently being done anywhere, and it has a major international audience with possibilities of expansion into different regions and language groups. Member Care by Radio was officially endorsed by MemCa at our Consultation.

8. MemCa Web Site

Link Care has offered to significantly help MemCa upgrade and maintain our web site. We formed a working group to

pursue this under Brent Lindquist’s direction.

9. Upcoming Conferences

It would be good for a few MemCa members to attend some of the upcoming regional missions conferences and to include a member care component/track. In November 2003 there will be one for Latin America organised by COMIBAM in El Salvador. In 2004 there will be regional conferences for the Caribbean (Bahamas) and one in Nairobi organised by the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. MemCa members have attended similar gatherings in the Ivory Coast, India, and Brazil in the recent past.

“We want to continue to link with other networks... such as the international health care and humanitarian aid communities.”

10. Additional Projects

There are various projects that were either discussed in Vancouver or else have been discussed in the past. We include them here as they are important to keep track of and pursue.

- Translate some materials from the Mobile Member Care Team’s web site on crisis response, into different languages.
- Translate core member care materials into Chinese, and put them on a CD for Chinese workers (Project CHIMP).
- Encourage the development of best practice guidelines for the selection of mission personnel, a project initially started in New Zealand by Don Smith, a MemCa member.

- Harry Hoffmann has done some work on a member care CD with core articles on it, and there has been some discussion about putting together a core CD with some of the main member care books on it.
- We want to continue to link with other networks outside of the Evangelical missions world, such as the international health care and humanitarian aid communities.
- We have had discussion in the past about organising an International

Member Care Consultation. There has been no further progress on this idea.

- There has also been discussion in the past about putting together on-line member care courses. But no progress yet, at least from MemCa.
- We spent some time discussing the implications of globalisation for member care, but did not come up with a summary statement.

Our time together was wonderful and we look to the next MemCa Consultation in the next 18-24 months.



Dr. Kelly O'Donnell is a psychologist based in Europe, with Youth With A Mission and Member Care Associates-Geneva. Kelly co-chairs the Global Member Care Task Force (MemCa), part of the WEAMissions Commission. Email: 2172.170@compuserve.com

We are all thankful to the Lord of the new mission movement he is raising up from countries that were once mission fields. All of us are working hard to see that movement enhanced and not encumbered by our own structures or practices. There is no better or more geographically or culturally diverse grouping of global missional leaders than Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance. This is a place where 2/3 world mission leaders help each other and also interface with us in the West.

Our MC colleagues have been used of the Lord to bring together by far the broadest network of international mission's leaders. EFMA has been a part of the Missions Commission almost since its beginning. The MC staff are expressions of our fellowship as well as associations and leaders from every other continent on the globe. I was at Canada 2003. Never have I seen the quality missions leadership represented by the 230 men and women from the 51 nations that gathered on the campus of Trinity Western University. The gathering exceeded my expectations and was a hugely productive time where major steps were taken toward an even more effective international functioning Global mission commission.

--Paul McKaughan, President, EFMA, USA

Ancient Apple Trees and the Mission Mobilisation Network (MNN)

by Trev Gregory

In the garden of our last house in England, years before my wife and I moved into cross-cultural mission, there was an ancient and long neglected apple tree. Each year it would bear hundreds of sweet tiny fruits, which were tasty but so small of little use.

We consulted two gardening books to discover what should be done. The first recommended it to cut down, ground into the earth and to start with a fresh new tree. The second book expressed a little more grace towards the antique tree and suggested heavy pruning of the branches and roots. The book clearly stated that action was needed both above and below the ground: the visible and invisible required altering, training and re-shaping so that it not only produced usable fruit, but also would begin to thrive in its new garden environment.

In a similar way the Mission Mobilisation Network (MMN), as a result of our time in Canada, is undergoing some root and branch treatment with the objective to be even

more effective in responding to the ever-changing circumstances of mission mobilisation around the world.

As one of the newer networks to be docked into the WEA Mission Commission (MC), the Canada working meetings for the MMN were not only a time of implanting our roots within this

“Our MNN vision would be built upon Facilitation Team members ...ministry focus of their felt need priorities...”

new environment, but also a time to plan and begin the root and branch treatment. This was done as we acknowledged with gratefulness the history and then-structure of the Network under the chairmanship of George Verwer and the co-ordination and administration of Chacko Thomas and Cliff Newham, all three tested OM leaders. The role and

task of the “new kids on the block”, the 15 who had been invited to form a Facilitation Team, was to prayerfully consider and discuss the way ahead.

Defining Our Task

One of the early tasks, which we set out to unite around, was to create a working definition of mission mobilisation. We wanted this definition to show as much

as the scope and depth of what we were about and what our goals are as a network. Our working definition is:

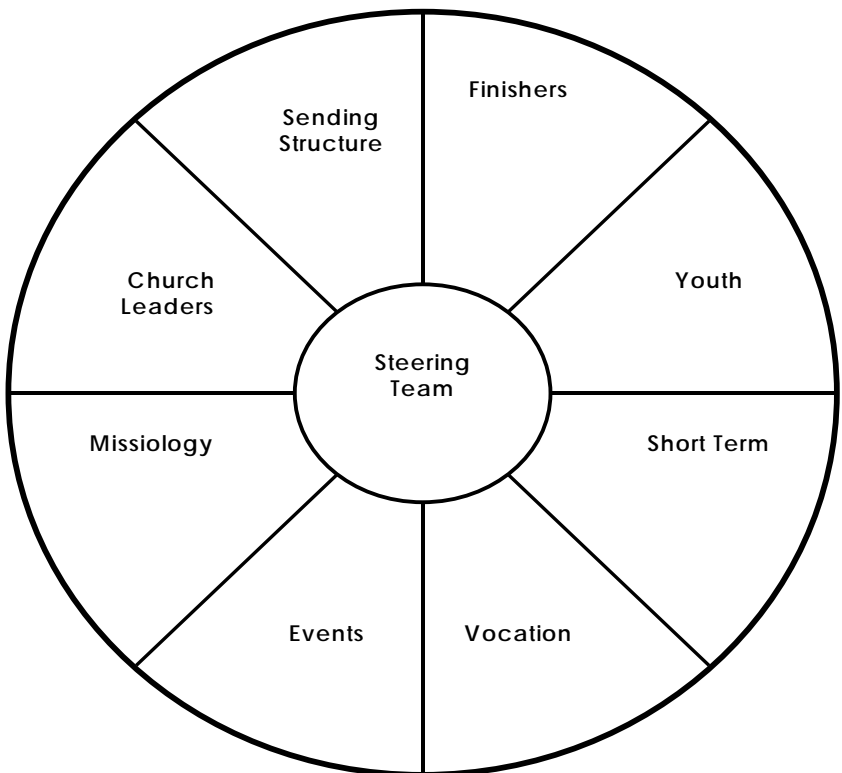
Missions Mobilization is to motivate and facilitate the Church to unleash its full potential in reaching all peoples with the gospel. It is a process of teaching, exposing, and linking Christians to opportunities for service, including praying, giving, and going.

Setting Our Structure

Mission mobilisation is a multi-faceted undertaking that interfaces and affects every area of Christian church and mission and cross-cultural structure.

Therefore, we spent some time discerning and deciding upon our next steps which should reflect our new environment as part of the MC. Our MNN vision would be built upon Facilitation Team members considering this a primary ministry focus of their felt need priorities, and it was to be flexible to change once definable tasks had been achieved. In other words our focus is mission mobilisation in every aspect, but we needed to begin on known group of mobilisation leaders and prepare for continual development and change.

To this end we devised the MMN wheel to give us a working visual of our task:



Steering Team

Our goal is to have a small working group that represents different cultures, generations and mission experiences to steer and guide the Action Issue Groups as well as to be guardians of the whole MMN agenda.

Currently we have appointed an interim development Steering Team for one year to work through a clear definition of their role and function. One immediate action point is to ensure a more balanced of geographical representation. The 1-year interim members are: Nelson Malwitz; Nick Green; Ari Rocklin; Matt Gibbins and Trev Gregory.

Action Issue Groups

Facilitation Team members identified 8 immediate Action Issue Groups:

- Finishers. What does it mean to focus primarily on the mobilisation of older more mature people?
- Youth. How do we focus on teenagers and young people?
- Short-Term. What are the trends and developments?
- Vocational. How are people recruited for long-term service either in the traditional missionary view or through other forms of service like, for example, Tent Making?
- Events. Whether Urbana-like events to Mission Fests, what can be learnt from each other?
- Missiological. What might it mean to network and partner with the MC Global Missiology Task Force if we want to set a biblical foundation and understanding for mission mobilisation?

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- Local Church Leaders. How do we engage and mobilise the local church and influence the training and equipping of church leaders?
- Sending Structures. From the traditional mission agency to the more contemporary, what can be learnt from each other to increase and better mission mobilisation?

Currently, each of the Action Issue Groups is being established and working through a clearer definition and role. It is a work in progress, but it is progressing.

Developing Our Mission Commission Relationship

One of the great advantages of this planning and re-shaping of the MMN was that it happened at the same time of the work week as other MC teams were meeting. This was a significant value-added factor for us, as we were able to cross-network with these existing groups and have easy access to the wisdom and guidance of the MC Global Leadership

Team. For some of us, like myself, it was a rapid induction into this wider, global context and provided a steep learning curve for me. This led all of us early on to realize that for the MMN to be true effective we need to serve and utilise the experience and expertise of the existing MC structure by deliberate and pro-active cross-networking. Therefore if you are a member of an MC task force or network be warned you'll be hearing from us!

The Way Ahead

Our immediate course of action has been set and we are currently working towards it.

It took my apple tree six pruning and restructuring seasons before our family really began to enjoy larger tasty fruit.

It might take the MMN time also, but we have begun a process, which under the graciousness of God will hopefully see mission mobilisation grow and flourish from every nation to every nation.



Trev Gregory became the International Director of TEMA-Mission and as a family he moved to Netherlands. This agency is dedicated to mission mobilisation in Europe of young people. www.mission.org

International Missionary Training Network (formerly “Fellowship”) Gains Ownership Through Participation

by Steve Hoke

Report on IMTN working sessions at *Canada 2003*, Langley, BC, Canada

Arriving at Trinity Western University, B.C. on May 31, over 30 different participants indicated their heightened interest in being a part of the future of the International Missionary Training Network (IMTN), a network of missionary training practitioners from around the world. Many former IMTN members, such as Seth Anyomi, David Lee, Jonathan Lewis, and others, now are dedicated to other Mission Commission task forces and networks and were no longer available to be a part of the IMTN sessions. So among the mostly new participants, the questions on everyone’s mind were: “Who are we? Where do we go from here?”

What do you do when the original situation changes dramatically? What do you do when a new generation of leaders emerges within a movement? What do you do when the wind of the Spirit seems to have shifted in a new direction?

If you are wise, you take time to listen, stop, and surely to pray.

It was obvious to all that as the MC matures and expands, so must the IMTN constituency. The next three days of our deliberations took the form of an intensive strategic planning workshop in which all participants joined actively in the process of imagining a preferred future for the missionary training network of the MC. Since we were convinced that training is still critical to the mission of the WEA Missions Commission and to the vision of advancing the expansion of Christ’s Kingdom among all peoples, the prayerful concern of the participants in the IMTN track was clear and huge. We had to clarify our intended purpose, vision, goals, and provisions for membership, leadership, and programs to gain ownership of the ever-expanding constituency in the exploding task confronting us.

Amidst soaring temperatures, multiple litres of cool water, frequent prayer breaks, and all too infrequent tea breaks, the Holy Spirit forged this cluster of fresh friends into a force for change. The group met for three full afternoons to pray, discuss, listen to stories from the field, purpose and set priorities. Their

proposal to the MC Executive Director and Executive Commission, ably edited from the contributions of the participant work groups by Dr. Bob Ferris of Columbia International University, is included for your study and comment:

- ◆ **Proposed PURPOSE of the International Missionary Training Network:** to stimulate, facilitate and support global missionary training.
- ◆ **Proposed VISION of the International Missionary Training Network:** the IMTN is a worldwide network of trainers equipping effective laborers for the global harvest, collaboratively sharing vision, experience, expertise and resources.
- ◆ **Proposed CORE VALUES of the International Missionary Training Network:** Within the context of the WEA Mission Commission core values, IMTN is committed to being a collaborative and global learning community engaged in effective in-context-training of cross-cultural missionaries for Kingdom expansion.

Proposed Provisions for MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP in the International Missionary Training Network

MEMBERSHIP in IMTN should be open to individuals who:

1. Are engaged in or committed to cross-cultural missionary training
2. Are committed to the purpose, vision, and goals of IMTN

3. Are committed to the purpose, vision and goals of WEA Missions Commission
4. Affirm the WEA Statement of Faith

LEADERSHIP should be provided by an IMTN Director who:

1. Is appointed by and accountable to the MC Executive Director;
2. Initiates, coordinates and evaluates programs in pursuit of IMTN goals;
3. Identifies and procures human and financial resources needed to sustain and promote the IMTN purpose and vision;
4. Recruits an international leadership team of three-
t o - s i x
persons who serve as a council of reference for the IMTN Director and who assume responsibility for interim direction of network and identification of a recommended candidate when the Director is unable to serve.

“...to stimulate, facilitate and support global missionary training.”

Proposed GOALS of the International Missionary Training Network

1. Provide and maintain an efficient global communication network among missionary trainers.
2. Stimulate vision for missionary training centers in strategic locations worldwide.

3. Coordinate development of culturally appropriate missionary training resources in major training languages.
4. Coordinate access to key missionary equippers for consultation with regional training centers and for training trainers.
5. Foster ongoing assessment of global missionary training outcomes to recognize effectiveness and address needs.

Proposed International Missionary Training Network Program Initiatives

The following initiatives are proposed as means toward realizing the purpose and vision of IMTN and achieving stated goals:

1. Meetings and Consultations

- 1.1 Plan and coordinate an IMTN consultation focused on one or more of its goals. This consultation should be held in conjunction with a potential 2006 MC consultation, and other IMTN consultations should be scheduled to coincide with subsequent triennial MC consultations.
- 1.2 Identify regional and national missionary training leaders and encourage regional and national consultations or meetings to address local issues and IMTN goals. Although locally planned and coordinated, IMTN will provide assistance as requested and as feasible.
- 1.3 In collaboration with regional WEA leadership, initiate and facilitate vision and action to help establish and strengthen new regional

missionary training centers in key locations.

2. Communication

- 2.1 Submit substantive articles, case studies, book reviews and news reports to the editor of *MC Connections* to meet the journal's quarterly deadlines.
- 2.2 Liaise with other Missions Commission task forces to coordinate and facilitate training functions.
- 2.3 Publish an e-mail newsletter for IMTN members.
- 2.4 Foster collegial prayer partnerships among IMTN members.
- 2.5 Compile an Internet-based directory of MC-related missionary training centers that will be available on the Missions Commission web site.

3. Consulting and Training

- 4.1 Develop an Internet-based database of persons, regionally located, who are able and available to provide consulting and training assistance to missionary training centers within their respective regions.
- 4.2 Establish criteria for IMTN sponsorship of missionary training experts to consult with regional training centers and to train trainers.
- 4.3 In collaboration with regional and national missionary training leaders, manage requests for consultative or training assistance from missionary training centers and coordinate assignment and funding of personnel who can provide the needed assistance.

4.4 Identify or create resources that can function as a virtual Global Training Center to facilitate and support missionary training worldwide

4. Publications and Research

4.1 Compile a directory of MC-related missionary training centers.

4.2 Update and republish *Internationalising Missionary Training*, or better yet, generate a new publication to replace it.

4.3 Identify or commission and publish grounded articles on the central role of spirituality, character and attitude development, as well as knowledge and skills training, in missionary preparation and growth.

4.4 Identify resources (existing and needed) on training of trainers and on the establishment and operation of missionary training centers and publish articles and books to address identified needs.

4.5 In collaboration with regional training centers, to equip national writers to generate appropriate missionary training literature, as well as to facilitate the adaptation and translation of critical resources on missionary training into major training languages.

4.6 Encourage regional and national collaboration in producing and sharing contextually appropriate training materials in the appropriate teaching/learning language.

4.7 Identify or develop strategies and instruments to assess missionary training outcomes.

4.8 Sponsor and publish ongoing research on training factors critical to missionary effectiveness.

4.9 Sponsor and publish research on training issues and challenges that are global in scope.

[Staff Decision: This proposal was slightly modified and accepted by the MC staff team and recommended to the MC Global Leadership Team for approval and implementation based on the provision of leadership and funding for a three year cycle.]

By the closing session on Friday, June 6, the benefits of the intense interaction and planning were evident. First, new partners in the IMTN were enlisted. Second, fresh ideas surfaced and were captured in the proposal. Third, the network was strengthened and extended. Most importantly, it is our hope that the Spirit will breathe fresh wind into this movement to accomplish a far greater impact—more missionaries trained more effectively for world evangelization!

But for the IMTN to be effective, each new partner joining the network must own the goals and values of the group. That ownership will only be gained through active participation in the priority initiatives of the network.

It is the desire of the emerging International Missionary Training Network—now known as the IMTN, that all individuals meeting the membership criteria forward their names and ministry information to Jonathan Lewis so that the momentum created by Canada 2003 can continue to build. We invite your participation in our distance conversations via email and e-

conferences, as well as participation in regional training events.

To accomplish the task of equipping the emerging generation of cross-cultural servant-leaders to minister in the difficult places of the world, we invite the active participation of like-minded individuals within the WEA-MC sphere of influence who share the passion to help equip and release harvesters into the tough harvest fields. Like the participants at Canada 2003, we invite

you to gain greater ownership of this expansion vision by participating with us in the task of missionary training.

For further information contact:
Dr. Jonathan Lewis at:
<jlewis@worldvangelical.org>

Editor's note: The MC staff has changed the name of this team to the International Missionary Training Network (IMTN) to bring it in sync with the other MC task forces and networks.



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It was a real privilege for me to attend the Canada 2003 meetings. As one of the younger people (perhaps the youngest!) present, I found it very useful to see the WEA MC structure and ethos, encouraging to talk to several fellow young leaders and challenging to talk and listen to some senior leaders. We came from all over the world but there was a real sense of belonging. I was encouraged by the sense of commitment, the prayer times we had for each other in the Mission Mobilisation Track and the wonderful way in which God worked through us to discover new ways forward.

I was also in Canada to explore the needs among young leaders and ways in which to support them in their specific situations. I am looking forward to seeing some follow up to the discussions we had.

***--Corrine Vlastuin, Human Resources Manager, TEMA-MISSION
The Netherlands***

ReMAP II Affirms the Maturation of the Younger Mission Movements of the South

by Detlef Bloecher

The mission movements in the countries of the South have greatly matured over the past ten years. This is one of the major results of WEA-MC's recent study ReMAP II in 20 countries around the globe. A questionnaire had been sent out in early 2003 to all known evangelical missionary sending bases¹ in 20 countries and mission executives asked about their organisational ethos and practices² as well as their retention record³ of the past 20 years. More than 540 sending bases with a total of some 34,000 long-term⁴ cross-cultural missionaries participated⁵ so far. The response of the New Sending Countries (NSC) of Africa, Asia and Latin America⁶ was compared with the Old Sending Countries (OSC)⁷ of Europe, North America and the Pacific.

Some eight years earlier a similar study (ReMAP⁸) had identified some marked deficiencies in many NSC agencies, especially in the areas of candidate selection and provisions on the field, yet these have been largely offset as the new study shows. The average rating over topical sections of the questionnaire showed only marginal differences

between NSC and OSC⁹. At the same time NSC agencies have maintained their pronounced character, which is different from OSC. These strengths need to be maintained, further developed and utilised to the common good of the global mission movement.

"...New Sending Countries gave highest ratings to Prayer throughout the agency..."

NSC have the same percentage (53%) of missionaries with children aged 0 – 21 years. They do not just send out young singles, yet somewhat more personnel serving in their home office as OSC (0.224 / 0.195 staff per field missionary). (1.13 / 0.47

staff per field missionary). This may reflect their increased recruitment rates and/or not yet optimal organisational structures. NSC agencies set aside the same percentage of their financial resources (8%) for retirement of their missionaries (with large national differences) proving their personal care and long-term commitment.

NSC agencies send more missionaries to unreached people groups (35% / 27% of their total work force) than OSC, and they invest in social and development projects (15% / 12% – underlining their commitment to social concerns and

wholistic outreach). Yet they invest less in (capital intensive) service programs like Bible translation, missionary children's education, aviation etc (11% / 19%). Evangelism in people groups with more than 1 % Evangelicals (23% / 24%) and support for existing churches (16% / 16%) are similar. To my knowledge these data constitute the first global census on personnel deployment.

In respect to candidate selection, NSC agencies gave top rating to: Clear calling to missionary service (5.83 – a remarkable value!), Pastor's endorsement (5.26), Doctrinal statement (5.25), Committed to agency principles (5.25), Mature Christian character (5.20), Character references (5.13), Contentment with present marital status (4.67) and Blessing of the family (4.60). NSC executives gave higher rating (than OSC) regarding Calling to missionary service (5.83 / 5.49), Family blessing (4.60 / 3.32 – an important issue in NSC) and lower rating on formal criteria like: Doctrinal statement (5.25 / 5.51), Character references (5.13 / 5.50), Ministry experience in a local church (3.66 / 4.77 - less opportunities for young people to exercise their gifts in the more hierarchical structure of NSC churches?), Cross-cultural experience (2.42 / 3.12 – how does this fit to the multi-cultural fabric of many NSC? Does it display the ethnic segregation in many churches – homogenous units?), Demonstrated stress-coping ability (3.68 / 4.34) and Psychological assessment (3.14 / 4.06).

Compared with ReMAP some eight years ago NSC's assessment has considerably

increased in critical areas such as: Calling to missionary service, Character references, Health checks, Psychological testing and Contentment with marital status. These developments underline the maturing of the NSC mission movement.

The educational standard of missionaries from West Africa, Latin America and India are in general lower than that of OSC and East Asia while pre-field training was more vigorous in NSC, especially in Formal Missiology (0.88 y / 0.54 y)¹⁰, Cross-cultural internships (0.32 y / 0.12 y) and Agencies' orientation programs (0.29 y / 0.17 y).

NSC agencies invest the doubled amount of their total staff time (17% / 8%) and financial resources (14.2% / 5.1% – difference in buying power?) in Member Care. These percentages are somewhat lower than in the previous ReMAP study (22% / 12%), yet Member Care has become more efficient and NSC agencies have grown in effectiveness (reducing the need for crisis intervention). Still their investment in Member Care is impressive. However, the percentage of preventative Member Care (in contrast to crisis response) remains unsatisfactory both in NSC (24% of total Member Care) and OSC (32%). Apparently Member Care is still considered primarily a reactive than a proactive service. This certainly needs improvement.

Regarding their Organisational Ethos and Leadership, NSC gave highest ratings to Prayer throughout the agency (5.37), Vision & purpose (5.33), Leaders

are an example (5.05), Documented policies (4.95), On-field supervision (4.92), Plans & job description (4.85) and Continuous training (4.82). NSC leaders gave a higher rating (than OSC) on Vision & purpose (5.33 / 5.00), Plans & job description (4.85 / 4.53), Communication field and sending base (4.64 / 4.27), Documented policies (4.95 / 4.43), Prayer (5.37 / 4.99), Problems readily solved (4.56 / 4.17), Supervision (4.92 / 4.18) and Continuous training & gift development (4.82 / 4.49).

Yet they gave much lower higher rating on Language learning (3.37 / 4.72) and Ongoing language and culture learning (4.06 / 4.85), possibly reflecting the different geographic priorities: NSC missionaries often serve cross-culturally in their home (or neighbouring) country in a trade (or related) language whereas many OSC missionaries work in very different cultures requiring intensive language acquisition. In general, however, the results show the high organisational standards of NSC agencies.

Regarding the missionaries' ministry, NSC mission executives gave highest rating on Missionary's commitment to his ministry (5.21), Commitment to the agency (5.21), Freedom to shape own ministry (4.91), Assignment according to gifting (4.74) and Administrative support on the field (4.71). NSC leaders gave higher rating (than OSC) on: Assignment according to gifting (4.74 / 4.40), Commitment to agency (5.21 / 4.64), Missionaries are not overloaded (4.21 / 3.22 - is stress and work overload a problem of the achievement driven

Western culture?), Evaluation & constant improvement of ministry (3.97 / 3.66), yet they gave lower rating to Spouse's ministry (4.17 / 4.88). Again these features prove the professionalism of NSC agencies.

Concerning Ministry Outcomes NSC leaders gave highest rating to: People becoming followers of Christ (5.03), Church on the field values missionaries' ministry (5.00), Good relationship with people group (4.95) and Missionaries' personal fulfilment (4.80). They gave higher ratings than OSC on: People becoming followers of Christ (5.03 / 4.46) and lower ratings on: Development of local leadership (4.54 / 5.19) and Missionary's sense of fulfilment (4.80 / 5.04). These peculiarities apparently reveal the agencies' cultural background: community versus individualistic society.

Similar differences are found regarding Personal Care for missionaries where NSC agencies gave top priority to Home office staff prays (5.32), Maintenance of missionaries' spiritual life (5.29), Transparency of agency's finances (5.14), Effective use of project finances (5.03), Missionary team provides mutual support (4.78) and Effective pastoral care on the field (4.70). NSC rated higher than OSC on: Missionary team (4.78 / 4.12), Pastoral Care (4.70 / 3.67), Effective conflict resolution (4.47 / 3.94), Missionaries' spiritual life (5.29 / 4.78) and Transparency of agency finances (5.14 / 4.84).

Many of these are community based, whereas OSC leaders gave higher rating

to MK-schooling (4.03 / 4.62), Health Care (3.87 / 4.66), Annual vacation (4.54 / 5.18), Risk assessment (3.92 / 4.63), Home church involvement in life of missionary (4.08 / 4.84 – a modern missiological paradigm in the West), Sustained financial support (3.87 / 4.79), Backup system for low support (3.48 / 4.02), Effective pre-field screening (4.29 / 4.86), Effective pre-field orientation (4.07 / 4.68), Effective re-entry program (2.81 / 4.27) and Debriefing during home assignment (2.62 / 4.51), which all refer to the missionary as an individual. The low rating of “re-entry program” and “debriefing during home assignment” indicate the young age of the NSC mission movement (on average 25 years of experience) and will certainly develop in the coming years.

The Annual Retention Rate (RRT) were found to be $95.95 \pm 0.09\%$ (NSC) and $94.18 \pm 0.06\%$ (OSC) – these numbers look impressive, yet we should keep in mind that after ten years of ministry only $0.96^{10} = 66\%$ (NSC) are still in active service, respective $0.942^{10} = 55\%$ (OSC) so that still a major percentage has already left. Thus even small differences have a major bearing on the long run.

The Retention Rate for Unpreventable Reasons¹¹ (RRU) was $98.20 \pm 0.04\%$ (NSC) and $97.09 \pm 0.03\%$ (OSC) and corresponds to an Unpreventable Attrition Rate (UAR = $100 - \text{RRU}$) somewhat higher than that in ReMAP some 8 years ago: $0.93 \pm 0.11\%$ (NSC), $2.52 \pm 0.14\%$ (OSC). Likewise the Retention Rate for Preventable Attrition¹² (RRP) in this study are 98.72

$\pm 0.15\%$ (NSC) and $97.54 \pm 0.09\%$ (OSC) corresponding to a Preventable Attrition Rate of $1.38 \pm 0.15\%$ (NSC) and $2.46 \pm 0.09\%$ (OSC)¹³. This difference underlines the passion, commitment, sacrificial lifestyle and perseverance of NSL-missionaries – yet for some early return is nearly impossible¹⁴. Both extremes, making early return too easy (OSC) and too difficult (NSC) are likewise questionable.

In fact, the Retention Rates Preventable RRP have declined over the past twenty years in OSC: $97.85 \pm 0.21\%$ (1981-85) to $97.41 \pm 0.06\%$ (1996-2000) and in NSC: $99.25 \pm 0.25\%$ (1986-90) to $98.47 \pm 0.08\%$ (1996-2000). This decline is in line with the increasing pace of our modern world, requiring ever growing flexibility of assignments. It also reflects the shorter time horizons of the young generation (of missionaries). On the other hand it permits a continuous adjustment of projects and personnel deployment to the current needs. Today the total group of NSC agencies has similar work practices and retention rates like the subgroup of the best mission agencies (lowest attrition) some ten years ago (ReMAP).

ReMAP II also gathered the (total) attrition numbers of the years 2001/02 and found a total Attrition Rate (TAR) of 3.1% /year in NSC and 6.8% /year in OSC¹⁵. For NSC this much lower than the first ReMAP study (and slightly reduced for OSC). As both studies applied comparable techniques and covered similar countries the data are

compatible and clearly demonstrate the improvement of mission movement, especially in NSC, proving the development of modern training methods and effective member care structures. This progress may have also resulted from the earlier ReMAP study (in spite of its limitations) which caused a major shock (at least in some countries) and alerted mission leaders, Bible school teachers and pastors of some of the critical issues which lead to decisive improvements of their mission structure. They are now rewarded with much lower attrition rates¹⁶.

"It also reflects the shorter time horizons of the young generation (of missionaries)."

We are aware that the study primarily gives the mission executives' perspective which needs complementation by the missionaries' insight, yet mission leaders are the main decision makers. Therefore the study was designed to help them to reflect on

their present practices, identify weaknesses and further develop their agency.

In summary, ReMAP II not only gives the first global census on the evangelical mission movement in old and new sending countries regarding missionary deployment, education, agency's values and practices, attrition and retention rates etc. It also provides the mission executives' insights into critical missiological issues. It demonstrates the uniqueness of the NSC mission movement which reflects her cultural background. It is "new wine in new wineskins" which requires new sending and support structures different from that of traditional mission agencies in Europe and North America. The

comparison with the earlier ReMAP study proves the impressive maturing of this movement in the past 8 years. This fills our heart with great joy, gives hope and anticipation as we walk into the 21st century.



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¹ i.e. Mission agencies, denominational mission's department and churches sending out their missionaries independently

² As evidenced by their time, effort and effectiveness rated on a 1 (= not well done) to 6 (= very well done) scale.

³ Retention R is the percentage of missionaries still in active ministry after 5 years or 10 years of service and the Annual Retention Rates $RRT = 10^{\wedge}((\log R) / t)$. This formula presumes a uniform probability of coming home. Extensive studies of the author have proved that this is a reasonable assumption.

⁴ Career missionaries expected to serve for at least 3 years. Missionary couples were counted as 2 persons.

⁵ The response rate was 50 – 90% of the total national mission force.

⁶ These were Argentina, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines and Singapore.

⁷ Australia, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, South Africa, United Kingdom and USA

⁸ Detlef Bloecher & Jonathan Lewis, Further Findings in the Research Data. pp. 105- 125. in: Too Valuable to Lose, William D. Taylor (Ed.), William Carey Library 1997

⁹ With considerable variations between individual countries which will be discussed elsewhere.

¹⁰ With considerable national differences.

¹¹ E.g. normal retirement, illness, lost visa, expulsion, appointment to leadership in agency home office, completion of pre-determined limited length of assignment, death in service.

¹² Returnees for all personal, family, work, team, agency related reasons or dismissal by the agency

¹³ These numbers are significantly lower than those of ReMAP some 8 years ago (5.45 ± 0.34 % for NSC, 4.55 ± 0.21 % for OSC). Yet the fundamental differences between Retention and Attrition must be considered so that the results cannot be easily compared.

¹⁴ Loss of face, limited social security, great financial difficulties, professional dead-end as pastors have a different training program.

¹⁵ These Attrition Rates are different from those derived from Retention Rates as they refer to a different period and TAR gives the percentage of returnees irrespective of the length of service

¹⁶ Yet also cultural factors need to be considered: many NSC missionaries have to stay on (losing face, low social security, great financial loss, dead end in professional career).

I could not find any other word than “overwhelming” to express my impression for MC consultation. I was really overwhelmed by the progress of mission work in various parts of the world and by the extension of global networking. My feeling grew stronger when I attended the workshop of regional and national mission movements. In contrast with many exciting reports presented at the workshop, churches in Japan are not growing much, and our mission work is not expanding.

However, the one thing that encouraged me was the prayer offered for the Youth Conference in Japan in the workshop. That conference had been prepared by Japan Evangelical Association to encourage youth for mission work. Many people had pessimistic idea for that project, though the organizers had 2000 as its target number of participants. The Lord answered your prayers! The conference ended August 15 with a great success attracting 2100. A lot of youth expressed their commitment for missions. I think that the success of the above conference gave a bright future for the mission work in Japan. I came back from MC consultation with a heavy heart, but the Lord turned this heavy feeling into that of joy and hope. Praise the Lord!

--Dr. Isaac T. Saoshiro, Immanuel Tokyo Central Church, Tokyo, Japan

Global Missiology Task Force: Plans and dreams

by Rose Dowsett

Canada 2003 was a very important milestone for the Global Missiology Task Force, one of the youngest members of the Missions Commission family. In fact, eleven of the plenary sessions flowed out of its work: the five morning studies on “Encounter with other faiths”, and eight sessions on “Globalisation”.

The Global Missiology Task Force is sub-divided into a number of working teams, each committed to exploring a separate theme. Their “life expectancy” is comparatively brief, disbanding when they have completed a suitable outcome for their work. This may be the production of a book, convening a conference, providing resources to be developed further on a regional basis, or whatever end result is appropriate for the topic and realistic for the group.

Canada 2003 provided the Globalisation team with plenary sessions through which to share their findings, and also saw the launch of *One World or Many?* The impact of globalisation on mission, a substantive textbook to add to the growing library of resources produced by the Missions Commission. Richard Tiplady, who had led the group, and

includes contributions from fifteen different authors, edited the book. Quite rightly, both plenary presentations and the book provoked some lively discussions, and clearly we have not yet said all there is to say about globalisation! Nonetheless, this working group has completed its task, and now passes the torch on to regional groupings to explore, develop and apply, the themes at a more local level.

“...and now passes the torch on to regional groupings to explore, develop and apply, the themes at a more local level.”

The “Encounter with Other Faiths” team also made considerable progress, clarifying its goals and process. This working group will meet in Singapore in August 2004, Lord willing, expects to publish its findings by early 2005. The “Missionary Ecclesiology” working group will also meet in Singapore at the same time, with a view to

further consultation and then publication by late 2005 or early 2006. The “Women in Mission” team expect their findings to be ready for publication in late 2004. If you have a special interest, it is not too late to contribute to any of these working groups.

All of these groups are progressing their work via e mail discussions.

Three new groups started some preliminary work on “Spirituality in Mission”, “Strategy and Mission”, and “Contextualisation Revisited”. So far, these groups have begun to identify some of the issues to be explored. However, membership, agenda and outcomes remain quite fluid at this point. Again, should readers wish to become involved, please contact me in the first instance (106011.462@compuserve.com).

It was helpful to have John Corrie at Canada 2003, the Editor-appointee of a new IVP Dictionary of Mission Theology. A number of those who attended the consultation are expected to become contributors.

What are some of the ongoing goals we have?

1. To ensure that as far as is possible with small working groups; there is

a good representation from different parts of the world.

2. To identify more young/emerging “reflective practitioners”, and more women, to participate.
3. To provide a context of training to enable the next generation of mission leaders of all nationalities to learn and listen humbly.
4. To establish some sub-groups of working groups who can operate in languages other than English.
5. To develop web-based resources.
6. To develop resources at a variety of levels, from materials suitable for use in church or student groups through to academic publications.
7. To make key resources available in a variety of languages, whatever their language of origin.
8. To identify and work on topics that is of genuine concern to different parts of the missions and church community.
9. To produce resources that will serve the Lord and his people well.

Please help us by your prayers!



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Building National Mission Movements

by Bertil Ekstrom

The refreshing experience of the Canadian Springtime was certainly an inspiration for many of the participants of the Canada 2003 Consultation of the

“...the Network has working groups that deal with specific issues related to the NMM and RMM.”

W o r l d E v a n g e l i c a l Alliance Missions Commission. The renewal and the crispness could also be seen in the different working teams during the consultation. One of the 32 participants of the task force on National and Regional Mission M o v e m e n t s

emphasised our fellowship when he stated that “we started as strangers but ended up as friends”. Many other aspects could be pointed out as important outcomes from the plenary sessions and the work of the different task forces and networks.

The task force on Starting and Strengthening National Mission Movements is composed of national and regional mission leaders who are associates of the Missions Commission of WEA. The task force had its first consultation in Iguassu, Brazil, 1999, when regional and national reports were

presented. A handbook was later published in 2001 for the MC consultation in Malaysia. During the strategic business meetings of the MC Global Leadership Team in England 2002, the task force was defined as a Member Service “Department” of the MC and a Network of Regional and National Mission Movements (RMM and NMM). Complementing the Member Service provided by the MC staff and the GLT, the Network has working groups that deal with specific issues related to the NMM and RMM.

The main purpose of the Network of NMM and RMM is to encourage and facilitate the development of viable, growing and functioning national mission movements in both Old and New sending countries. That means that in every country with a missions movement there should be (1) sending and supporting structures in collaboration with one another, (2) local churches and denominations with deep involvement in cross-cultural mission and (3) training centres for mission candidates.

Forum on Regional and National Mission Movements

The meetings of the Network in Canada were planned as a Forum with an excellent participation of representatives from all the continents.

The Forum had important outcomes such as:

1. A valuable understanding of the worldwide situation of the NMM through Regional and National reports.
2. Concrete steps on how to further the studies and the publications on relevant issues for the NMM.
3. A basic agenda for the period 2003–2006, generated by the participants of the Forum, on how to grow in our work of establishing and strengthening the NMM.

We invested a lot of time in listening to each other. The reports from the different regions and nations gave us the worldwide context, within which the Network functions, and identified the key missiological issues in each region.

One of the crucial themes discussed, in a follow up to the reports, was the question of the “north-south” partnership in missions. The understanding of the need for a “mutual relationship” between the more experienced northern missionary movement of the older sending countries, and the more enthusiastic southern movement of the newer sending countries, was a common concern of all the participants. The discussion of a “code of best practice” for non-Western missionaries coming to Europe was one of the practical aspects of that partnership.

Another question, engaging most of the participants, was the function of the Network. It is so easy to have good intentions when meeting in international consultations but often difficult to keep

the contact between the events. A commitment was made by the participants to give priority to frequent communication with their peers in other nations and regions, and to share experiences and challenges. One of the proposals, in order to facilitate that integration and partnership, is the formation of an international team of regional leaders with people committed to the vision and objectives of the Missions Commission in each of the 12-15 regions of the world. These regional leaders form the central core of the Network and are responsible for the communication to the NMM and the main strategy of the Network. The coordinator of the Network is working with the formation of that team and functions as the facilitator of the Network.

Different working groups have been dealing with key areas of concern for the NMM since the consultation in Malaysia in 2001 and will continue deepening and broadening the themes. These are:

- Innovative and Creative Sending Structures.
- The Relationship and Partnership “North – South”.
- How structures reflect theology, culture and purpose in the NMM.
- Relation between NMM and other national, regional and global networks, defining the

“The reports from the different regions and nations gave us the worldwide context...”

understanding of what a National Mission Movement is and how it functions.

- A new consultation/forum in three years time.
- Regional consultations between the international gatherings.

Agenda for 2003 to 2006

Among many of the good suggestions given for how the Network should function for the next period of three years, the following proposals could be mentioned:

- The use of an Internet Forum (Chat room).
- A regular newsletter from the MC office.
- Visits and development of the RMM and NMM in the different regions.
- Sharing of examples of partnerships.
- Helping to start and strengthen NMM to function in each nation.
- A list of available resources.
- Continue to work on the relationship North-South, South-South, etc.
- A list of regional and international events.

In the establishment of the working agenda for the MC in general and for the Network coordinator in particular, these items will be taken in consideration.

We thank all the participants for their openness, excellent contributions, faithful attendance and sense of humour. We thank God for giving us this opportunity to be together and for the guidance of his Holy Spirit during the sessions. To Him, the Triune God, all the glory!

PS. If you want a more detailed report from the Canada 2003 Forum on NMM and RMM or to contact us for other matters related to the Network and the Member Services, please write to: bekstrom@worldevangelical.org



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The Refugee Highway Partnership (RHP): A call to care and connect

by Stephen Mugabi

A popular African proverb on the essence of being in community says: “I am because we are. And when we cease to be, the ‘I’ disintegrates.” Also one prominent African leader had this to say: “The moment you have protected an individual, you have protected society,” Kenneth Kaunda (former Republic of Zambia president).

Nowhere is the impact of conflict or its

“I am because we are. And when we cease to be, the ‘I’ disintegrates.”

serious social, economic and human costs more acutely felt than among refugees and other forcibly displaced population. The magnitude and complexity related to the displacement and uprooting of people in different parts of the world (particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America) continue to pose serious problems, challenges, opportunities and several threats to the church and international community at large. For instance, it is estimated that due to war and armed conflicts, poverty, persecution or pestilence, natural and

man-made disasters in recent years, nearly 34.5 million people have been driven from their homes. Of these 52% are refugees and Africa has generated almost a third of them.

In the past decade alone, we have witnessed a flood of humanity exiting their home land in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes region countries of Rwanda, Burundi & Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, to mention some. There are also many other groups on the move from Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, Sri Lanka, different areas of the former Soviet Republics, as well as many countries in Latin America.

Refugee Highways

Tom Albinson of International Teams (IT) in Vienna, Austria observes that: “When people make the desperate decision to flee from their homeland, they need to plan their route to a new life. There are some well-worn paths around the world that refugees travel upon. These paths are the refugee highways.”

The challenges faced by the exodus of refugees on the highway are enormous. They range from hopelessness, violence, abuse, desperation, fear, high

vulnerability/risk, lack of provision of basic necessities and entitlements, social and economic depravity, and a passionate desire to locate a new home....or for some, to return home if possible.

The refugee highways reflect the vast size of the refugee challenge to the local and global church, Christian and International community. Spanning the globe, the refugee highways generate stories of human need requiring some coordinated response. While geographically broad, the refugee highways are ground for a scope of critical issues, ranging from the physical and spiritual needs of the individual refugees, to separation of families and emotional trauma, to challenging governments with the legal treatment and settlement of refugees.

Refugee Highway Partnership (RHP)

To respond to the many challenges on the local, regional, continental and international refugee highways, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) under the Missions Commission (MC) set up the refugee highway initiative in January 2001. The refugee highway initiative arose from the acute need for coordination of church ministries and Christian NGOs involved in such a complex and vast ministry field.

The initiative, with the support of WEA, partner churches and refugee ministry agencies, has now completed a two-year process of consultation with the evangelical refugee ministry community. A consultation of 200 refugee workers

and stakeholders and prospective partners held in Izmir, Turkey in November 2000 was among the processes that culminated in the formation of the refugee highway partnership. The RHP today is a twenty-member facilitation team with a seven-member core administrative team. It is an affiliated network of the World Evangelical Alliance Missions Commission. It is also the only global network formed to serve in coordination and resource sharing needs of evangelical refugee ministries and churches.

RHP Mission/Purpose

The Refugee Highway Partnership was formed for the following purpose:

“Motivated by our God-inspired love for refugees and the biblical mandate to care for them and believing that we can do this best by collaborating or connecting together, the refugee highway partnership seeks to create and nurture a Christian community that:

- facilitates more effective refugee ministry;
- stimulates strategic partnerships and collaborative action;
- inspires and equips the local church to carry out her priestly, pastoral and prophetic responsibilities, so that refugee ministries are strengthened and more refugees are served on the highway”.

RHP in Action

The refugee highway partnership provides a collaborative environment to help the local and global church deal with a vast array of refugee challenges, including for example:

- Lobbying governments to resettle refugees stranded along the “highway” and advocating for justice and dignity in their treatment.
- Mobilizing the Church along the highway to be a welcoming community of hope, love and renewal as refugees pass through, or settle in their neighborhoods.
- Providing a mechanism to facilitate partners responding rapidly, and in coordinated fashion, to developing or exploding refugee crises.
- Training and equipping the emerging “refugee church”, a growing and mobile community that has found Jesus while on the highway.
- Facilitating the work of regional churches and Christian agencies to respond to regional refugee crises, with indigenous strategies.

RHP Formation Phase 2003-2004

The Core Administration Team has identified three clear foci that will guide and energize the partnership through the Formation Phase.

1. PROJECT ONE:

G L O B A L PERSPECTIVE ON REFUGEE REALITY. Research of the Refugee Highway reality, culminating in a vivid, graphic map/poster presentation of the reality, the challenge, and the hope that can be brought to the ‘highway’.

The Refugee Highway Map will help the Christian community clearly understand the nature of the refugee highway, the challenge before the Church, and the way in which the Church can respond. There will be four distinct layers of information on the map:

- a) the political/geographical layer
- b) the refugee reality layer (stats, stories, flows, and photos)
- c) where the Church and Christian NGO’s are along the highway
- d) how the Refugee Highway Partnership aims to create a partnering environment (i.e. the element and tools to collaboration).

2. PROJECT TWO: CREATION OF A ‘COLLABORATION

ENVIRONMENT (including the online **I n f o r m a t i o n** Clearinghouse, and the Partnership Facilitation System (PFS).

This service will enable the development of a dynamic database of the activities of evangelical refugee ministries, the matching of resources such as

personnel, materials, and finances with needs and opportunities around the world, and the collecting and sharing of vital expert information on refugee situations around the world, to facilitate informed ministry decisions and planning.

“It is also the only global network formed to serve in coordination and resource sharing needs of evangelical refugee ministries and churches.”

It will also serve as a linking platform between local churches, refugee NGO's, and individual refugee workers, facilitating broad and integrated mobilization of personnel, prayer, funding, and material.

Finally, it will include a "rapid response" component, to assist in quickly organizing the response of the church in refugee crisis situations.

3. The facilitation of "real-world, real people" working environment's fall into four categories:

a) The gathering of working groups and project work teams, focused on world-sized opportunities and challenges facing refugee ministry. This will be facilitated generally twice a year. (For example: convening stake-holders concerned with advocating to governments on behalf of refugees.)

- b) The facilitation of a regionalization process, bringing stake-holders together within regions with special issues. Regions currently under consideration or in a building process: Africa, Europe, South America, North America, Middle-East, and Asia.
- c) The administrative and coordinating work of the Core Administrative Team, twice a year.
- d) Hosting a Global Consultation on Refugee Partnership in 2005.

The refugee highway partnership therefore desires to engage in realizing the mission of Jesus Christ:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4: 18-19)".



Stephen Mugabi serves as the Executive Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa-Commission on Relief and Development (ARDC) based in Kampala, Uganda. Stephen is co-facilitator of the Refugee Highway Partnership (RHP) and is one of the members of the planning team that established the initiative in Vienna, Austria, 2001.

Tentmakers International Exchange: Docking with WEA/MC and Canada 2003 Report

by Danny Martin

A note on WEA/MC and Tentmakers International Exchange

by William D. Taylor

On behalf of the full MC Global Leadership Team, we are delighted to welcome TIE and its networks as our own global tentmaking link. Many of us have observed TIE over the years, have known of its growth, and changes, and now sense the fullness of time in this “docking partnership”. TIE’s relationship with the MC illustrates one of several MC docking models with diverse global mission bodies, and we are thankful to God for our future together.

We encourage you to make direct contact with TIE’s leadership team as you pray and consider the tentmaking commitment you and your ministry might have.

TIE Meeting Report: Canada 2003
Tentmakers International Exchange (TIE) was conceived out of the 1992 Lausanne II congress in Manila. TIE’s purpose, formed in 1994, was to promote tentmaking world-wide and to provide a

forum for networking. In order to explore ways of expanding the influence and reach of the organisation, in recent years TIE approached WEA about establishing formal links. As a result of this request TIE was invited to participate in the recent WEA-MC consultation at Trinity Western University in Canada.

“TIE now becomes a new Network, under the umbrella of WEA-MC...to promote the cause of tentmaking throughout the world.”

Our time at Canada 2003

Board Members present included Ken Smith (USA), Derek Christensen (New Zealand), Ian and Lois Grant (Australia), Johnny Chun (Korea), Bob Lopez (Philippines), and Danny Martin (USA).

During the time there, the TIE board met to consider questions relating our

future, with a view of improving both effectiveness (inclusiveness, governance, communication, accountability and linkages) and influence (promotion, training, advocacy and facilitation) of the organization on the tentmaking movement.

This required a review of TIE’s purpose, name, governance, duties of members (staff, regional and country

representatives), organizational structure and methods of appointment, the need for legal incorporation of TIE, and importantly, what services the organization could/should deliver to the global tentmaking community, including how this be implemented and funded.

A crucial meeting between TIE and WEA-Global Leadership Team (WEA-GLT) was held during that week to discuss establishing a formal relationship between the Missions Commission and the TIE network.

The International Director for TIE, Dr. Danny Martin, was invited to speak to the meeting. He provided a brief history of TIE, details of the organisation and discussed the outcomes of our deliberations during that week. A number of issues were discussed and good questions raised, relating to advocacy (especially in relation to the expected publication by Time magazine of a critique of the tentmaking approach), incorporation of TIE and issues of governance, establishing a code of tentmaker best practice (especially in relation to member care and integrity of service), constituency, the relationship between tentmakers and the local church, and representation of TIE in Lausanne.

Dr. William Taylor, Executive Director WEA-MC discussed MC guidelines for establishing linkages with other mission bodies. Applied to TIE, these guidelines are:

1. The MC GLT sees the relevance, integrity, value, leadership and governance of TIE as a strategic mission body.

2. There is evident value-added to both TIE and the MC. It's a "good fit" for both mission entities.
3. TIE demonstrates a deep commitment to cross-cultural mission.
4. TIE is asked to purposefully serve the regional and national missionary movements as well as other key networks.
5. TIE is free to serve its own constituencies but never in competition with the vision of both WEA and the MC.
6. TIE will provide staff and finances for its programs.
7. TIE is committed in its organization and leadership to provide disclosure in funding and governance, a willingness to consult with the MC on fund raising efforts and present a yearly plan of action.
8. Both TIE and the MC will mutually review the relationship on a two year basis.

A separate meeting of the WEA-GLT was then held and at that meeting the proposal by TIE to "dock", as a Tentmaker arm of WEA, was approved. TIE now becomes a new Network, under the umbrella of WEA-MC and using the structure of WEA, to promote the cause of tentmaking throughout the world.

Furthermore TIE was encouraged by the MC to undertake the following, as able:

1. The development and circulation of a strong and Biblical theology of work and vocation. Definitions of what the term "missionary" means are changing worldwide, and it's imperative that we think biblically about work.

2. The development of a tentmaking Code of Best Practices that will guide and strengthen the global vision of godly vocational servants sent out into the world by their churches and other sending bodies. We want to do this in the best way possible. It will also reduce the false dichotomy between “tentmaking missionaries” and “ordinary missionaries”.
3. To serve as the MC voice and advocate for tentmaking in the global mission world.
4. To consider a proactive publications program to strengthen the international tentmaking vision, resources that would be produced in the major missionary languages of the world. This may start with a third and revised edition of

Working Your Way to the Nations.

5. To develop a new crop of younger women and men from diverse nations of North and South who are committed to tentmaking and will serve with TIE in different capacities.

In the past ten years, TIE has been a loose affiliation of like-minded people. We are trusting God that in the years to come we will become a true movement of the Holy Spirit among lay Christians with mission hearts. We are estimating that God has placed some 10 million evangelical believers in cross-cultural work situations around the world. Our desire is to mobilize, train and support them to become witnesses in the countries where they work.



Danny D. Martin, a Ph.D. in Vocational Counseling: Somerset University, U.K. is the International Director of Mission to Unreached Peoples. He mobilizes and trains Asian tentmakers and place them in jobs among unreached peoples. Also serves as international Director of Tentmakers InternationalExchange (TIE).

For me, as a missions pastor in a North American church, the value of the consultation was first, the opportunity to meet and to spend quality time with key international church leaders. I personally had wonderful times of fellowship—hard on the sleep—with my roommate from Sri Lanka. I really came to appreciate some of the struggles they have in that difficult situation. Second, to be allowed to see current issues in mission, specifically globalization, from something other than a western perspective. Sometimes we tend to read only our own press releases. Third, to sit beside our colleagues and interact on concerns that we share as a worldwide Christian community.

--Tom Correll, Pastor, Wooddale Church , USA

Quotes From Canada 2003 Participants

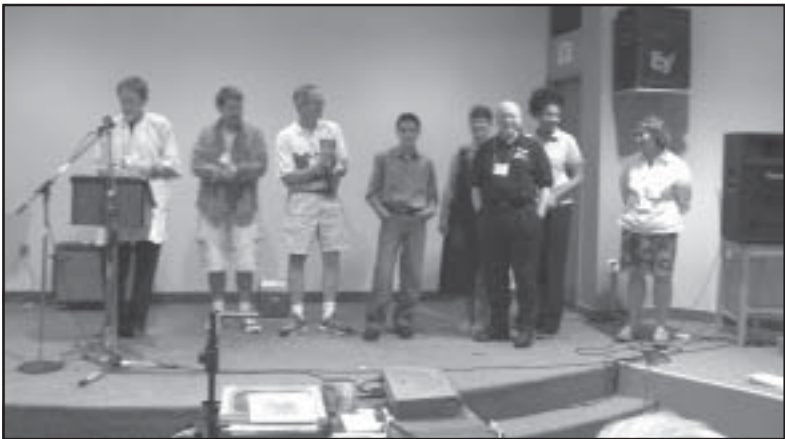
“For me, Canada 2003 ranks among the finest meetings I have attended as an agency leader. First, the agenda was well conceived and the presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared. The content shaped my worldview. Second, I made valuable connections with Christian leaders from around the world that have resulted in helpful partnership. Third, an atmosphere of humility permeated the entire event. My spirit was encouraged! I am thankful for the people who made this consultation possible”.

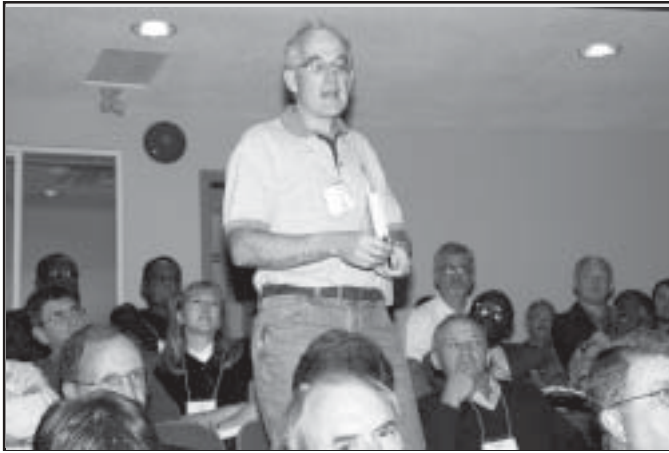
*Gregory E. Fritz, President, Caleb Project, 10 W. Dry Creek Circle
Littleton, CO 80120-4413. www.calebproject.org*

“It was good to connect and re-connect with friends and colleagues from different regions of the world. I believe the WEA MC has done an outstanding service in bringing all of these mission leaders together. The plenaries were superb. The selection of those young experts on globalization issues helped us all to better understand our postmodern world, thanks.

I also value very dearly my involvement with the International Missionary Training Network team. I believe together we were able to find new ways to improve and effectively increase missionary training in the world. Canada 2003 meant a lot to me. Thanks you WEA MC for making this encounter possible.”

*Dr. Miguel Alvarez, Vice President, Asian Center for Missions US Office
Adjunct Professor of Intercultural Studies, Regent University, VA*





Canada 2003 was a wonderful opportunity to network with God's servants from around the world. Previous mission conferences I had attended have tended to be dominated by middle-aged to elderly North American mission executives, reflecting more of the Spirit of Missions Past rather than Missions Future. This conference was entirely different. Not only were many of the key speakers and seminar leaders representatives from what we used to call the Third (Two-Thirds) World (where the churches is often growing vigorously), but they represented an intellectual and spiritual maturity that was remarkable. The number of women speakers, including younger women, also impressed me. In this, the WEA Missions Commission has provided a model for others to follow. Surely, this represents the vanguard of the Church in the 21st century!

*W. Ward Gasque, President
Pacific Association for Theological Studies*

Canada 2003 was for me personal a time of refreshment to grow existing relationships with brothers and sisters from "the ends of the earth". It was a blessing to meet new colleagues, especially the younger generation represented there. The greatest blessing however was the testimony heard from so many at the conference that undoubtedly showed how God is building His church all over the world.

In my role with EZA the theme of the conference: "One world or many, the impact of globalisation on mission" helped me realise the need to communicate what we learned to the Dutch mission force. The world changes rapidly, the church is not excluded from that change. How do we respond? That certainly is the question I went home with.

Kees van der Wilden, Evangelische Zendings Alliantie, The Netherlands



Through the unique gathering of reflective practitioners at Canada 2003 you acquire valuable cutting edge perspectives on current developments and needs in the Evangelical world missionary movement. We do not get this in a purely academic setting for mission studies, nor at normal mission activist gatherings. It assisted me in gaining a more multifaceted understanding of the task before us and in seeing what is being done in order to face present and future challenges.

*Birger Nygaard, General Secretary,
International Association for Mission Studies -Denmark*

Canada 2003 presented us a wide range of stimulating material to engage with, ideas that need to guide us in the future as we promote mission in, from and to New Zealand. The unplanned agenda of informal meeting, greeting and introducing new friends and old with one another to the mutual advancement of respective ministries, proved a major bonus. Passing on the content and inspiration of this event is a challenge. We in NZ have decided to replicate the consultation with our own event for reflective practitioners in June 2004. Thanks for the model.

*Gordon Stanley, Director, Missions Interlink (NZ),
PO Box 114, Patumahoe 1730 New Zealand*

Canada 2003 was a very exciting melting pot of ideas from peoples of like minds. I found it exciting meeting peoples from many nations who are involved in reaching out to peoples of many nations. Apart from encouraging a weary traveler like myself on the road to missions, it gave me an insight into the beauty of the multitudes from different nations worshipping the lamb. How dare we relax and miss that company of the redeemed!

*Bayo Famonure, Executive Secretary,
Evan & Missions Commission of AEA*

I was greatly inspired, motivated, and learnt a lot. I was happy to personally connect, and for us all at AEA/RDC & the Refugee Highway Partnership to dock with WEA/MC. Thank you all for the effort and making our time in Vancouver so resourceful.

Stephen Mugabi, Refugee Highway Partnership, Association of Evangelicals of Africa, Uganda

What a fabulous time of networking, especially with our brothers and sisters from the Two-Thirds world. That's what I will remember most about the consultation. For someone newly coming into my role as CEO of an international agency which is far too Westernised and Caucasian than the word "international" implies, the timing could not have been more strategic. As a result of Canada 2003, I was able to form new alliances and solidify existing friendships. WEA, if this conference is indicative of its ethos and organisational culture, it epitomises what we want "globalisation" to look like as we apply it to the mission world.

David Lundy, International Director, Arab World Ministries United Kingdom

Meeting old friends and making new ones; this has been my hallmark of the consultation. Missions in the 21st Century is characterised by partnerships between churches and agencies on the ground, and they live it out in the personal relationship between their leaders. To maintain this is crucial in our modern times of rapid leadership successions.

In addition, my days were marked by the intensive interaction in our ReMAP II study group. We expect excellent results soon, which will give crucial directions for agencies as well as for the global mission movement in general. It was great to see the growing interest by many conference participants.

Detlef Bloecher, General Director, DMG, Germany



For me Canada 2003 was a very significant consultation. The themes we grappled with were of great relevance for the challenge we have to take the Gospel in a relevant way to a world more and more influenced by post-modernity and technoculture. What's more, the friendship with 230 brothers and sisters from 51 different nations has been a great inspiration and blessing. I express my profound gratitude to the WEA Missions Commission for the important effort made to make this event a reality.

Marcos Amado, Presidente, PM Internacional

CANADA 2003 was a safari in critical thinking that gave me hope for the future of evangelical mission work and reflection in the Caribbean. It was an experience in formulating a positive aspect of globalisation from the perspective of Christian mission. The Consultation helped me to view globalisation through objective eyes – moving from a critical approach to a willingness to work for reforms, and to find new ways of expression that would motivate the mission force from the Caribbean. It revealed my role as a missions practitioner, to continue dialogue toward a Caribbean agenda of probing into the Word to develop a global conversation that will provide opportunity to effectively manage current and future paradigm changes.

Rev. Emerson L. Boyce, Executive Director, EAC-Commission on Evangelism and Missions, P. O. Box 4947, Tunapuna, Trinidad

When I came back from the consultation I told my staff, “Everything we have done during the last ten years to change TEAM (and nothing has been left untouched) has just caught us up to the present. Now we need to work on the future, and the Mission Commission of the WEA is what the future is going to look like. Things are a bit fuzzy around the edges, but the energy of the mission movement from the Global South is mind boggling”. Andrew Walls has it right when he says that the energy for the next wave of expansion of the church always comes from the fringes.

Charlie Davis, Executive Director, TEAM



Canada 2003 was a great opportunity to consider some of the big issues relating to Globalisation and also to observe the growing maturity and enthusiasm of many of the leaders of mission movements from the newer sending nations in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. It was good to reaffirm some of the basic principles of cooperation, integrity, accountability and respect in our continuing endeavours to fulfil the Great Commission. Indeed the fields are still white unto harvest and the labourers are few. The challenge to send out many more labourers to reach the unreached in today's changing world, remains.

Phil Douglas, National Director, Missions Interlink, Australia

How delighted and blessed I was to participate in the WEA MC Consultation, "Canada 2003." The focus upon globalization and world missions was right on target. The leaders and facilitators were outstanding. The content was very practical and relevant. The fellowship was wonderful. The presence of the Lord was evident again and again as we worshipped, shared, listened, learned and committed ourselves anew to Christ and His mission. I pray that as a result of this consultation the Church of Jesus Christ may be more effective in sharing His Gospel lovingly and appropriately to the nations and generations of the world.

Paul Cedar, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation



Participants of Canada 2003

Thinking New in Southern Africa

Part 2 of a 2-part report

by Phyllis Dolislager

New, yet old.

*Using technology, but not abandoning
personal contact*

*Fresh approaches, but still presenting the
classic Gospel message*

*Innovative strategies, yet conventional
people skills*

*Contemporary, but following time-
honored traditions*

Donkey churches, micro-businesses, food gardens, Gospel Taxi Club, Mission School in a Briefcase, a sea-going catamaran, city marches, HIV/AIDS awareness projects, and the Gateway Strategy. These are a few of the tools that World Mission Centre uses to take the Gospel to unreached people groups in southern Africa.

No matter how one describes World Mission Centre, since its inception, it's been a God-thing all the way. In the previous issue of Connections, we gave the overall review of the ministry flowing from the WMC.

And now the reports from the nations of Southern Africa

Angola

With a population of more than 11.5 million, Angola endured one of the most

backward forms of colonialism that resulted in the longest civil war never known in the world today. This civil war and the socialist regime adopted by the Angolan Government hindered the expansion of the Kingdom of God. There was a closed door to many missionaries from other nations to work among the people. Christian activities were increasingly limited by the government controls; however, social disasters opened the way for greater freedom of religion and caused people to turn to God.

"Today, four of these people groups have cell churches planted by these students."

The research done in 1995 by World Mission Centre revealed six people groups not being reached with the Gospel. They are Akhoe, Curoca, Humbe, Ikung, Kwando and

Mungambwe peoples, all situated in the southern part of the country. In August 2000, WMC launched a Mission school at Humpata, a small town situated 16 miles from Lubango, a southern city of Angola. Thirty students were trained and sent for a short-term outreach with the goal to plant at least one cell church in each unreached people group. Today,

four of these people groups have cell churches planted by these students. After the training, seven of these students were selected to go back to the field in full time ministry to help these newly planted churches grow. We need to continue training and equipping indigenous missionaries in Angola.

Botswana

The Gikwe people group focus

With seven unreached people groups and most groups inter-mixed, it has become difficult to identify only one specific group. The church planting process however is being carried out in close proximity to where the majority of the various people groups live. Originally hunters, they are no longer allowed by their government to hunt or wear their traditional clothing. They are fighting against this new environment and culture. This is a critical time to assist them and to bring them to the Gospel.

From the first team that entered the people group in November 2000, the lives of the Gikwe as well as those ministering to them have changed. Through the help of the community and international churches that were mobilized, fences were erected, food gardens were started, the books of Luke and Acts were translated into the Gikwe language, and attention was given to those with basic medical needs. This opened many doors as churches and youth groups started to enter the area, assisting the local missionaries with discipling and leadership training. A strong working relationship was built with the AEC-church of Botswana, and together we continue to establish the church among the Gikwe.

Basarwa people group focus

When we started working in the country in July 2000, there were five unreached people groups. Now three have beginning churches. We want to replicate this process with the Basarwa, one of the two remaining, unreached people groups. The Basarwa are cattlemen who live on the Eastern side of the Central Kalahari National Game Park. The World Mission Centre team ministers at nine different cattle stations. They need to continue focusing on evangelism, discipleship, community development, and basic medical needs.

Southern Africa Coastline: the Linaka, our sailing ship

Along the Southern Africa coastline and the Indian Ocean islands, there are 34 unreached people groups. In most cases they are hard to reach using conventional methods. A catamaran like the Linaka is ideally suited for the work as she has a shallow draft (depth below the water), allowing her to sail to places that are inaccessible to most other boats, such as up close to beaches and, in some instances, up rivers. The focus of Linaka is to plant churches among these remote and difficult to reach people groups and to equip leaders to continue the work.

Itinerary for 2003/4: Sail to Madagascar and help facilitate Training Meetings for (church) Leaders among the Antakarana people group. Sail to Comoros to facilitate international teams that will teach the people micro business principles and help establish 200 vegetable gardens. Sail to Mozambique to help facilitate the fielding of 20 Mozambiquan missionaries, show the Jesus film on remote islands, and place

visiting international local church leadership teams with indigenous missionaries in the Least Reached People Groups.

Madagascar

We have planned six Training Meetings for Leaders (TML's) that will be held in strategic places around the island in seven people group areas. Approximately 40 indigenous pastors and missionaries will attend each TML, which will focus on leadership and character development, as well as church growth and government. In addition, a medical outreach has been planned to the Comorian people group.

After the week of teaching, the international pastors will go on a short two-day grass-roots field outreach where they will get an accurate idea of life there, including the difficulties that missionaries might be experiencing. After the time in the field, the pastors will then enjoy a few days debriefing. A crucial reason for inviting international pastors is the hope that they will catch the vision for what is happening among the least reached groups, and then determine that their churches will partner with an indigenous church, or decide to meet a need within a people group. Our goal is to encourage and discuss future involvement, thus ensuring a continuation of the process.

Mozambique

Two of Mozambique's people groups are found in and around a small town on the East Coast of the Nampula Province called Angoche. These are the Sangage and the Nathepo people groups. Folk

Islam is the main religion in this area. With less than 1% Christian among all three of these people groups, there is a lot of work to be done. Besides the need for a church, we help with their physical needs like basic health care and food gardens.

During 2001, nine trained missionaries from Swaziland worked among the three people groups in Angoche. Their goals were to plant at least one church among these three people groups. Because the people groups are saturated by the Islamic faith, it was no easy task.

We plan to send two missionaries to stay and work among these people groups for a period of one year (2003). Their projects will be micro businesses, medical assistance, food gardens, basic health care teachings and Bible distribution.

Swaziland

Since the first mission school session in Swaziland, in 2000, this country has produced some of the most dedicated missionaries in the field today. Presently they are at work in Angoshe, Mozambique. They are people with a passion to reach out to other nations. We held another school session in 2002 and once again more missionaries were sent to support the church planting process in that region.

We believe that the local church is the missing key to reaching the unreached of the world. Our challenge is to get the entire Swaziland church excited about what God is doing in Mozambique. Therefore we need to mobilize the local

church and organize another mission school in Swaziland to train local African people to reach their own people and beyond their borders. Once they're trained, we need to equip them for the task. Our investment in their lives now, will determine the future of this work and these people groups.

Tanzania

Tanzania is home to at least ten least reached people groups. Six of the ten people groups are Islamic tribes while the remaining four are more animistic. The work in Tanzania has been growing in a spectacular way, but with the growth came an increasing demand for more laborers to strengthen existing teams. As we work in seven of the ten least reached people groups in Tanzania, each one presents its own challenges. In some of these people groups small churches have been established and a small building has been erected. In others we have cell groups where people are trained and baptized.

In some of these people groups it is not possible to plant a church unless we first touch their social lives. Water, sustained preventive and curative medical care and education are the three most urgent

social needs across the nation. We must sustain these missionaries in the field until the new churches are strong enough to function on their own. And this is our vision: to keep them in the field, to train new converts, to change their lives on a social level, and to bring the gospel to those who have never heard it.

"The work in Tanzania has been growing in a spectacular way..."

Like most organizations, World Mission Centre leaders continue to look for funds to carry out their vision. They pray. They knock on doors. They pray. They plan for the future. They pray. They make treks

into the jungles. They pray. They change time zones, flying from Singapore to South Africa to the United States. They pray. They believe that being called to missions is one of God's highest callings. They pray. They knock on more doors. They pray.

Editors note: Willie Crew, the founder of the World Mission Centre in Pretoria, serves also as a WEA Missions Commission Associate. He is one of many who represent the strong move of God operating through creative and sacrificing women and men whose passions reflect the Father heart of God for the nations.



For more information: www.byphyllis.com;
E-mail: phyllisd@byphyllis.com

The Southern Cone Missionary Movement

by Carlos Scott

COMIBAM Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay) is a network formed by the different missionary structures that exist to serve Jesus Christ and all the people of God in order to fulfill their cross-cultural mission.

The strategic objective is as follows: To involve more churches, equip more pastors and leaders, provide effective training for missionary candidates, cooperate in the formation of sending structures, and to motivate financial resources for mission in favor of the less evangelized and unevangelised peoples.

Our goal is to see a movement with 2,500 cross-cultural workers from our four Southern Cone nations.

Our work plan consists of the following:

- ◆ To involve more churches, pastors and leaders in cooperative networks.
- ◆ To provide missions training and equipping at all levels.
- ◆ To cooperate in the creation of sending structures (equipping and training of candidates, sending models, field shepherding, prayer, finances and creation of other resources, and strategic cooperation).

- ◆ To develop the Reaching Peoples Program to evangelise the unreached.

In order to achieve an efficient and effective action, we have identified the following four key areas to develop:

1. A network of local churches
2. A network of training centres and programs
3. A network of agencies and missionary societies
4. A network of cross-cultural workers

In the network of local churches we expect to see pastoral leadership committed to missionary work, challenging and serving together to develop full support strategies for churches in different stages of their missions maturity. We want to see pastors challenging pastors, churches modeling for other churches, and churches cooperating with other churches to make missionary projects a feasible reality of greater impact amongst the adopted unreached peoples.

In the network of training centres and programs we expect to see more “intentional training”, not only of our missionaries but also to those who will participate in the various stages of the missionary process. We are willing to

develop new projects that will contribute to the development of wholistic training programs, where the measure of success of training centres is not the number of candidates enrolled but rather workers serving effectively in their fields.

In the network of agencies and missionary societies we expect to see mission agencies that are identified with the local church and are willing to serve her. We expect to see mission agencies that are willing to see themselves as part of the preparation team and also with a specific commitment to support workers on the fields. We are working to encourage mission agencies to go beyond representing simply their own interests and who will take seriously the role of those who must interpret the field reality in order to provide guidance for their workers, before they leave as well as on the field.

In the network of cross-cultural workers and missionaries, we expect to listen and dialogue with our field sisters and brothers and learn together to know how to improve the entire mission process.

Drawing to a close
The kind of movement we wish to see in the Southern Cone is the following. We want to witness the rise of a broad base of many inter-related local churches. We

want to see a solid group of training centres that will constitute the next level through which both pastors and missionaries will pass. The third level follows with efficient sending structures, and ends with a fourth level, which represents the support structures needed for our field workers.

There is a vertical relationship between the church, the training centre, the sending structures and missionaries, but there is a horizontal relationship where self-educating networks are formed. In essence we have a mission movement with four networks or levels, because it can count on the broad base of churches committed to world evangelisation, with access to solid missionary education through the dedicated training centres, and with sending structures that will channel and support our missionaries with effectiveness, along with the other resources, in the global unevangelised fields.

“To provide missions training and equipping at all levels”

The contribution from COMIBAM Southern Cone to this process is to facilitate the development of each level/network and to work for its development and maximum benefit. The preferred strategy we will follow is to establish a national missionary movement where each region can count in either embryonic or real form the representation of each of the four level/networks.



Carlos Scott, Argentina, Vice President, COMIBAM International Representative of COMIBAM Southern Cone.

Journeys of a Mission worker in Sri Lanka

by Anonymous (for security reasons)

For me the day begins with the mixture of sounds that echo the social symphony of our nation. From singing birds to religious chants over speakers of the temples and mosques in this Southern Indian Ocean Island of 19 million, it is a call to seek God early for a day filled with challenges, opportunities and the unexpected. These sounds fade with the noise of city traffic as I leave today for a rural area where 70% of people live in 30,000 villages. The Buddhist Temple is the center of most villages where most Sinhala people (70%) live, who seek Nirvana through good works. The Tamil people mainly practice Hinduism, a worship of multitudes of gods.

Power in unity

I am taking a group of 10 intercessors to a rural church where last week, the worshipers were violently attacked during a service and the pastor was badly beaten up. The mob set the church on fire. Injured believers were denied treatment in hospital. It was a well organized attack to eliminate the presence of the rural church. Reporting these attacks to the authorities, to human rights groups, or by lobbying politicians have brought no results. But today we have Intercessors from various churches praying on site to lobby the highest levels of authority, and to

encourage the hands of the brethren. As we all pray things begin to change, fear leaves, and there is a turn around in events.

Praying is something we all learned in the past 20 years. Once we prayed alone, sometimes against each other, till the civil war assaulted the nation. Now we pray together.

Another prayer conference where we train 85 intercessors is an exciting experience. Usually our two ethnic groups never join in religious worship because of their different beliefs. The Sinhalese generally are Buddhist, and Tamils are Hindus. But in the Christian church we have both worshipping together. We know that destiny is shaped through prayer, and so we spend two days in prayer for the nation and to demonstrate unity in real life.

Bomb victims

Another day I am in the middle of a pastor's meeting discussing church planting. The terrorists bomb a commercial area of the city. Thousands have been injured. I rush to the hospital where over 1000 people are admitted to the emergency unit. As I wade through the overcrowded corridors, the injured are lying everywhere. I pray for whoever

needs attention. In the intensive unit I pray for an old businessman, and a young executive in a coma. The old man survives, the young man dies.

I am connected to these victims, my Sunday school friend is buried in a bombed office basement, my niece is injured with glass shrapnel. Things happen so fast, there are no explanations, only prayer. The mission worker needs more than explanations...he and she need faith.

Beauty from ashes

My daughter and I visit an area 150 miles away from home. For 20 years, war has prevented her visiting this area. The pastor taking us around is accustomed to the terrors of war. From the time he graduated, the war front was his parish. Most of his flock is destitute and scattered, many orphaned, others widowed. His church together with hundreds of houses has been bombed. My daughter has many questions, why didn't he leave? He only has reasons for staying!

To many of his flock, he is Jesus, the shepherd who stayed when the wolves came. Here I also meet many other pastors who did not allow the situations to decide for them. They are my heroes. That night I was invited to dedicate a new church building where about 750 excited people worship God in their new

facility. Yes, there had been war here, but the Kingdom goes on.

While the war has polarized the nation by ethnic and religious identities, the Church has done the opposite by drawing both ethnicities into "One Body." Being subjected to various forms of "mental ethnic cleansing", we have chosen to be identified first with Christ, then our ethnicity. He has "Broken the middle wall of partition". For this we run the risk of being branded as "traitors" of religion, race and culture.

Pastor's kids

In another church we have a seminar around 8 pm and go on till midnight. Why at night? Because it's curfew; we are prohibited from going out from dawn to dusk. These people take every advantage of the visiting preacher. Half way into the meeting the pastor's kids take me out to show the sky littered with colored lights. Tracers and flares lighten the sky fascinating the kids. Fireworks? No, because now comes the sound of machine guns and mortars. The rebels attack an army camp, barely a mile away from the church. A frightening experience for me. But for these PK's - this is life. Often when mortars fall, these kids creep under the beds hoping for some protection if the roof falls.

One night the pastor's pregnant wife lost her baby due to shock. Time to leave? No, they stayed because of their commitment to people. He only requested we build a concrete roof over the children's room. At least they can stay on top of the bed and not under it.

"...the Church has done the opposite by drawing both ethnicities into 'One Body.'"

Today his eldest son is in the Bible College following his father's call.

Persecution

Pastor's kids pay a high price! In another family the son has to wear his dad's motorbike helmet to bed because those who opposed the church were throwing stones (rocks) at the house. Eventually they came and burned the house down. In our nation throwing stones at a house is a common way of protesting anyone's presence. The Jewish tradition still lives on!!

"This is the 30th night of non-stop stoning," she said when I visited another lady pastor once. I could see the sky through the holes in the roof of her dilapidated house. Those opposing his presence in the village martyred her young husband. They came one night and put a gun into his mouth and shot him. She stayed and continued his work and her life is still threatened. Stones seem to be a minor problem to her.

"Did you inform the Police?" I asked. "No," she said. "It must be the neighbors. I can't afford to lose them, I must win them" Stones give her "open heaven" and help to "pray through the night". Now there isn't a house or stones, instead, a large church building seating over 500 people. Only "living stones".

"For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones" Matt 3:9

The price we pay

Another day I am called to a police station as the officer is questioning the

suspicious intentions of the mission worker in a remote village. The day before, a demonstration led by religious leaders with a 100 people marched through the village to the rented house of the mission worker. They demanded they leave the area within 24 hours or face death. The young wife, who is a convert herself from the area, takes a bold stand and refuses to leave. They're accused of converting people by paying them money.

The religious extremists incite anti-Christian sentiments – accusing us of conversions through favors and finances. "Christianity is another form of Colonial invasion through western influence and money" they charge. The Colonial ghosts from the past 500 years still haunt our nation, although the Portuguese, Dutch and British have left. Independence is seen more than a political triumph – it is also a religious and cultural victory. Now the Evangelicals are seen as a serious threat to that victory.

The Police officer questions the house owner: "How much does this man pay to convert to Christianity?" "Sir, I don't know anything about this man's money, but one thing I know, he lives one of the most simple and poorest lifestyles. He even finds it difficult to pay the rent. I don't know how this man can afford to pay others to convert". The inquiry is dismissed. The church goes on.

It is the price we pay to serve the Master that separates the hirelings from shepherds. Thankfully, in my nation there are not many "hirelings" and I am

proud of the many shepherds who serve the Master without hire.

Reconciliation

In a different kind of meeting, pastors repent and pray for reconciliation. This war in our nation has been a reflection of the internal battles within the church. Denominational loyalties, doctrinal distinction and historical grievances have left many casualties in the unseen battlefields of the church. We cannot finish the war if we don't first deal internally. Each pastor stands and

confesses personal prejudices and division. They denounce competition and pledge cooperation. We discover our "real" enemy. Something happens in the atmosphere, a bonding takes place in Christ's love. We realize the enormous cost of the war within. Never again!

After 20 years of war, now there is a political cease-fire. But the war is not over. As I write this, I heard of 5 churches just attacked by mobs. Laws are considered to stop evangelism and conversion. It's time to pray again!

The identity of this colleague rightfully remains anonymous to our readers, but known to the interceding Spirit of God and a few choice and interceding friends.

The breadth of ministries, collective experience, and vast diversity of nationalities/cultures that were represented made a profound impression. Neither I nor my colleague, David Stoner, had previously been in a setting where so many world leaders of mission movements were present. I was humbled and privileged to be a part. The most inspiring aspects were the encounters with the participants during the "in between" times. To dialogue with servants of such character and caliber was priceless. Many new friendships were forged and existing relationships strengthened during my week there. Finally, I was motivated to sense that the Kingdom of God tears at the foundations of the gates and breaks through the walls of Hell through the collective efforts of those gathered. It encouraged me to continue fulfilling the role to which God has called me in His Kingdom work.

**--Keith G. Sparzak, Global Outreach Associate Pastor,
Mars Hill Church, USA**

Europe Calls Again

by Chacko Thomas

“the need
for
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on our
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Any missionary would be more than satisfied to report that “the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily”, as did the apostle Paul and his team after their fruitful tour in various cities of west Asia—modern Turkey. The apostolic team continued their outreach in Asia and were making plans to move further east to continue this fruitful ministry. But then things seem to go wrong, or at least the changes were puzzling.

“They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia” (Acts 16:6). They tried again to preach in Asian Bithynia, but again were hindered, as “the Spirit did not permit them” (Acts 16:7). God had other plans.

Then came Paul’s famous “Macedonian call”.

When God closes a door, He opens another. Acts 16:9 tells us how God directed the Apostle and the team in a new direction. In the night a vision appeared to Paul of a man of Macedonia pleading with him saying, “come over to Macedonia and help us”. The rest is history. The Gospel broke into Europe and began to spread westward. In the apostle’s lifetime Christian communities were appearing as far west as Spain.

Europe calls again

For many years I have heard European Christians say: “the need for missionaries on our doorstep is as critical as in any other part of the world”. I heard of a respected Muslim clergyman who told a Christian leader in Britain that in ten years Islam will be the majority religion in the UK. Islam is the second largest religion

in a number of European countries, far outpacing Christianity in growth and zeal. Have you not heard it said, “Europe is the only continent where the church is shrinking”? Recently I was in Cornwall in the south west of England and I was told that this region is “the evangelist’s graveyard”.

A German friend told me, “If Christians do not wake up, and the trend continues, Germany may be a Muslim country in 70 years, through multiplication of the large families of immigrant Muslims.” *Operation World* tells us that Germany has more than three million Muslims of Turkish, Albanian, Kurdish, Arab, Iranian, Afghan, and Pakistani background. They grow at the astonishing rate of 5.1% a year. Buddhists increase by 20% and Hindus by 9% each year. At the same time, church-going Christians decline by 1% per year.

The scene is still more depressing in several other European countries, such as Austria, France, Greece, Spain, Italy, Poland, and Portugal, to name a few. More prayer, better planning, preparation of effective evangelistic tools, immediate recruitment and sending of tentmakers, missionaries (both long- and short-term) and church planters—all are needed to be directed at these nations of Europe as urgently as to the 10/40 window.

Europe a Mission Field

Europe is a mission field. For some years the leaders of Operation Mobilisation (OM) in Europe have been saying that,

“Today the USA has the largest church in the world...”

as have other veteran societies focused on Europe. At their recent annual international meeting, OM’s main leaders acknowledged that European countries, which have often been regarded as sending nations, need now to be added to the list of target nations, on a par with Turkey, India and the Muslim world. In fact some European countries, such as Spain, are seen to be more unreached than India, where in recent decades there has been a multiplication of churches. And I speak as an Indian.

Who will re-evangelise Europe? The first people must be the Europeans themselves, however small their number. Evangelicals make 2.4% of the overall population of the continent, but a figure artificially high because of the higher percentage of Evangelicals in the Faeroe Islands (28.5%), Finland (12%), Norway (9.3%), the UK (8.5%) Latvia (7.6%) and Romania (6.3%). Certainly these nations cannot ignore the call of the rest of Europe.

In many of the European nations the Evangelical population is below 1.0%. Poland for example has only 0.2% evangelicals among its 39 million people. “Way back in the 1600’s the King of Poland consecrated his lands to the ‘Mother of God’ and named her the Queen of Poland. The title was publicly reaffirmed in 1956. In one or two cathedrals you can even find the figure of Mary – instead of Jesus – on a cross,” wrote Debbie Meroff. With all the fury of missionary activities in Albania in

recent years the nation still has only 0.3% Evangelicals. Spain, with its 40 million people has only 0.4%. Greece and her 11 million people is in the same group with Spain with only 0.4%. In both these nations the evangelical believers are increasing slowly.

Europe can be re-evangelised!

Europe can be re-evangelised. There is nothing in the Bible or history to say that the task is impossible. In fact God's Word gives us many beautiful promises to encourage us to trust Him as we pray and work for these nations to turn to God. One of the greatest examples of church growth in the world took place in the USA during the last one hundred years. At the beginning of the Century there were only about 3% of Evangelicals in the nation. Today the USA has the largest church in the world, with about 90 million Evangelicals—about 33% of the nation. At least that's what some of the numbers report! (See pages 657-663 on USA in *Operation World*, 21st Century edition)

Certainly the USA—and Canada too with its large evangelical population, many of whom have their roots back in Europe—need to consider Europe in their mission plans. George Verwer, in a recently issued tape (available on request) speaks out on why Americans especially should consider Europe and the significant role they can play in the evangelisation of the continent. The

same applies to the large body of believers in Latin America. I thank God for the difference they have begun to make in world missions.

In the aftermath of the September 11th attack on New York and the Afghan and Iraq wars, many Americans may be wondering about their role in missions in the nations of the 10/40 window. In Europe the whole world is still within reach! Learning one of the European languages may be a lot easier than Arabic, Farsi or Urdu. This is in no way to hinder the daring and the called from moving into the needy 10/40 window nations. But God is also calling the daring and the concerned to Europe in order to reach the world. In no way is that a second rate missionary task. If evangelising Europe was a monumental task for the great apostle Paul, it should be a task big enough for the most committed Christian today.

Pray over the map of Europe

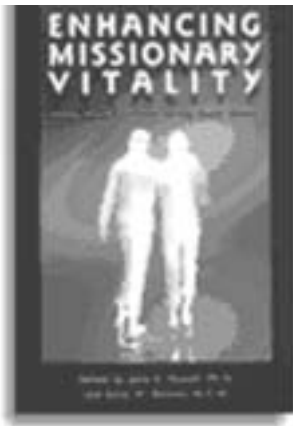
I urge you to get hold of a copy of *Operation World*. It is a wonderful guide to praying for the world intelligently and strategically. Make reading and praying for the nations of Europe a priority. Pray until Europe is re-evangelised. Pray that the next edition of *Operation World* will show a different Europe, with a much higher percentage of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us plan and work for it, let us support it. Europe is calling again. Could this be the voice of God calling His people?



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Enhancing Missionary Vitality: Mental Health Professions Serving Global Mission

by Gracia Wiarda



Edited by John R. Powell and Joyce M. Bowers,
(Mission Training International, 2002, 499 pages)

This book is an extended compilation of short, readable, and well-written articles, contributed primarily by Christian mental health professionals. It is an especially useful resource for those with a background in mental health training interested in serving the missionary population. Unfortunately, the contributors are mainly from North America and the writings have a distinct North American flavour. Nevertheless, there is much to stimulate thinking for readers of other nationalities and much that is applicable and adaptable to their contexts.

The book has something for everyone. Those interested in the history and development of movements will be delighted to learn how mental health professionals became involved in missionary care. Those interested in new developments in the field can read about innovative models of member care.

Several articles in the section on “Complexities of Cross-Cultural Service” highlight different sources of missionary stress. The authors include practical suggestions for helping missionaries cope with the stresses and enhance their spiritual life. Of particular interest are the studies reflecting the role issues and struggles of women missionaries, with the implication that mission organisations must increase their respect

and support of the choices women make for effective and satisfied service.

Mental health professionals who wish to provide consultations and field visits for mission agencies *must* read Powell and White's "A Tripartite Model for Missions Consultations". This article crystallizes their combined experience and wisdom to provide clear and helpful guidelines. It is also important to read McKaughan's survey of what mission CEOs might want from mental health professionals.

The section on "Models for Preventive Services" is particularly valuable for personnel of mission agencies and missions training institutes. The articles highlight the different areas of assessment, training and supportive interventions that provide a continuum of care for the missionary, from selection

to field service. The authors have summarized their knowledge and expertise (often garnered from years of observation, learning, and practice) in their particular areas of emphasis. The dimensions covered include the physical, psychological, affective, and interpersonal needs of missionaries. In the section on "Clinical Interventions" the experienced mental health professionals who have worked extensively with missionaries offer helpful models they have developed or used, giving invaluable insights and practical tools. There is so much to glean from their knowledge and experience.

I believe this book will be very beneficial for all involved directly or indirectly in global missions.



Gracia Wiarda is a Principal Therapist at the Counseling and Care Centre in Singapore. She is a graduate of Wheaton College (1975), and Wheaton Graduate School (1976), and also a Marriage and Family Therapy degree from Hahnemann Graduate School (1989).

Being quite new in the Missions Commission, I have gained so much from my participation in Canada 2003 especially the warm fellowship, networking and building relationships with other diverse but like-minded people from all over the world to work together for a common goal, that is, to do the Great Commission.

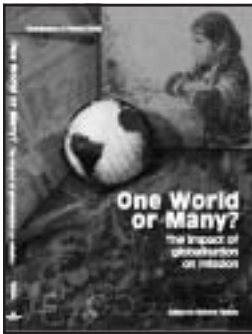
**--Philip Chang, Missions Commission,
National Evangelical Christian Council, Malaysia**

review

One World or Many? The impact of globalisation on mission

by Todd M. Johnson

Edited by Richard Tiplady (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2003, 276 pages.)



Before even opening the cover of this book I would commend the editor for daring to engage the subject of globalization. Was a similar compendium ever produced 100 years ago reflecting on the impact of colonialisation on mission? I would also note that both the American and British spellings of globalis(z)ation appear on its front cover (perhaps the word itself rejects homogenization!)

A factor in the editor's favor is the advantages of doing such a study in the context of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Missions Commission (MC). The MC is one of the broadest-based missions networks around today—providing an enormous and diverse pool of commentators from many cultures. This contrasts with the reality that most commentary on globalization has come from the Western world. In addition, although the intended audience of this book is wider than just the WEA, this group is a key player in a global Christian response to globalization. In both of these ways, the WEA MC is an excellent candidate to produce such a compendium. At the Canada June 2003 meeting in Vancouver the contributors presented and expounded on their chapters, sparking a lively conversation on both the dangers and opportunities of globalization. Participants returned home to 51 different countries outfitted with a vast array of perspectives and responses to globalization.

The book is divided evenly in three parts. In Part 1 “Main Features” four articles develop the definition of globalization. In Part 2 “Specific issues” another six articles examine global issues ranging from ethnicity to women to healthcare. In Part 3 “Mission” one finds theological, missiological, and ecclesiastical reflection on globalization. Finally, Korean missiologists Steve

Moon and David Tai-Woong Lee summarize the impact of globalization on mission in a masterful overview and synthesis of earlier contributions.

Nonetheless the most significant chapter is the introduction in which editor and younger evangelical Richard Tiplady gives direction to the discussion by setting forth an agreed-upon definition of globalization. It is not synonymous with Westernization or simply about global economics but instead “refers to increasing global interconnectedness, so that events and developments in one part of the world are affected by, have to take account of, and also influence, in turn, other parts of the world. It also refers to an increasing sense of a single global whole.” This definition, while allowing authors much latitude in their coverage, also prevents a one-sided critique of globalization. What is remarkable is how contributors, particular non-Westerners, freely present with grave warning upon the dark side of globalization while simultaneously recognizing its positive traits and opportunities.

What sets this book apart from others on globalization is its unique combination of critique, sense of opportunity and reasoned appeal for engagement from an Evangelical point of view. In another sense its weakness is its relative lack of academic interaction with existing literature on globalization—secular, Roman

Catholic, and ecumenical. But the primary purpose of the work is applied missiology with a decidedly activist posture. This is nowhere more needed than in the tension between global and local missiology. The contributors consistently point to the need for emphasis on the value and beauty of the local while stopping short of advocating isolation.

At the same time one senses a decidedly Non-Western uneasiness with globalization. This wariness should give Christians around the world hesitation in trying to utilize globalization for the advance of the gospel. However, this temptation is not limited to Western Christians. One can easily imagine a world 25 years from now where a plethora of Chinese tele-evangelists, African preachers on the Internet, and Latin American Christian media moguls dominate Christian broadcasting. The global Christian church must accept this book’s warning that with power (of any kind) corruption will not be far behind. In the end, it appears that the answer to the book’s title is an unequivocal “yes”! There is one world and there are many. In Andrew Wall’s terminology the Christian church is indigenous (many) because the gospel belongs at home in every culture but it is also pilgrim (one) because the gospel can never be truly at home here on earth. The dynamic tension between these will likely be played out in the context of globalis(z)ation for some years to come.



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reflections

Following Christ in a world of faiths

by Rose Dowsett

A disturbing story...in the Bible

There are some parts of the Bible that I find puzzling – and disturbing. They leave me with many unanswered questions. I have a profound commitment to the inspiration and authority of Scripture. Yet, as I grow older, I find there are more rather than fewer questions that I cannot answer, and more rather than fewer points at which I need to say humbly “I think this is what it means, but please help me understand it better”. And I become increasingly wary of neat systems that confidently tie up every loose end.

The story of the Magi in Matthew 2 is a case in point: intriguing, disturbing, it leaves us with some complex missiological questions.

It is a story that has been sentimentalised out of all recognition, and in my country at least hi-jacked by the Christmas card industry. Three kings in sparkling rich jewel-coloured robes, riding camels, set against a deep blue night sky, with an enormous star hovering over a thatched cowshed – ah, that is a Christmas card maker’s dream! Yet Matthew does not tell us how many they were, or what their

mode of transport was (they might have travelled on foot, or on donkeys.....); nor does he call them kings. There *were* indeed kings in the story—two, not three: Herod....and Jesus. We do not even know that these non-kings were all men, though everybody assumes so.

“And finally, God himself warns them in a dream...not to go back to Herod on their way home...”

What Matthew does tell us—twice—is that these travellers were Magi, that is, astrologers. Now, astrologers were not just astronomers (those who studied the stars as a matter of scientific observation). Rather, they were those who studied the stars as a means

of finding out the will of the gods, what fate lay in the future, and what actions might bring good luck or bad luck. So, astrology, along with its own brand of sacred writings, was forbidden among God’s people. It was a pagan form of magic.

Now, here’s the disturbing bit. These people, on the basis of an activity which displeased God, and using books and “revelations” and methods which were forbidden by God, nonetheless rightly grasp that a very special baby has been born, a baby who is King of the Jews at birth. They also believe this baby has special significance for them (though

they are not themselves Jews), and that the star which has appeared celebrates that fact, is a sign from God, and will lead them to the child. Wrong religion, wrong sacred writings, but right conclusions. By contrast, the chief priests and teachers of the law in Jerusalem, have all the Old Testament writings at their fingertips, are supposedly experts in interpreting them, *and* allegedly are looking eagerly for the Messiah to come. Yet, not only can these men not recognise the evidence when it's under their noses, they can't even be bothered to travel the few miles out to Bethlehem to check it out. Further, when the Magi find the child they seek, they recognise him as the one to be worshiped, tiny baby though he is, and give him prescient gifts that symbolise kingship (gold), worship (frankincense), and death and burial (myrrh). And finally, God himself warns them in a dream, presumably, not to go back to Herod on their way home, and they obey without question.

I should love to know whether they went home to practise astrology once again—after all, it was their livelihood as well as their religion—and whether Mary told them all that the angel of the Lord had revealed about her child's special origin and destiny. I should love to know what, if anything, the Magi might have learned about the hoped-for Messiah from Jews of the Dispersion. Were there some in the country from which they came? We are not told these things, so presumably in the wisdom of God we do not need to know. We do know that the Magi were led to Jesus, and that they worshiped him, limited though their understanding must

have been. In other words, here is God using methods that we might consider unconventional, to say the least, to reveal precious truth and wisdom about himself to committed practitioners of another religion, and graciously communicating with them through their pagan religious practices, in order that they might encounter Christ.

No, I am not hinting at some form of universalism or pluralism or inclusivism. Those Magi needed to come to worship Jesus. And only the Lord knows what the eternal outcome of that encounter was, whether in the end they

"Our God is greater than any other power..."

belonged to the roll-call of Hebrews 11, among so many others who came by the grace and mercy of God to

live by faith, though they never saw the Lord Jesus Christ in bodily form, or knew of his death and resurrection for them. But, I am left with an uneasy feeling that it may be easier than we realise to be more like the chief priests and the teachers of the law than we would care to admit: having the full Scriptures in our hands, and yet not being able to see what God is doing in our day.

The story comes home
And as for the Magi, perhaps we too readily close our minds to the possibility that God, who by his Spirit is at work outside the Church as well as within it (after all, he creates life and sustains it throughout the whole universe, not just among believers), may be communicating with people within their

religious systems and practices, and drawing them to an encounter with himself outside what we would regard as “usual channels”. Perhaps we have domesticated God, and set boundaries on what he can do and how and where. Perhaps we have become so accustomed to reading God’s Word in certain ways that we are scarcely capable of asking fresh questions, or revisiting traditional interpretations.

And so, when I think about being a disciple of Jesus Christ today in a world of other faiths, I find myself both uneasy and full of hope. Uneasy, because I am not sure that we have always found how to hold truth and grace together when we think about other religions, or mined the Scriptures deeply enough, or exegeted them accurately. Full of hope, because today in a privileged way as never before, the Church is now a truly global community. Thus we have the opportunity to listen to fresh questions, to challenge traditional interpretations, to weigh new insights into the Scriptures, as brothers and sisters around the world struggle with what it means to be disciples of Christ in obedience to the Word in a vast mosaic of contexts. Uneasy, because one becomes very vulnerable when the familiar is challenged, and because the new insight is not necessarily right because it’s new any more than the old is right because it’s old. Discerning the authentic voice of God is not always easy. Full of hope, because as time moves steadily on towards its final consummation in eternity, we grow ever closer to the fulfilment of the Lord’s promise that those of every tribe and tongue and

nation shall be drawn out of every religion and worldview to new life in Christ. The religions that contribute so greatly to the chains binding people do not have the last word. Our God is greater than any other power or being on earth or in heaven.

The issues we need to face regarding following Christ in today’s multi-faith world are urgent and complex. They cannot be addressed only within the community of professional theologians (or missiologists!), vital though it is to bring our best-trained minds and hearts to wrestle with them. Nor are yesterday’s questions all that need to be on the agenda. On the one hand, while the Word is unchanging, the community that needs to ponder it, and the world in which we are located, is changing dynamically and rapidly. Today is not yesterday. For nearly seventeen hundred years, the theological agenda, and the way in which Christians thought about other religions, was largely shaped by the framework of Christendom. Even the modern missionary movement, from the late eighteenth century onwards, was largely captive to that, or at the very least compromised by it.

Today we live in a world where increasingly, especially in the world’s cities, people of every religion and none rub shoulders with one another. The twentieth century saw people migrations on an unprecedented scale; the upshot is that increasingly people observe at close hand practitioners of faiths different from their own. In many places, Christians and Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, Sikhs and secularists, are

jumbled up together in bewildering fashion. For western Christendom, that has been quite a shock. Not since the days of the Early Church have Christians had to live out their faith in such a multi-faith environment.

As then, so now for those who call themselves Christians. Some try to accommodate anything and everything (that way lies pluralism and inclusivism). Some experience the cost of persecution (and let's not be starry-eyed about that: persecution means suffering). Some find another faith more attractive, or less demanding (that way lies apostasy). Some try to change the Christian faith to fit culture (that way lies heresy). Some try to privatise their Christian faith (that way lies unbiblical reductionism). Some profess to be 'born-again', but believe 'all good people will go to heaven' (as did 45% of those claiming to be evangelicals in a Gallup poll in the USA a few years ago). Some conclude that the only appropriate form of mission in today's world should be social development and aid, and that proclamation of the gospel and of Jesus Christ as Lord is irresponsible and imperialist, stirring up racial hatred and damaging cultures.

Clearly, we have some very hard work to do, because many of these responses must grieve the heart of God, and betray how shallow our discipleship too often is. And these problems are only those *within* the Church, before we ever get to how we actually incarnate and express the gospel coherently and effectively amongst those of other faiths.

Probing questions for new dimensions

What might be some of the areas we need to dialogue about amongst the global Christian family? How can we help one another 'to see more clearly and to follow more nearly'?

As always, as evangelicals we want to begin with the Scriptures. Here are some of the things I think we need to grapple with. You can surely add others.

1. What does God have to say in the Scriptures (a) negatively and (b) positively about other religions? Are they entirely demonic, Devil-inspired fabrications of the fallen and rebellious mind at war with God? Or are they evidence that, made inescapably in the image of God, however fallen, human beings cannot help themselves but seek after God? On the one hand, many verses in the Psalms and Isaiah, for example, seem to support the first position (e.g. Psalm 96:5, Isaiah 44:9-20). On the other hand, Paul's experience in Athens (Acts 17:16-34) seems to support the second. How might exploring this theme help us know when to be confrontational and when to be sympathetic in relation to another faith?
2. On several occasions, Jesus drew attention to what could be learned from pagans (unbelievers). For example, he commended the Good Samaritan (Luke 15), the centurion in Luke 7:1-10, and the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28. What might we expect to learn from those

- of other faiths? Are we open to doing so? Have we the humility to do so? What commendable things might we need to affirm more readily?
3. How does Creation declare the glory of God (e.g. Psalms 19 and 96)? What kinds of 'true truth' (revelation) are accessible to all humankind, even those who never hear the gospel (e.g. Romans 1 and 2)? How might that be evident within another religion? How might that become a bridge for the gospel? What are the limitations of this kind of revelation ("you can't be saved by thinking trees are beautiful")?
 4. Hebrews 11 is a record of those who were accepted by God, accounted righteous through the atonement of Christ, even though they neither heard about Christ nor responded to him, since they lived before his earthly life, death and resurrection. Was this pattern of God's grace only operational before Christ chronologically, or can it be applied to those who are 'pre-Christ informationally' – i.e. have never yet had the chance to hear the gospel? How do we balance this with those Scriptures that state that an explicit response of repentance and faith towards the person and work of Jesus Christ of Nazareth is absolutely necessary?
 5. In both Old and New Testaments we meet people (for example, Rahab, Nebuchadnezzar, the Queen of Sheba, Naaman, the Magi, Cornelius, etc) whose experience outside Israel or outside the Church leads them to seek after or to recognise the one true and living God. In some cases there is clearly a human agent who helps them towards faith, but not in all of them. Are there ways in which following another religion might prepare people to seek after God, or to recognise the gospel for what it is when they encounter it? How does the Holy Spirit work beyond the boundaries of the Church today? What should we be looking for?
 6. Many religions display supernatural phenomena: healings, miracles, ecstatic experiences, and so on. What are the biblical guidelines to help us discern when such phenomena are evidences of the authentic work of the Holy Spirit of God, and when they are counterfeit? Is the Holy Spirit dramatically evident in different ways in different religious contexts?
 7. What are the hallmarks of authentic discipleship as a person moves from another religion to following Christ? Will submitting to Jesus Christ as Lord look different in different cultures, and within the context of different dominant religions? What will be the evidence of a profound worldview transformation rather than a superficial cultural shift? What kind of mission and ministry does the Lord look for to effect this?
 8. As we look again at biblical contextualisation, and examples within the Scriptures of that process at work, what lessons can we learn about contextualised mission and discipleship amongst those of other specific religions? What do we need to learn, and do, and become, to see more effective gospel-radiant living among Muslims, or Hindus, or

Buddhists, or secularists? What will the counter-cultural Kingdom-life of Christian individuals and communities look like in different specific settings? What qualities of Christian discipleship might most powerfully arrest the attention of a Muslim or Hindu, Buddhist or secularist?

9. Paul's letters to the Romans, Hebrews and Colossians (for example) were written into not only different cultural contexts but to believers drawn out of different religious worlds. What models might we find from this to help us distinguish different ways of communicating the gospel within different religious worlds today?
10. In the Scriptures, and in the life of the Church down through the centuries, what place do prayer and persecution have in the effective

testimony of God's people in the face of opposition from those of other faiths? What do we need to learn from this?

These are just some of the areas where I believe we need to engage as a global Christian family in serious study, scouring the Scriptures again with fresh eyes and with a new, enriched symphony of voices from different parts of the world. The whole Body working together is better able to understand the mind and heart and will of God than any one part alone!

May the sovereign Lord of history, who has placed us today as his people in this exciting, demanding multi-national and multi-faith world of ours, help us to help one another to be transformed and transforming disciples of the Triune God.



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For me Canada 2003 was a refreshing reminder of richness of both the diverse traditions and unity of the global evangelical community. Interacting with evangelicals from 50 different countries gave me a fresh vision of the body of Christ worldwide and accentuated how none of national or linguistic perspectives alone offers us a finished portrait of Jesus.

**--Todd M. Johnson, Director, Center for the Study of Global Christianity
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