

PROVIDING A GLOBAL WRITERS' ROUNDTABLE TO SPEAK INTO THE CHALLENGES OF WORLD MISSION TODAY

Connections

The Journal of the WEA Mission Commission

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Tentmaking in Today's Global Environment


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From the Heart and Mind of the Editor



William Taylor is the Executive Director of the WEA Mission Commission. Born in Latin America, he and his wife, Yvonne, served for 17 years before a move to the USA. He is the father of three adult GenXers born in Guatemala.

A word from Bali, Indonesia

I conclude this editorial surrounded by creative, committed, global servants in the cause of the Kingdom of God in Christ. Why so? Well, because from March 6-11, 2006, some 370 women and men from 50 nations have quietly, boldly and prayerfully gathered at Ethnê06 in Bali to consider the historic challenge of the least-reached peoples of the world. Hosted by the network called SEALINK out of South East Asia.

Many of our MC Associates are here, including some of our leadership: K Rajendran, our chair, and Kelly O'Donnell, MemCa network coordinator. Two of the key conveners are Kent Parks and Beram Kumar, representing SEALINK and Ethnê06. Some of the other MC Associates (from 16 nations) I have spotted include Todd Poulter, David Packiam, Bob Lopez, Michael Abel, Stanley Ow, Bangbang Widjaja, Timothy Olonade, Greg Parsons, John Amalraj, Mats Tunehag, Kang Seungsan, Susanta Patra and Augustine Jebakumar.

Both SEALINK and Ethnê are missional networks currently "docked" with the Mission Commission (MC), and it is a win-win relationship. Their heartbeat, vision and

gifting pour into the ongoing global alliance/network that makes the MC what it is. We provide to them a broader forum and platform into which and from which they can speak. I am impressed with the depth of this programme (stronger than some previous similar events, rooted in the church and missiologically driven), the diversity of voices—older and younger, women and men, representing the full spectrum of outreach to the least-reached peoples.

MANI in Kenya

Some 500 leaders from across Africa and around the world just met in Nairobi, Kenya for the MANI 2006 Continental Consultation on African National Initiatives (26 February to 4 March). The delegates from 48 African nations and 18 countries abroad exert combined leadership influence over hundreds of denominations and organizations, thousands of churches, tens of thousands of Christian workers and many millions of believers.

And MC Associates were present there also, through our staff, Kees van der Wilden, MemCa coordinator, Kelly O'Donnell. The new MANI

leader is Reuben Ezemadu of Nigeria, and an MC Associate. He was joined by MC Associates Younoussa Djao from Ivory Coast, Timothy Olonade of Nigeria, Peter Tarantal of South Africa and others from Africa.

Back to Ethnê. Our small role in it, as one of the convening bodies, gives us additional integrity when we re-affirm our own high calling as the WEA Mission Commission to focus on the ever-expanding extension of the Kingdom of God. We want to respond to cutting-edge concerns of the missional people of God—the church on the move in all of its forms and empowering by the Spirit; serving within cultures and cross-culturally; near and far; local and global; evangelizing and discipling; proclaiming and serving; praying and missiologizing; weeping and sowing.

A future issue of **Connections** will give us a more complete report of both Ethnê and MANI.

The Bi-Vocational Challenge—tentmaking in a changing world

Second, as you read this issue, you will discover two primary challenging content packages. Our feature theme is "Tentmaking in today's global environment". You will appreciate the diversity of voices, primarily from the TIE—Tentmakers International Exchange—network. We are indebted to Derek Christensen and Bob Lopez for gathering the material and writing with such clarity. The least-reached peoples of the world are simply hard to reach, due to historical, cultural, religious factors as well as ancient spiritual strongholds. Thus we will need enormous streams of new cross-cultural workers who know how to "get in and stay in" within these nations for longer rather than shorter terms. We must continue to re-visit our theology of vocation

and work, of ecclesiology and mission. And yet to be developed in **Connections** will be the newer focus on "Business as Mission".

Towards South Africa this June 18-24, 2006—SA06

The MC convenes a global consultation every three years for mutual encouragement, growth in our understanding of the missional enterprise around the globe, dealing with global issues and challenges, planning our joint work and strategies, and to become better equipped for our work. These consultations are issues-centered events with a strong training and planning component. While plenary sessions will focus on diverse global issues, all of our networks and task forces will intentionally engage in equipping and planning activities.

The Programme Narrative presents the flow of the program and the emphases we pray will shape us for the future. And a number of our task force and network leaders write with expectation for their teams at SA06.

You will be stretched as you read Todd Johnson's singular global summaries in "Seven Signposts of Hope and Challenge in Global Christianity", followed by two responses, by Bertil Ekström of Brazil and David Tai-Woong Lee of Korea.

Do join with us in prayer as we seek the mind of God for the MC and its ongoing working teams at SA06. The next issue will report in full to our readers.

Drawing to a close

As you come to the end of this issue, you will be challenged with the missiological reflections, news and reviews.

We invite your input on these topics and issues, and you can do this by writing to: connections@globalmission.org. Good and global friends, read, profit, grow, reflect, serve and pray! <<

By William D. Taylor

MCA'S: WEBSITES OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

3P Ministries

3pministries.org
Information about prayer and giving

Africa Christian Mission (ACM)

africachristianmission.com
to inform and to invite prayerful participation in the work of mission

AC4

techmission.org
resources related to Christian Community Centers, platform for mission and community development

Antioch Mission

missaootioquia.org.br
organizational info

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Missionen

aem.ch or mission.ch
organizational and missions info

Areopagos

areopagos.org
organizational info; theological & missiological issues; book reviews

Asian Center for Theological Studies and Mission

acts.ac.kr
organizational info

Baptist Theological Seminary, Porugal

seminariobaptista.blogspot.com
organizational info

Centro de Capacitación Misionera Transcultural

ccmt-online.org
organizational info

Christian Vocations

christianvocations.org
provides information and resources for Christians seeking opportunities in Christian Ministry e.g. short/long term, agencies

Church Mission Society (CMS)

cms-uk.org
info of CMS ministries; support to international community for mission service

Church Resource Ministries

crnnet.org
organizational info; ministries

Comhina

comhina.org
organizational info

Comibam

mm-comibam.net
Tool to help the Iberoamerican church in its missional task

Comibam International

comibam.org
information tool for the Latin American

National Mission Movements (NMM)**Conference of European Churches (CEC)**

cec-kek.org
organizational info

Deutsche Missions Gesellschaft (DMG)

DMGint.de
To support churches in Germany in the sending and support of their missionaries

Dev Corps International

DevCorps.org
organizational info

EFC Global Mission Roundtable

globalmission.ca
communicate the collaborative nature of mission in Canada

Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church

ekhc.org.et
Coordinating evangelism & missions discipleship & churchplanting

Ethne and Sealink

ethne.net
for global UPG meeting

European Christian Mission (ECM)

ecmbritain.org
organizational info; recruitment issues

Evangelical Association of the Caribbean

caribevangelical.org
info on events and church projects

Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI)

efionline.org
organizational info; aid to the churches

Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA)

EFMAMissions.org
organizational info

Federacion Misionera Evangelica Costarricense (FEDEMEC)

fedemec.org
mission under UPG's, tool for churches

Finnish Missionary Council

lahetysneuvosto.fi
sharing information and news

Fresh Anointing Revival Ministries

freshanointingrevival.org
organizational info, activities and doctrine

Geneva Global

genevaglobal.com
organizational info and objectives

Global Connections

globalconnections.co.uk
info for members of UK NMM

Global Careers

globalcareers.org
organizational info

Global Mapping International

gmi.org
sale of products, links to sites for mission research

Global Missionary Fellowship

gmf.or.kr
organizational info

Global Missionary Training Center

gmtc.or.kr
info of world & Korean mission; intro to GMTC training center

Global Opportunities

globaloppss.org
To inform, educate and mobilize tent-makers

Gospel Echoing Missionary Society

gembihar.com
activities of the ministry and prayer support

Horasis

horasis.nl
services for Organization and Leadership development

IFMA

ifmamissions.org
organizational info

India Missions Association (IMA)

imaindia.org
organizational info

Instituto Ibero-Americano de

Estudios Transculturales (IIBET)
iibet.org
ministry activities and goals

Interdev Partnership Associates

interdev.org
IPA info; partnership resource material

Interserve Fellowship Berhad

interserve.org
ministry; job opportunities

Interserve

interserve.org
information about Interserve's ministry

JUVEP

juvep.com.br

Info over departments, ministries and people involved in this organization

King of kings Baptist Centre

kingofkings.org.za
information about this South African church

Korea World Missions Association

kwma.org
organizational info; mission information and articles, posting of meetings

Living Hope Community Centre

livinghope.co.za
Info about HIV/AIDS actions of this church

Member Care

membercare.org
resources; updates

MEVIC, Evangelical Intercultural Mission

conceptus.net/mevic
organizational info

MF Norwegian School of Theology

mf.no
organizational info

Missions Interlink (Austr.)

ea.org.au
history & introduction to its activities, services and members

Missions Interlink (NZ)

missions.org.nz
Provide information for people enquiring about mission to, from and in New Zealand

Missions Mobilization Network

missionsmobilisation.org
info & resource on missions mobilization in 5 languages

Mosaiek Church

mosaiek.com
organizational info

NEMA

NigeriaMissions.org
ministries to missions movements in Nigeria

OMF International

omf.net
organizational info, mobilisation

OM India

omindia.org
online brochure for ministry in India

OM UK

uk.om.org
organizational info and Global Focus, a resource programme for the Church

Challenges and changes discomfort us, even if they are good! But without them, life becomes dull and boring.

This is true as followers of Christ. The following are some of the challenges as we approach SA06

—the MC Global Mission Issues Summit:

WEA Mission Commission Challenges As We Approach South Africa

June 18 - 24 2006



K. Rajendran is the General Secretary of the India Missions Association and the Chair of World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission Global Leadership Council.

Fusioning the Overall Leadership Change in the WEA MC:

Dr. William Taylor, a veteran missionary, a thinker, and a networker, is passing leadership of the MC to Bertil Ekström. Transition is quite a challenge for all around—incoming leader, outgoing leader and the MC constituency. Moving forward will affect all, mostly in good ways, always with some trying to find their spots. New relationships have to be built to take the MC forward, yet leadership will need to persevere on issues like the inclusion of the new two-thirds world leadership and the building of momentum in fulfilling the Great Commission of Christ.

Fusioning Networks Leadership and Contemporary Challenges:

WEA MC has, over the years, created and allowed structured and non-structured networks to affect the Christian missions' world and movements, touching topics such as member care of missionaries, tentmakers, mission mobilizers, unreached/least people groups, national mission movements, and others. The continuity of these networks is crucial for ongoing Great Commission endeavors around the world. These networks will continue to give direction, momentum, and will

work to change “old” mindsets to the new innovative ways of world missions. They move with the heartfelt passion for which the Lord has called their leaders to serve.

Fusioning the Identified Global Leadership:

In the newer, global Christian world, there is a constant challenge of finding competent new national and international leaders. Most of the newer developing world became independent from their colonialists in the recent past, having followed and worked under the previous colonial regimes. As consequence, there was a very little indigenous leadership developed, including among Christians.¹ Fusioning these new leaders with the older world and their constituencies, without offending, is a tricky matter. It will take time, greater efforts, and conscious decisions.

Fusioning the Economically Dominant World in a True, Trusting Partnership with the Newer Christian World:

Fusioning and bridging the trust gap between the “have” world and the “have-less world” is another challenge that we will have to face. Often, the economic powers drive events and strategies in the developing world, regardless of good or bad results, usually without even considering the local context or the suitability.

The newer developing-world Christian leadership has to form truly genuine partner-

ships with the “older Christian” colonies. Often, the party needing funds forms some kind of partnership with a middleman, or “dalal,”² trusted by the economically stronger nations. The recipients bear with the middlemen because there is no other way to move forward as the donors and the churches do not yet trust the emerging partners of the newer world. Therefore, there has to be a forum like the MC where the right kind of partnerships are nurtured and built without much of the meddling of the “middlemen.”

Fusioning the Gender Balance:

Another challenge is finding an equal voice from the other gender. Often, machoism is reinforced with biased theological factors to keep the gender out of the leadership and decision making process. This takes much energy and bridging and networking to change mindsets.

Fusioning to Each Other in the Lord:

Above all, the need for connecting with each other in Christ has to be the main agenda of our time together. Trust and understanding have to grow as we sit shoulder to shoulder, learn, and vouch to work together.

Let us join and work together in some of the above issues as we meet in South Africa. May the Lord Jesus continue to work in our lives and keep us open for His ways.

Blessings. <<

K. Rajendran

¹ This is very similar to the lower-caste Indians who were dominated by the upper-castes and suddenly find new freedom, but lacked competency as they were under suppression for about 3000 years. Developing competent leadership takes time and efforts to produce such leadership as Dr. Ambedkar and others.

² “Dalals” is a strong Hindi word used in the world of stockbrokers and a few others for the middle-men or agents.

Tentmaking in today's mission environment

Origins

Tentmaking is now a well established part of the current world mission scene. Estimates by Barrett and Johnson in *World Christian Trends* suggest there are more than 150,000 people who would fit the standard definitions of tentmaker, and recent developments out of Asia suggest this number may well be conservative. It is not a new phenomenon however, as throughout the history of Christianity much of the spread of the gospel has been through the movement across and through cultures of lay people, many of them in their workplace environment. Paul joined with Priscilla and Aquila to make tents in Corinth (Acts 18:1-4) and since then, many of God's people have operated out of workshops, businesses, professions, in their military service and through their travel as merchants and sailors. The Moravians established their early work within such a model and William Carey, out of necessity, supported much of his work and that of his colleagues through his university teaching and his business ventures.

Controversies

The fact that this model of spreading the gospel has such a long history does not save it however from considerable controversy in the modern mission world. Tentmaking is controversial for a number of reasons.

One is that the term itself is often misunderstood. It does not fit easily into a modern environment, especially a western one where tents which were once 'portable living units' are now 'temporary shelters used for recreational purposes' in the words of Pete Hammond. The term itself is used only once in Scripture (Acts 18:4) and so creates confusion by its very use. However the many attempts to replace it have failed to gain agreement. Many terms have been used including kingdom professional, bivocational witness, bivocational missionary, non-professional missionary, lay missionary, God's special envoys, self-supporting witness and lay apostolate. None has gained wide acceptance and so by default we have returned to 'Tentmaking.' The term has only been used in

mission circles again in the past half century, the first appearance known to this author being in a document from the World Council of Churches in 1962.

A second area of controversy surrounds definitions of the term.

In the earlier days of the movement, the emphasis was on self support, the capacity to engage in work cross culturally at no cost to the home base. Today definitions are much broader, referring more to those whose involvement in work across cultures for the sake of the Kingdom is on the basis of a secular visa and not a missionary one. Some of these people are supported fully from home while others earn high salaries or run productive businesses. More important than the degree or means of support however is the element of intentionality. Is this person engaging in this activity for the sake of the Kingdom or there simply because their work has taken them to another culture and they also happen to be Christian?

A third area of controversy relates to ethical questions. Greg Livingstone aptly described tentmakers as 'job takers, job makers and job fakers.' Some are employed by others. Some set up businesses. And some pretend to do one or other of these but in fact are covertly working as missionaries, doing something other than that shown on their entry visa. The famous article in *Time* magazine of June 2003 raised questions especially about those whose operations are covert. Is it right for Christians to lie or mislead in their desire to serve the gospel? The debate rages between those who see the



Derek Christensen is a New Zealander who spent much of his working life as a Baptist pastor in both New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. He now teaches at Carey Baptist College, a theological seminary in Auckland, New Zealand where his subjects include cross cultural missions, tentmaking and marketplace theology. His major interest of the past two decades has been in the tentmaking movement, with particular focus on training. He is currently acting as International Director of TIE International, the global movement that coordinates world tentmaking. He is married to Isa and they have four adult children and five grandchildren, one of the families living in China where Derek and Isa visit regularly.

needs of the Kingdom as superior to all human law and those who consider that dishonesty or deception in the pursuit of the gospel undercut the value of the witness itself.

Despite the controversies, the Tentmaking movement is clearly here to stay. In the earlier days (1970's and '80's), many traditional mission agencies viewed the movement with great suspicion, at times well justified as some of those who went out were highly entrepreneurial, very independent and often untrained in current mission or cross cultural understandings. The 'lone ranger' syndrome developed, and the missions movement was hard pressed to understand the new breed of people who saw themselves as part of world missions but certainly had not entered by any of the usual doors. If the tentmakers were connected to an agency at all, then it was generally a very small group that placed few requirements on its associates.

During the nineties though, many larger traditional agencies have recognized the need to develop new strategies for work in restricted access countries. Something like seventy five nations today do not issue visas to Christian missionaries, most of these being amongst the least evangelized areas. Some missions began to recycle traditional career missionaries as business people, with some interesting results! Most have begun to recognize however that people entering for employment or business need competence in their chosen occupation and there is starting to emerge a wiser use of both resources and pre-departure preparation time.

It is still true to say though, that the tentmaking movement worldwide is young, raw and often uncoordinated. It has minimal literature, little recognition in many mission

training programs and faces significant challenges, many of which will be dealt with in a later article.

The emergence of the contemporary movement

So why did this movement emerge almost unannounced in the second half of the twentieth century?

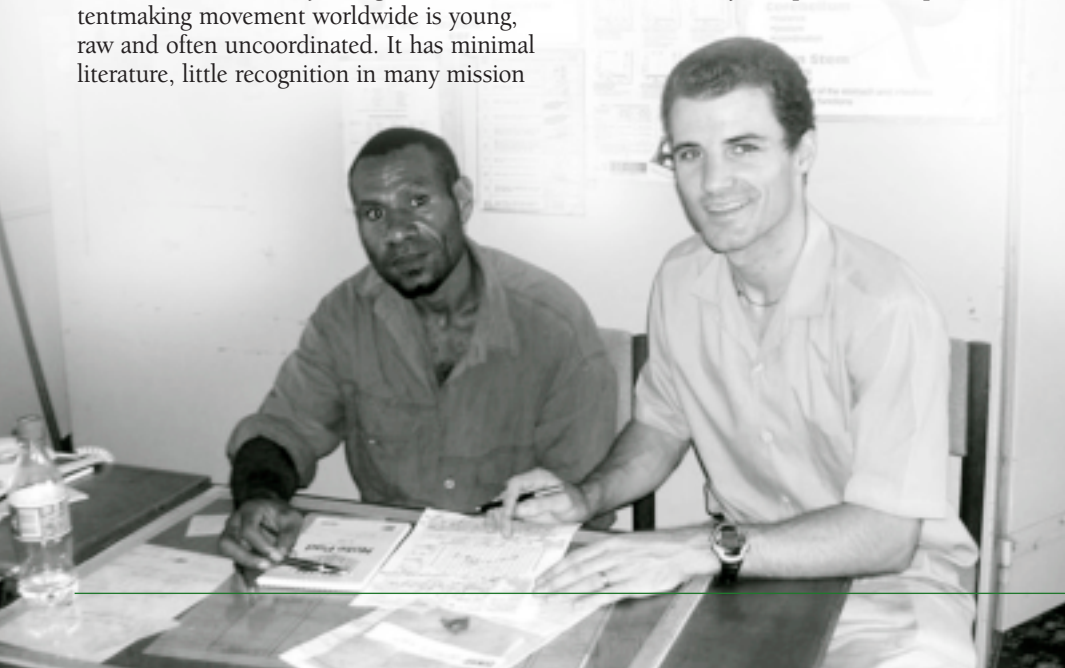
It pays to repeat that it was in fact always there, unnamed, often unnoticed but present *de facto* wherever keen Christians worked across cultures and tried to join in with the work of God's Spirit in that place. It has always been so, sometimes accidentally and sometimes more intentionally. It was, however, the emergence of a number of fresh factors that led to the present state and self awareness of the Tentmaking movement.

Five factors dominate.

1. Restriction of access

The first is quite simply the fact that many countries are no longer accessible to traditional missions. As mentioned above, some seventy-five countries will not issue visas for those wanting to do mission work as their stated purpose of entry. Some are more tightly closed than others but all seventy-five make entry by traditional means either difficult or impossible. The reasons for this are multiple. Post-colonialism is clearly a factor as nations emerge from a colonial era into independence and rediscovery of identity. Religious factors also play a part. For example, in a number of nations, Islamic faith is part of that journey of national identity and political independence.

Derek Christensen



Overlake Christian Church

occ.org
Church information

Paraclete Inc.

paraclete.net/eagle
organizational info & ministry of Van Meters

Partners International

partnersintl.org
organizational info

Philippine Missions Association

philippinemissions.net
organizational info and people groups

PMI

pminternacional.org
potential long term role of Latin Americans in this specific people group

Portuguese Evangelical Alliance,

Missions Commission
portalevangelico.pt
organizational info

Redcliffe College

redcliffe.org
Research and innovation in Mission

Generating Change

generatingchange.co.uk
training for international mission –including the online journal- 'Encounters'

Samaritan Strategy Africa

samaritan-strategy-africa.org
vision & info about holistic ministry

Seoul Theological University

stu.ac.kr
organizational info

Sepal

sepal.org.br / brasil2010.org
Tool help pastors in research and biblical studies

Serving in Mission (SIM)

sim.org
general info; ministries; services

Singapore Center for Evangelism and Mission (SCEM)

scem.info
organizational info

Stanway Institute for World Mission and Evangelism

stanwayinstitute.org
info on mission and ministry of institute

Sydney Missionary and Bible College

smbc.com.au
Information on training programmes and resources of the school cross cultural mission

The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM)

teamworld.org
vision update, opportunities, prayer

Tiplady Consulting

tiplady.org.uk
articles and information on issues in world mission

Trans World Radio

twr.org
organizational info

Urban India Ministries

urbanindia.org
Inform, promote and network

Velemegna Society

velemegna.org
Founders details and history

WEA – MC

globalmission.org
organizational info; links

wearesources.org

(downloadable) articles on missiological issues

missionarytraining.com

info about missiological training issues

West Africa Theological Seminary

watsonline.org
organizational info

World Mission Center

worldmissioncenter.com
info of ministry activities

Worldview Resource Group

wrg3.org
answers interrogatives about form and Function & portal for seminar registration

Wycliffe (Asian Diaspora Initiative)

wycliffe.net
info of the organization and its branches

xGlobal Mission Innovation

xgmi.net
ministry profile of the organization

Additional helpful links:**Emercy**

emercy.org/index.htm

info about member care services <<

In other nations, the faith system has been political rather than religious, as in some Communist areas. In today's world, nations do have the right to determine who crosses their borders and it is hardly surprising that many have chosen not to allow in those whose primary intention is to change the faith of its citizens to a religion seen rightly or wrongly as predominantly western. It is helpful to reflect on our own reactions within our own nations to entry applications by those whose occupation is listed as 'missionary for Islam' or 'missionary for Buddhism'.

2. Globalization

The world, at the same time, has both more and less restricted borders. National boundaries have been redefined to reflect self awareness and identity. Meanwhile, economic and technological changes have meant huge changes in the way we relate to each other. It is possible to fly almost anywhere in the world within one or two days. It is possible to communicate to people almost anywhere on the face of the globe within a microsecond by e-mail or satellite phone. It is possible to get information on the web about almost any place or any product. And the world's markets are shifting at an amazing pace and we have come to accept different trading patterns to those of the past. On a recent visit to China, I walked through open air markets

selling exactly the same goods as I can buy at the \$2 shop down the road from my home.

This all affects the job market as skills go global. It is estimated that one million Americans are working abroad at any one time and similar percentages are true for other countries as well. In my own district, I chat daily with an Indian computer expert, ride in taxis with an Afghani driver, buy ginger tea from Chinese merchants and have coffee with a Taiwanese colleague. Friends teach English as a second language in Thailand, run an electronics business in South Asia... you know the story and that is the world we live in. The end result is that there is an international demand for particular skills and people with these skills can move easily into almost any nation, including those we described above as restricted in access.

3. The cost of missions

In the early days of the current movement, there was great hope that Tentmaking may solve some of the financial problems faced by traditional missions. The cost of much mission work was rising, especially as length of term shortened, educational costs increased, urbanization pushed up accommodation costs and so on. Now there was a chance for people to engage missionally in other cultures while they were being paid for by someone else. 'Self supporting' was the term being used very freely.





That was a rather naïve hope. Much of the work done by tentmakers is costly. Language learning, business start ups, the gap between local wages and living costs – all of these are factors in much Tentmaking work.

However there is still a major cost factor that assists many tentmakers. For example, people become involved in intentional missional witness who would not have been involved before, people who are committed as Christians and who wake up to the opportunities afforded within their secular job location. The Filipino evangelical church has seen with remarkable clarity the opportunities that arise through the Filipino Diaspora, over a million Filipinos working offshore at any one time, many in domestic positions in the Middle East.

It is possible to multiply the workforce cost efficiently by wise strategies, but it is naïve to believe that Tentmaking will instantly solve all the financial challenges faced by current mission work.

4. Compatible mission strategies

Tentmaking, in its modern form, coincides with the rise of a number of missiolog-

ical strategies that together form what we sometimes call the frontier mission movement. Focus on people groups, emphasis on the 10-40 window, realignment of resources, urbanization, all of these are compatible with a Tentmaking approach. As many of the people groups are in restricted access areas, Tentmaking is the only option. And many of those areas are in the 10-40 window.

5. Fresh awareness of theologies surrounding laity and marketplace

During exactly the same period, there has been a renewed focus on the place and nature of the laity. This has run alongside theologies of work and an interest in Christian influence within the secular marketplace. Where does mission take place and who engages in mission? If churches wake up to the fact that biblically, mission takes place where the people are (the people outside of faith) and that the whole people of God (*Laos*) is the workforce of mission, then it prepares the way for a Tentmaking approach.

There is significant evidence in western Christian circles of such a renewed interest,

accompanied by a great flood of literature both informed and hasty. In the end, the future of Tentmaking depends in part on the recovery of a true *Laos* perspective that lines up with the Lausanne goal of ‘the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.’

These five factors, accompanied by the breakthrough examples of pioneer tentmakers, assisted by a long history and supported by biblical models, have led to the emergence of the current Tentmaking movement.

Conclusion

Yet the situation is fragile, loosely coordinated, missiologically raw and organizationally scattered. The next decade will be crucial as the movement faces major challenges on its way to maturity. In the next edition of *Connections*, we will outline some of those challenges. <<

If Barrett and Johnson¹ are right, there are something like 150,000 tentmakers in the world today, but where are they? Why do we hear so little about them? Where are the agencies to handle them on the scale of the great mission agencies circling our globe? Where are the books, the courses in mission schools and seminaries, the news and the heroes and the stories?

And why do so few people even understand the term 'Tentmaking'?

Challenge and response

A look at the state of the global Tentmaking movement:

The Tentmaking movement is at a vital stage in its contemporary history, a stage of crisis and challenge and also great opportunity. It is a movement only half a century old in its current form, and like a hormone loaded teenager, faces many risks as it explores its place in the surrounding world.

This article aims to identify some of the major challenges that face the movement today and then begins to sketch in some of the responses that are being made, particularly by the international agency that aims to coordinate Tentmaking, *TIE International*.

Hey, won't somebody notice me please?

One challenge is simply that of recognition. Few people even seem to know we are here. The famous *Perspectives* reader has just one nine page article tucked away in 782 pages.² Until recently, many agencies either had no place for tentmakers in their traditional workforce or else were confused about how to handle them.

The literature is sparse, a mere handful of books being written since the seminal work of Christy Wilson in 1979.³ Most of that literature is also about practice more than theory, for a popular audience and not an academic one. Therefore, our seminaries, Bible colleges and

mission training agencies have very few courses specifically designed for tentmakers, they rarely mention them in advertising, and academic missiologists often write as though tentmakers do not exist. A browse through major recent texts will confirm this. So too will a glance at the list of theses completed at major institutions, although recently there have been a few theses completed and one or two published.

So, the normal means by which a movement becomes recognized have not been utilized by the fledgling movement. Although there is a long and honorable history, it has not been translated into eye catching format. Tentmakers are people of action more than words, work more than books and doing more than thinking.

But if you do recognize me, careful with the publicity!

But there's a catch! The very nature of Tentmaking often means that too much publicity creates a security risk. The other day, the editor of this article saw a Christian TV

broadcast in our totally open access nation, celebrating the 150th anniversary of one of our major churches. During an interview, the senior pastor sat in front of a large missions photo board with a section labeled 'Creative access nations,' and the photos of people working in these nations were highly visible. That is the sort of recognition and publicity that many tentmakers do not want, especially listed as 'missionaries.' How do we increase the Tentmaking profile in the sending Christian community without risking the work and networks in the host nation with legal restrictions on the spread of the gospel?

Our much loved Bill Taylor asked for photos to brighten up our articles, but photos can be a problem. Stories are often told with identities disguised.

This is not because the tentmakers are law breakers, deceivers and frauds, a religious CIA penetrating deep into enemy territory in a religious cold war. No, it is simply a matter of being wise in some very delicate settings, maintaining integrity of purpose within a

Derek Christensen

1 D. Barrett and T. M. Johnson, eds. *World Christian Trends*. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2001) p.61.

2 R.D. Winter and S. C. Hawthorne, eds. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999).

3 J. Christy Wilson Jr., *Today's Tentmakers: Self-support: An Alternative Model for Worldwide Witness* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1979).

zone of discretion. To identify openly with the term 'missionary' or link directly with well known mission agencies would mean that the countries where many serve would no longer welcome them.

And that raises the other side of the security challenge. Discretion is one side. Honesty is the other. How far do I go in identifying with what God is doing in a nation not open to the gospel while maintaining integrity with my visa? Can I truly bless a nation with my work of itself without compromising my desire to be Christ's ambassador there as well?

Working through the issues of security and integrity are part of the upcoming challenges, yet too often tentmakers flounder through lack of guidance and example. Being as harmless as doves and wise as serpents is tougher than it looks.

How do we keep us all together?

The Tentmaking movement is made up of diverse elements. Greg Livingston's description of tentmakers as job makers, job takers and job fakers is an indication of this. Recently, the job makers division has begun to gain momentum, helped by some fine writings and a track at the 2004 Lausanne meetings in Pattaya. Some are suggesting this "Business as Mission" track is entirely separate from the Tentmaking movement and should work on its own. Others would see this separation as a backward move.

Many people engaged in Relief and Development operate in fact as tentmakers, but rarely have much to do with the mainstream movement as such.

In some areas of the world there are two or more separate groups representing the tentmakers of the region. And in other places, major tentmaker placement groups neither use the term nor recognize any links with others of a similar intention.

Christian mission will always be made up of those of diverse style, background and strategy. That is inevitable. But for Tentmaking, the fragility of the entire operation is highlighted when we become competitive or fragmented. The only international body is TIE International, a totally voluntary group made up of people already holding other jobs and struggling to bring about some sort of common direction. It is a challenge indeed and we shall spend some of our time at SA06 working on this issue.

If we are working in secular jobs, then why do we need Christian training?

Training is one of the interesting challenges of the future. Do tentmakers need to be trained in Christian mission as well as in their secular field? If so, how much training do they need and how does it differ from ordinary mission training?

The broad picture is that training has largely been neglected or underdone for tentmakers, partly because people already engaged in high level secular roles have not been able to take time out for dedicated training, and partly because traditional training providers have not put in place training that suits the specific needs of tentmakers in both curriculum and delivery systems.

Tentmaker agencies generally provide some practical orientation prior to field placement, assuming candidates already have a sound foundation of Bible, theology and mission practice, an assumption shaky at best.

Recently, considerable work has been done on training both by individuals and by a training group within TIE. Something of the outcome of the research is described in the succeeding article, 'Glimpses of a Movement.'

Linked to training is the question of resources. Where do people get hold of good materials about Tentmaking? As mentioned before, there are very few books (probably less than 20 in print). There are more articles in magazines and journals, but these are scattered and often hard to get. In some places, there are few people who have experience in the Tentmaking area, able to operate as mentors. Gathering resources and giving access to them is another challenge and something in which Tentmaking is so far behind the world missions movement which is a resource rich in so many ways.

So what do we believe anyway?

The final challenge lies at the very deepest level of theological basis. What is the underlying theology that drives the whole movement? In many cases, theology is minimal in a highly pragmatic climate.

At the deepest level however, tremendous potential lies in a fresh look at our theology of the church, especially the western church. Who does mission? This is a critical question for both the west and the rest of the world. The western trend, especially driven by a high focus on leadership strategies, constantly marginalizes the non professional and turns *laos* into laity, a highly unbiblical shift. Related to this is the question of where mission is done—where the Christians gather or where the pagans gather? The default option so often is to center activity in the physical church site and within its programs and organizations. The marketplace movement, with its thrust back into the workplace, challenges that and seems to be making some headway at last, especially in the United States.

For some within the Tentmaking movement there has been considerable interaction with marketplace thinkers and writers. Tentmaking is seen, not as an isolated phenomenon arising out of restrictions on traditional mission but as the natural cross cultural form of a revised theology of the missionary church that engages the whole church in the whole mission of God. People first become genuine marketplace Christians, missionary in their familiar weekday settings, before they transfer that experience into a cross cultural one.

All of this challenges the way we think about mission. Evangelical missions in the west began partly as a lay reaction to the needs of the world and the structures of the Church. In subtle fashion, it became professionalized until 'missionaries' became a sepa-



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The latest and truly exciting development is the TIE grouping in the northern part of Africa; this too is outlined in the 'Glimpses of a Movement' article.

Alongside organization is talking and networking. When we know each other and spend time with each other, it is easier to appreciate our common concerns.

Training

This area has felt like a desert for many years, too daunting to navigate. Suddenly, by the grace of God, many things have come together in training. The desert is beginning to bloom and



training is available this year that has never been there before. Again, we talk about this more extensively in 'Glimpses of a Movement,' but the part played by the Mission Commission has been highly significant. The book, *Too Valuable to Lose*³ spoke almost despairingly of great gaps in tentmaker training and offered no specific solutions. Now some half decade later, the report is far more positive. TIE International is well placed to coordinate and encourage what is beginning to happen.

Developing a theology

Ah, here's a challenge for a scattered global volunteer body! However, we are certainly very much aware of it. We decided three years ago in Vancouver to officially explore links with marketplace thinkers and organizations. That has been fruitful. Some of our writers and thinkers have also begun to produce significant work on the synergies between the two movements.

There is nothing like a challenge to grow a fledgling movement. And when your constituency may well include Middle Eastern domestic servants from the Philippines, East Asian hydrologists from Australasia, English language teachers in Central Asia from Canada, exporters in Indonesia from Europe, an electronics factory in South Asia staffed from South America...then that becomes a challenge worth facing. <<

rated and elevated category alongside pastor or priest. A call was needed different from that of the Christian engineer or plumber, and few seemed to receive it.

That is beginning to change again. The work of God is being given back to the whole people of God. The example of the Filipino Church is a powerful reminder, and other reminders are coming out of east and south to awaken thinking in the Church of the west.

It is good to remember as we face strategic, organizational, ethical and directional challenges as a Tentmaking movement, that underneath are massive theological questions as well, and facing them will impact not only our cross cultural journeys, but our home faith journeys as well.

A TIE response

What is TIE International, the global body of the Tentmaking movement, doing to meet these challenges?

Much of SA06 (the MC consultation in South Africa) for us will be about these challenges. We are a small and scattered group of volunteers with little opportunity to get together. But amongst our dreams and our actions are the following:

Recognition

We are aiming at a higher profile, simply by working on our networks and alliances. Our linking with the Mission Commission is a most valuable part of this and we plan to share common concerns with leaders in other

tracks of the Mission Commission.

Recognition is also about building a profile in circles where written work is important. A new web site will gather many of the resources we have developed. Some of our people are producing significant writing and we aim to both publish and distribute what is available.

Security

Whenever we meet in regional or global groups, we talk about security concerns and share strategies and experiences. This is a never ending process and it happens also in particular agencies, interest groups and regional alliances. Security concerns vary from country to country, even from profession to profession. And the security question constantly raises ethical questions too. There is a need for more significant writing in these areas and we are keen to promote that. The article, 'Glimpses of a Movement,' refers to Patrick Lai's recent book⁴ which has helpful material in this area.

Unity and cooperation

We need to be organized ourselves before we can expect others to cooperate with us. We are certainly working on that. We also have a real concern to develop regional groupings that are closer together and can work more consistently together.

4 Patrick Lai, *Tentmaking: Business as Mission* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Books, 2005).

5 William Taylor, ed, *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1997), e.g. pp. 346-7.

Tentmaking is as old as Scripture, but as young as the last half century. For this reason, it has many raw edges, half formed strategies, diverse peoples and the enthusiasm of a teenager, which can be both engaging and irritating. Its literature is minimal, its chief exponents are people of action rather than words, and so it is hard to get a clear picture of the movement, far more difficult than it is to gain insight into many aspects of traditional mission.

Glimpses of a movement

Fragments of insight into the Tentmaking movement worldwide, as it struggles towards maturity

TIE International Team

The following glimpses offer some insight into fresh developments, not a comprehensive description. We trust they will be helpful for your own reflections on the movement.

Training

Training is an area the young movement has struggled with for some time. Too many people rushed off half formed, unevenly trained, and too many trainers were confused about what was needed anyway.

As the movement is now producing more people with clear, long term service in mind and more cohesive strategies, training is emerging to match. Here are some insights into three new ventures in training.

Working your way to the nations

At the beginning of the 1990's, the Mission Commission produced the book, *Working Your Way to the Nations*, aimed to give tentmakers some insight into their future role. Jonathan Lewis was editor and drew on an international team for content. The book has been useful in many settings and half a dozen languages and has been revised and reprinted since. Last year, the whole project entered a new phase. Jon and Ari Rocklin of Global Opportunities contributed to put 'Working' on the internet as an online training course. The pilot project worked well and now enters the market as a regular offering. The following comment comes from Jonathan Lewis regarding the course

Working Your Way to the Nations, the online course, is sponsored by WEA's International Missionary Training Network and directed by its author, Dr. Jonathan Lewis. The course uses readings and self-assessment tools to identify key issues, help measure readiness for Tentmaking, and create plans that lead to effective deployment.

Encouragement and accountability is provided by the *course facilitator*, fellow trainees, and a church-based *mentor* of the participant's own choosing. The end product is a thorough understanding of the process involved in becoming a successful tentmaker and a *Personal Action Plan* leading to this end, to be executed over time under local church supervision.

A major thesis on training

Derek Christensen has been gathering information on tentmaker training worldwide for many years. This information was eventually worked into a thesis done through Melbourne College of Divinity, titled simply *The Training of Tentmakers*, and it examines in-depth what is happening in the arena, how this relates to theological and missiological training worldwide, and then suggests a template for assessing and designing training.

It is an academic thesis, rather than a popular writing, but Derek suggests that in any development, there needs to be rigorous examination that can be held alongside practical developments. A book arising out of

the thesis is planned in the near future, but the whole thesis has now been put on to the Mission Commission resource website and is available for any to read. The website is: www.wearesources.org/publications.aspx.

A combined project to provide a semi-nary level course

The Australian tentmaker group, AZTEM, is working with Carey Baptist College in New Zealand to provide a one semester course on Tentmaking, suitable for people at degree level. The course is based on one taught for several years at Carey, but the current project aims to put it on CD-ROM, partly for easy carriage and partly to allow for multiple features. It is hoped this will be ready in the middle of this year and available to agencies, teaching institutions, and individuals preparing for Tentmaking.

Death of a pioneer

One of the great pioneers of the modern movement was Ruth Siemens, whose contribution stands alongside of people like J. Christy Wilson and Don Hamilton. The following brief note was supplied by Global Opportunities, the organization she founded. Many fine articles by Ruth are available on the GO website.

On December 20, 2005, Ruth Siemens went home to the Lord she loved and served so long. The Church has lost one of her most remarkable tentmakers and missionaries. From her youth, Ruth was greatly used in evangelism,

discipling, leading Bible studies, and mobilizing for missions.

While preparing to be a missionary, life-threatening illness moved her into Tentmaking. In Peru and Brazil, Ruth integrated work and witness in full-time secular teaching jobs. She led many teachers, staff members and students to Christ. Over 21 years, she started four Christian university student movements—Peru, Brazil, Spain and Portugal.

When she returned to the U.S., Ruth itinerated around the country mobilizing for Tentmaking. She wrote, counseled, mentored, and researched international jobs. Her work grew into Global Opportunities and facilitated hundreds of tentmakers going overseas—many to the hardest, neediest countries on earth. For Ruth's story, see globalopps.org/ruths_story.htm.

Ruth possessed an untiring passion to send more tentmakers to tell more people of Jesus. She saw Tentmaking as vital to the world and the Church and championed it till the end, even as health declined. God has now brought her home to rest and left the work to us.

Business as mission

Part of the phenomenal growth of Tentmaking over recent years has been through job making, business ventures catalyzed by the collapse of the Iron Curtain but now becoming much more intentional, better equipped and more strategic. Known by several different names over the years, “business as mission” seems to be the final title of choice. It had a very enthusiastic track at Lausanne in Pattaya 2004, and their fine report is available at: community.gospelcom.net/Brix?pageID=12890

Three major books give real insight into the nature of the business side of Tentmaking and are all worth exploring.

- Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen of Biola have written *Great Commission Companies*, exploring some key principles which are then illustrated with case studies (Intervarsity Press, 2003).
- *On Kingdom Business* is edited by Ted Yamamori and Kenneth Eldred. It has contributions from people engaged in

business as mission and many useful principles emerge from their stories (Crossway Books, 2003).

- Patrick Lai, a long-term and highly respected practitioner, has recently published *Tentmaking: Business as Mission*, arising out of a doctoral research thesis on what makes tentmakers effective (Authentic, 2005). This is a major contribution to literature in the field, often provocative, strongly advocating some key principles, and packed with great insight and highly practical advice. Patrick is currently working on a companion volume.

New regional development

One of the long term goals of TIE is to develop strong regional groupings around the world. A new and exciting development over the past year has been the formation of a group in the north of Africa, under the leadership of Rev. Tiowa Diarra of Mali. Advisor to the group has been Derek Green of England, the European regional director. Tiowa has worked extremely hard on a vision for the entire region and now has a team of country representatives for almost the whole region. The first regional training event has taken place, led by Steinar Opheim of Norway and the first All Africa Congress is planned for August of 2007.

A couple of glimpses of tentmakers in action to close...

Nothing in my history prepared me for missionary service and yet everything did. My physical handicap left from youthful polio surely would say “unqualified.” The usual qualifications of Bible school or seminary training were completely lacking, as was any personal involvement in a missions committee or other missions related organization of efforts. Yet HIS passion to share HIS love with the ABC people was waiting for me. That first short-term trip ... stirred me as nothing ever had. Returning to my wife and three home schooled children we began to talk about how to be of service to the ABC people. We researched lots of alternatives and realized that we had almost no qualifications other than our ability to speak English. Was that enough? I had been a research scientist after graduate school and then worked in a hospital laboratory for many years before spending more than a dozen years in sales. My wife was a home-

schooling mom with some community involvement. Not exactly what you would think of as sufficient preparation for life as a missionary. We did have some experience teaching Sunday school, but was that enough to qualify for Kingdom service as ... missionaries? Those marks are to tell you that even as we were being sent out from our home church as missionaries through a missionary agency, our personal sense of who we were could not grasp what we felt was the “high calling” of being called missionaries. We had accepted a position at an ABC university to teach spoken English. Because of our intentions to learn how to share our faith in Jesus Christ in culturally appropriate ways, this meant we would be tentmakers—earning at least some of our cost of living by the work of our hands. We could say we were English teachers, but the idea of being missionaries was still beyond our ability to grasp. That has since changed.

After five years at our first university, having been part of planting a still reproducing and functioning church among the national students (now pastored by one of the early believers who we continue to mentor), we moved to another university and then into the city to establish an English training center that now has over 200 students, ten national full-time workers and an additional part-time ABC staff of another thirty young people being trained to be teachers... Who would have thought all this was in our future ten years ago? Certainly not one agency we applied to, who told us that with three children it was too difficult; certainly not those that pointed out the need for evangelizing “right here at home”; surely not anyone who matched our “qualifications” against previous missionary criteria. Certainly not those worried that our children would suffer the “loss” of the American benefits and socialization they saw as foolish to give up. But there is ONE who calls and ONE whose call qualified and ONE who equips and trains. HE thought we were able and HE enabled and we have learned what it really is like to become missionaries, the description of ourselves that we now identify with completely and are comfortable with because we now know what that really means...

And another...

Have you ever wondered how our lives fit into God's ultimate plan for the world? Each of us has a strong desire to do something significant. God put that desire into us! Recently, I found myself asking God what was the real purpose of our marketplace ministry in China and how that purpose fits into His overall plan for history.

Before moving to China, I spent 15 years in the American corporate world. In that world, I learned a very un-Biblical perspective of business. I learned that *people were just tools to use to help accomplish our business objectives*. And, unfortunately, I exhibited this attitude countless times in the way I went about my work. I may never know how many times I missed opportunities for ministry because of my focus on just accomplishing the business goals at hand.

Since starting our Kingdom-focused outsourcing business in China, though, I've learned that God's way is completely opposite. He wants us to *use the business of the company to help disciple the people*. Isn't this much better? In our China business, we go to work every day and work on the business at hand. But, every decision we make is made with the ministry as the primary objective. In fact just yesterday, one of our employees prayed to accept Christ in a business meeting in our office. How often does that happen in Corporate America?

Two weeks ago, we experienced a string of mistakes made by several different employees. Some of the people in the office were very upset at the mistakes. But, I felt God was saying this was a great opportunity for discipling! At our next staff meeting, we laid the mistakes on the table and had a very encouraging discussion on things like effective communication, serving clients, and caring about people enough to do our best for them. Many came into the meeting fearing humiliation. But instead, everyone was lifted up and encouraged and left the meeting with new determination to press on. At XYZ, we are finding that just going through our daily work creates many opportunities to make disciples... <<

The Unfolding Story of the Filipino Tentmaking Movement

Overview:

The Philippines is the only country in Asia whose majority population adheres to Christian beliefs and tenets. A majority of Filipinos are highly literate and have a good grasp of the English language.

Due to four decades of weak economic conditions in the country, about 8 million Filipinos have either migrated or are now working abroad as expatriate contract workers in over 190 countries in the world.

According to official government statistics, on a daily basis over 3,000 individuals leave for foreign destinations to seek employment. All over the world, Filipinos are now positioned in residences, offices, schools, hospitals, hotels, pubs, restaurants, malls, construction sites, factories, orphanages and senior citizens homes. You will find Filipinos in technical, domestic, executive, IT, medical, musical, educational, development and commercial fields in mega-cities as well as remote rural areas.

Protestant and Evangelical churches number 60,000 congregations in the Philippines with thousands more abroad. Because of divine placement, Filipino believers are in strategic positions to impact the spiritual landscape of many of the least evangelized cities



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and communities in the world. Approximately 50,000 believers go abroad annually.

Filipinos have traits that make them natural missionaries. Filipinos are able to easily adapt to new cultures and have an extraordinary ability to learn new languages. The Philippines is the third largest English speaking country in the world, giving Filipinos the ability to enter the global marketplace with ease. Their natural ability with music also makes for Filipino believers to be worshipful messengers of the gospel. Friendly and winsome, Filipinos are able to establish relationships without difficulty.

In fact, Filipinos excel in jobs that require personal interaction and service such as nurses, teachers, care givers, nannies, hotel and restaurant workers. Many Filipinos are also able to persevere under adverse conditions.

The Movement:

Last March 2005, forty mission leaders from all over the Philippines gathered for three days to plot out how the Philippine church may be used further as a vehicle of the gospel across cultures. On March 19, 2005, the Philippine Missions Mobilization Movement (PM3) was formed. The PM3 is envisioned to be a global movement of the Filipino Church and partners committed to glorify God by mobilizing, equipping and deploying 200,000 tentmakers and career missionaries to disciple unevangelized peoples by 2010.

This Movement endeavors to mobilize the Filipino Church to work together in obedience to the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ. The focus of the PM3 will be on four key tasks: MOBILIZATION, TRAINING, DEPLOYMENT and ADMINISTRATION.



Mobilization:

Mission agencies that are engaged in missions mobilization are now starting to work together. Consultations have been undertaken wherein the key leaders of these organizations have agreed on a unifying approach of mobilizing through both denominational lines and through geographical ministerial associations. The main objective of this partnership effort is to establish grassroots missions movements composed of churches, mission agencies, and other organizations in every region of the Philippines and in every country where Filipino churches have been organized. Mobilizer's kits that contain presentation materials (print and CD) will be provided to every church that goes through the PM3 orientation and subscribes/commits to the vision. These regional movements will coordinate with the Missionary Trainers Network and the Deployment Network to ensure that the tentmakers and career missionaries being sent are properly motivated, equipped, cared for and accountable for effective ministry.

Training:

A Missionary Trainers Network has been formed to meet the need of equipping the vast army of missionaries, both in the Philippines and in the various countries where overseas Filipino Christians are stationed as contract workers. The first achievement of the network was the formulation of *The Profile of a Filipino Missionary* and a *Recommended List of Subjects* that becomes the basis of a core missionary training curriculum that will be adopted by all those engaged in training future missionaries and tentmakers. The training network also aims to achieve the following: a) to put together a directory of all available training resources in the country and beyond; b) to develop reproducible and transferable training modules

and other tools for contextualized cross-cultural witnessing; c) to multiply missionary trainers through *Training of Trainers* courses; and d) to conduct missionary training of Filipino believers in every country.

Deployment:

Along with Mobilization and Training, PM3 is creating a national network of mission organizations, local churches and manpower recruitment agencies that deploy Filipino tentmakers and missionaries. Multi-agency partnerships are being formed to avoid duplication and to leverage the combined resources of these organizations to make a more meaningful impact in the field. Another critical area that is being addressed in deploying new tentmakers is Missionary Care. PM3 is ensuring that each person deployed is accountable to the sending body and becomes part of an existing missions team or church engaged in cross-cultural witness in the field where supervision and care is given to the individual. Continuing consultations related to best practices and identifying priority field areas will be done in order to deploy well-equipped cross-cultural workers in the most strategic fields.

Administration:

Given the scope of the Movement, a secure communications infrastructure is a key component to help facilitate the three major tasks mentioned above to be carried out effectively. A well-equipped communications center will be put in place in every one of the five major regions in the country to serve the objectives of PM3. This also entails the setting up of a national and global database of Filipino churches, mission agencies, tentmakers, career missionaries and mission resources (books, missions education and missionary training programs, pool of trainers, etc.).

Structure:

A National Facilitation Team (NFT), composed of the executives of 18 major mission bodies and organizations from all over the Philippines, is committed to meet regularly and work closely together to ensure that the PM3 is meeting its goals as envisioned. The NFT is tasked with seeing to it that the various networks are empowered to function effectively and that the coordination between each is smooth.

Outside of the country, the NFT will be working closely with the Filipino International Network, a network of Filipino church leaders in various Asian countries/regions such as Hong Kong, South Korea, and the Persian Gulf. These churches will become themselves both receiving agencies for PM3 tentmakers as well as organizational agencies to field their teams to the unreached people groups they work among. The NFT will continue to establish relationships with Filipino churches based outside of the Philippines and encourage PM3 participation.

Conclusion:

We acknowledge that it is the Lord of the Harvest that has been thrusting out Filipino laborers into the many mission fields of the world. It is the belief that the Filipino Church is accountable to God to be a witness among those who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ that the vision of PM3 is hinged. We are under no illusions—the road ahead will be tough as the concerns of churches and mission agencies are multi-faceted. But we believe that with the grace and favor of the Lord, a genuinely global missions movement by Filipinos will be able to raise hundreds of thousands of cross-cultural witnesses and disciples in the coming years. <<

Proverbs on Mission Mobilization

Proverbs from the Sesotho language of South Africa and Lesotho



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 Mission Commission.

Proverbs with South Africa '06 in view

Stan Nussbaum

Wisdom is not found in only one person's home.

We need to get together to arrive at wise decisions. The Spirit gives different gifts to different people so they grow into healthy interdependence, benefiting from each other and appreciating each other. (See 1 Cor. 12:7, gifts given "for the common good").

New (fresh) water pushes out the old (stagnant) water.

As a spring is forever cleaning itself, so the church on its mission is forever letting God's Spirit renew it. Strategies that worked in yesterday's world may be toxic to the spread of the good news in today's world. New life and new ideas are always bubbling up among God's messengers. (See Jn. 7:38, "springs of living water.")

Those who go to Mahlatsi's place have to be very clever.

As the story goes, a man went to Mahlatsi's place to kidnap his wife but he was discovered and killed. His planning did not measure up to his mission. Our mission is good, not evil, but good mission can also fail if the planning is poor. (See Lk. 14:29, the project that could not be finished because the builder did not plan well.)

The hare said, "I am swift"; the plateau replied, "I am vast."

Like rabbits on a plateau, we can only ever become familiar with a small part of it. We need to talk to other "rabbits" about their parts of the plateau so we can see how our part fits into the bigger picture. (See Acts 1:8, "to the ends of the earth.")

A crooked road cannot prevent people from completing their intended journey.

Twists and turns are not roadblocks. The longest road may actually be the safest and "shortest" way home. Perseverance pays off as long as the traveler knows the final destination and the general direction. South Africa '06 is a chance to remind ourselves of the final destination again. That vision will inspire us to continue on the road of mission, undeterred by the twists and turns we encounter. In fact, as we go along, we bulldoze the twists and turns out of the road, preparing it for the arrival of the Messiah. (See Is. 40:4-5, "Every valley shall be raised up" and all humanity will see the glory of the Lord.)

It is a calf still in the belly.

We do not yet know what the calf will look like or what it will grow into. The future of mission and the future of the world are like that. All we know for sure about them is that they are coming. The best thing we can do for them is to take good care of their "mother cow," the present. A healthy cow produces a healthy calf. This pattern is evident in Paul's missionary journeys (see Acts 13-20). He planned his trips but he did not over-plan them before setting out. He was obedient in the present, and God's future opened up before him as he went along.

Some useful resources on Tentmaking:

a) Books

There is only a limited range of books available and some are now quite old. The following all offer some insight into the subject:

Wilson, J.Christy. *Today's Tentmakers: Self-Support: An alternative model for worldwide witness*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1979.

Hamilton, Don. *Tentmakers Speak*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1987.

Yamamori, Ted. *Penetrating Mission's Final Frontier: A New Strategy for Unreached People*. Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993.

Gibson, Dan. *Avoiding the Tentmaker Trap*. Hamilton, Ontario: WEC International. 1997

Yamamori, Ted and Eldred, Kenneth, eds. *On Kingdom Business: Transforming Missions Through Entrepreneurial Strategies*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003.

Rundle, Steve and Steffen, Tom. *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

Lai, Patrick. *Tentmaking: Business as Mission*. Waynesboro, GA: Authentic, 2005.

b) Journals

Two issues of the International Journal of Frontier Missions (see www.ijfm.org) were dedicated to a range of articles on Tentmaking:

International Journal of Frontier Missions 14(3)

International Journal of Frontier Missions 15(1)

c) Web sites:

Two of the most helpful are:

www.tentmakernet.com

www.globalopps.org

Working Your Way to the Nations: A Guide to Effective Tentmaking

The Online Course

World Evangelical Alliance and International Missionary Training Network (IMTN) have recently adapted the book, *Working Your Way to the Nations*¹, into an on-line course to help address the need for training those who go out as tentmakers into the market places of the world.

Tentmakers are world Christians who are a part of Christ's *Great Commission*. The term "tentmaker" comes from Acts 18, as cross-cultural missionaries Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla were tentmakers by trade. Paul was a highly trained minister who made tents. Aquila and Priscilla were trades-people who led a ministry in their home. All three were "tentmakers."

Tentmakers are effective witnesses in and through their occupations in the various marketplaces of the world. Tentmakers can be employees, business people, students, or be in any occupation that allows legitimate access, in a cross-cultural setting, to serve as witnesses for Christ and in building His church. Yet, tentmakers should be trained and qualified if they are to be effective for Kingdom ends.

Course highlights:

- 12-week course format (fits easily into a quarterly educational program through church or school)
- Weekly on-line meetings (with small group of course participants and course facilitator)
- Self-instructional materials
- Independent study combined with "mentored" review, accountability and guidance
- An Action Plan is custom created by each participant to provide structure in working toward developing the character qualities and skills needed to become an effective tentmaker
- Course utilizes authors from 11 different countries and was created using research involving over 40 international agencies
- Participants already enrolled in college can check with advisors to see if the course can qualify as independent study

The Action Plan is the key

- Helps set goals
- Establishes specific plans
- Becomes a personal map to the nations

Built-in accountability structure

- An Internet Cohort—a small group of course participants, linked through the Internet
- A course Facilitator who helps keep participants on track
- A mentor of the participant's own choosing

Who should take the course?

- Anyone desiring to serve God in the workplace
- Any Christian wanting to work overseas
- Any of the thousands of Christians already employed overseas
- Church leaders—particularly those who serve on missions committees—who need to understand Tentmaking and what it involves
- Members of a tentmaker's "support team"
- Occupational "partners" (business owners and employers), potential "job makers"
- Occupational and ministerial mentors

How much does it cost?

- US \$75 for a single applicant
- US \$99 for a married couple

How do I start?

Begin by filling out the application form from www.missionarytraining.org (click on the "hat"). Courses are scheduled to start at the beginning of every month—but space is limited.

Get there, stay there, be effective!

¹ Jonathan Lewis, *Working Your Way to the Nations: A Guide to Effective Tentmaking* (Downers Grove, IL; Intervarsity Press, 1996).

Resource sharing in globalized mission:

The role of information sharing and distribution systems

JIMI TAKES FEET WITH SOUTH AFRICA '06 DISCUSSION

With the globalization of mission comes a new challenge for the funding of mission globally. It is no longer a case of Western organizations resourcing Western projects. Mission “from everywhere to everywhere” also calls for “funding and participation from everywhere to everywhere.” I believe much of the challenge lies, not in lack of resources, but in how we enable resources that already exist (or are available to be invested) to get to the projects and people, whether small or large, that can use the resources most effectively.

In other words, the challenge has two sides: Information-sharing and distribution systems.

Information-Sharing

Accurate information about projects should be readily available to all funders and stake-holders, whether that funder is a large foundation, a small business, or a local church, anywhere in the world. Further, the information sharing system needs to incorporate accountability, authentication, and reporting.

The sharing system does two things: it facilitates new emerging ministries around the world to tell their story in a format that will attract resources and involvement, and it facilitates the due-diligence that people with resources should do before making an investment or getting involved. Funding systems



Mark Orr serves as the Associate for Information Sharing for the WEA Mission Commission. He also is working on a collaboration model for the Refugee Highway Project.

Dr. Sas Conradie has been born and raised in South Africa where he was involved in mobilising students for mission. After finishing his Doctorate in Missiology under Prof Dons Kritzingier at the University of Pretoria, he served as a missionary to an unreached people group in Ukraine. Sas and his family moved in 1999 to the UK to become the Assistant International Director of a UK based mission agency. Although still living in the UK, he is now Central Asia team leader for Geneva Global, a grantmaking foundation based in Philadelphia, USA. He also assists as facilitator for the Joint Information Management Initiative of the World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission and is involved in the Association for Christian Community Computer Centers as volunteer regional area director for Europe and Africa. Sas is an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa where he is still an official minister in the Dutch Reformed Church Pretoria-Oosterlig congregation with mission calling.

I've seen in North America tended to be designed for large funders, and out of reach of the average donor. We envision a system that gives tools to emerging mission communities. We also envision a system that allows large donors to pinpoint smaller portions to smaller projects, and to direct people to the precise opportunities best for them. In the past it has not been viable to do this. But with the emergence of innovative ideas for “project verification systems,” it could become viable.

Distribution

We are interested in exploring peer-to-peer models of resource distribution. How can a small church in England have an intelligent and efficient resource sharing relationship with a small project in Sri Lanka? How can a Korean businessman initiate a fulfilling ministry relationship with a project in the Ukraine? We are interested in models of infrastructure that enable average Christians and donors to get involved, and yet do so within a globally integrated environment. We are interested in the challenge of creating a global infrastructure to facilitate resource linking, as opposed to using a few multinational superstructures. The Global Share System is one such infrastructure system being designed today.

Mark Orr and Josias Conradie

The Joint Information Management Initiative: South Africa '06

The Joint Information Management Initiative, a task force of the WEA Mission Commission has been set up as a global forum on mission information sharing and media collaboration. JIMI has a mandate to investigate the role of five information-sharing challenges that together are part of building a resource sharing environment for global mission. These five areas are community driven mission objectives; diverse media integration; content administration; standards agreements; and technical considerations.

As a starting point, the JIMI will meet in South Africa in June for the first time, with a discussion focusing on new resource sharing systems. The idea is to explore specifications and requirements for such a system, possibly culminating in a proposal for a Project Verification System.

JIMI leadership is selecting about eight participants for South Africa, limited by local accommodation restraints. However, we welcome your contributions, suggestions and articles on this topic. Please email them to Mark Orr (mark@xgmi.net) or to Josias Conradie (jhcgenevag@yahoo.co.uk). <<

International Consultation. WEA Mission Commission: "MC Global Issues Summit"

Goudini Centre, Western Cape, South Africa. June 18-24, 2006

There are many issues confronting the global mission endeavour at the dawn of the 21st Century. At South Africa '06 we will devote time to a number of these, with a special focus on the continent of Africa. We will also have our ongoing networks and task forces who will meet to continue their long term strategic initiatives. This document fleshes out the programme allowing you to see what fits with your interests and where you might serve most effectively. As we get closer some new workshops may appear, so be flexible.

Regular Programme

The journey from Seoul to Cape Town [Plenary 1]

Understanding and celebrating the story of the Mission Commission from its inception in 1985 in Korea through to 2006 in South Africa. This is Bertil Ekström's challenge, particularly as he looks to the future and asks some of the questions that confront us.

Just what is good practice in global mission? [Plenary 2]

Here Rob Hay and team share the well researched secrets of mission retention – key building blocks which have the potential to become culturally appropriate local frameworks for good practice. (See Stream Sessions 3-6 for more details)

HIV/AIDS – Facing the Challenge [Plenary 4]

Dr. Elijah and Eunice Mahlangu will share from their firsthand experiences in Africa on the response that HIV/AIDS sets before the national, continental and global mission movement. Report of the regional mission movements in the Caribbean and Europe.

Part 1: Wholistic Mission & Part 2: China [Plenary 5]

Part 1: Valdir Steuernagel from World Vision, Brazil reflects missiologically on the role and nature of wholistic mission.
Part 2: Sam Chiang from Hong Kong reports on vital developments in China—in the nation, the church and the mission movement. Report of the national mission movements IMA and the regional mission movement in Oceania.

Miss. structures: reg. nat. movements: [Plenary 6]

Jon Lewis and three colleagues help us explore the nature and contribution of different mission structures with case studies of COMIBAM (LA), Indian Missions Association (IMA) and Global Connections (UK)

African miss. models, [Plenary 7]

Nigerian Reuben Ezemadu will take us on a tour of African mission models exploring their different roles and contributions. Report from Ethné and the mission movements in North America.

Religious Encounter; Religious Freedom; [Plenary 8]

Grappling with issues of religious pluralism is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Kang San Tan leads us through some of these. The other challenge we explore is the issue of religious freedom and persecution of Christians, with expert help from Reg Reimer.

Younoussa Djao: Islam from an African perspective; [Plenary 9]

After Younoussa speaks, we hear two responses to Islam Marcos Amado from Europe and Fayeze Ishak from the Middle East.

Leadership Transition [Plenary 11]

We will celebrate with music and then David Tai-Woong Lee, Rose Dowsett and K Rajendran preside over the MC's leadership change from Bill Taylor to Bertil Ekström

Key issues in global mission [Plenary 12]

Bill Taylor and younger voices help us together

engage on critical mission issues we must grapple with.

Closing Session: Challenge into the Future

The challenge will be led by KC Rajendran and Richard Tiplady and will be followed by celebrating Holy Communion together as Bertil Ekström concludes our time together.

Joint Venture for Africa (JV4A)

This overarching theme will help shape plenary sessions and streams throughout our gathering. The Mission Commission is committing to focus considerable resources for the next three years as it responds to requests from the continent of Africa to assist them in building a vital and viable regional and national mission movement.

Opening session [Plenary 3]

Here the agenda, scale of commitment, and process of the Joint Venture for Africa will be outlined and the vision shared jointly by MC leadership alongside African national mission movement leaders.

The task force on national mission movements, sessions 1-7

The networks and task forces spend a significant amount of time on their specific focus areas and each will explore their role in the JV4A.

Concluding session [Plenary 10]

In this concluding session the individual components from the networks and taskforces will be brought together, a draft programme presented and a project team appointed.



Tribute *to* Bill Taylor

I think it was 9 April 1996 when we met the first time. It happened at a MC consultation in England. I was a newly appointed leader still searching for my role in the international mission arena and exploring my niche in this large gathering of honourees. The opening evening included a time of personal sharing and the large gathering split up in pairs to pray for each other. I was uncertain whom to turn to in this large group, when Bill approached me to get to know and share with me - so that I found myself together with the famous Executive Director and being showered with his care for people, personal touch and humble spirit.

Dear Bill, I really thank you for your compassionate heart, your personal interest in emerging leaders, your passion for Christ, your reminder on finishing-well and care for our families, ... among many other things I should mention. Many thanks for your personal example. It has left a lasting impact in my life. Many thanks for your personal interest in me as a person and for your investment in us. Our gracious Lord may continue to bless you and set you as a blessing for many.

With warm greetings

Detlef Blöcher

Executive Director of German Missionary Fellowship (DMG) and Chairman of German Mission Alliance

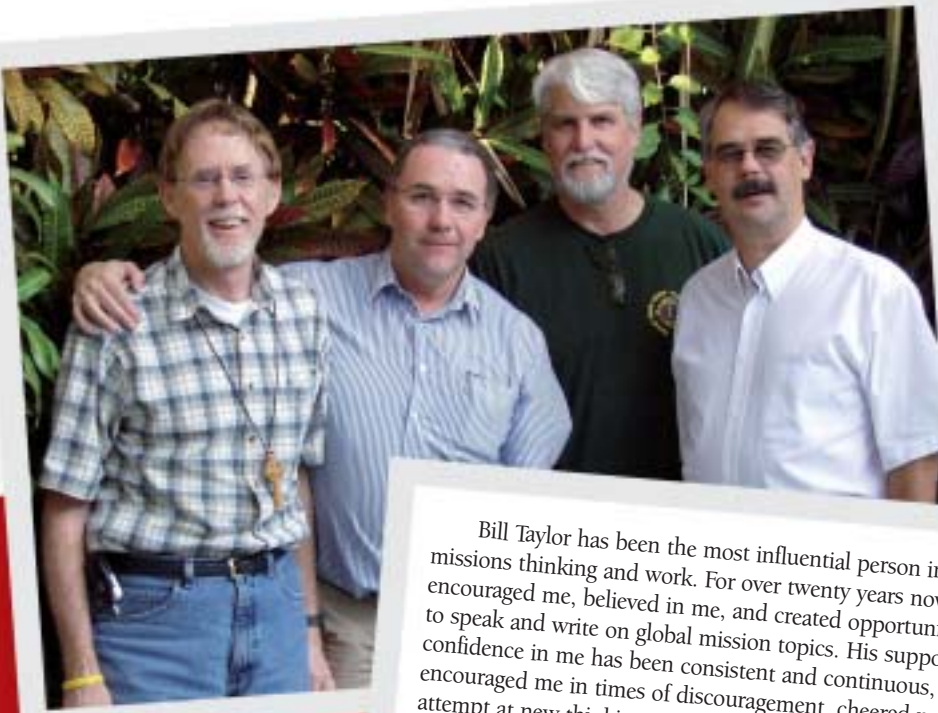
Uniquely Carved Out for WEA Mission Commission

My first encounter with Dr. Bill Taylor's family was in 1982. I was doing my doctoral studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield Illinois. He and his family just moved from Guatemala and for one year lived with the students in the Gunderson apartment where we also had been living for some time. He had occasionally attended early morning prayer meetings that we were having on every Saturday mornings. Then to our disappointment, they went back to Guatemala after one year to attend to "unfinished business" in regard to pulling their roots from the land where they had lived so long.

Dr. Taylor then literally popped up in front of me one day at All Nations Christian College in UK where I was on teaching assignment for a quarter in 1987. My life never have been the same ever since. He asked me to join WEA Mission Commission and I hesitantly complied not knowing what was lying ahead. I have enjoyed every moment that I have been a part of the WEA Mission Commission. I believe it was mainly due to the leadership of Dr. Bill Taylor that I felt that way.

Dr. Bill Taylor had been someone whom people could approach easily and became friends with. He did not wear façade like many of the big shots. He was not afraid to expose himself, his weaknesses and strengths. He showed forth a strong spirituality often lacking among those who are in international politicking. This became evident in many of the consultations that we had over the two decades. Inevitably there was a strong presence of the Lord in each of those meetings. I could never forget, for an example, the consultation on partnership in Manila attended by well over one hundred mission leaders, including CEOs of the large international missionary organizations; we felt that we have had a mini revival. People, including westerners and non-westerners were in tears as they expressed their gratitude towards the Lord and confessed their inadequacies. Without Dr. Bill Taylor's leadership something like this could not have happened is my conviction up till today.

David Tai Woong Lee, Global Missionary Training Center, Seoul Korea



Bill Taylor has been the most influential person in shaping my missions thinking and work. For over twenty years now he has encouraged me, believed in me, and created opportunities for me to speak and write on global mission topics. His support and confidence in me has been consistent and continuous, and has encouraged me in times of discouragement, cheered my every attempt at new thinking and work. Bill has been willing to link my name with his in public places, thus taking the risk of being hurt by my failures. God has given me many friends and encouragers through the years. I hold Bill as one of the dearest to my heart.

With thanks to God.

Alex Araujo

Dear Bill

From the very first moment it was clear to me: Here is a man, loving and honouring the Lord - and loving people, investing into and for them.

Your passion for the kingdom of God - "to fill heavens with worshippers" - and your compassion for people as well as your desire in helping them to unfold their gifts and giving them space to act and to create ideas, plans and projects has become a strong stimulation and encouragement to me.

You marked the movement of evangelical Missiology - on its theological as well as on its strategic development - always keen in building bridges and communicating globally and yet very personally. A real "Alliance-Man".

God bless you and your dear Yvonne - for more years to come, serving our great Lord - until we'll meet and see him "as he really is"!

Martin Voegelin., Switzerland

Who would know that Bill has a secret love, which he pursues wherever he goes? I shared accommodation with Bill in Singapore. He gets up early in the morning - probably to pray, but also to pursue his secret love. . .

I woke up triggered by the wonderful aroma of high quality coffee, which had been meticulously prepared in a French press coffee pot, which he carries along on this journeys around the world together with a bag of freshly ground high quality coffee and proper coffee mugs. He had prepared a perfect cup of magnificent coffee for both of us. I also highly appreciate good coffee that both smells and tastes according to God's good creation rather than the depravity of the fallen world (indeed, coffee quality at most conferences is not exactly giving glory to the Lord!)

This act of providence and mercy is not all about coffee. But it tells a story about a person, who has kept all his senses intact, and who understands to create sacred space in the midst of an ordinary day. The atmosphere and the conversation going on when drinking the heavenly stuff turned Bill from being an ordinary human being to a real soul mate.

Birger Nygaard, Evangelical Alliance in Denmark

It would be difficult to summarize the way in which Bill Taylor has been a blessing to all the "women and men" his life has touched over the past twenty years, but a few things can be said in this short page and a half I have been allotted.

I first met Bill in Manila at a Missions Commission meeting in 1989, when he was elected General Secretary. Our next meetings were in Guatemala, for a two-week stint at the Seminary and in churches there. After that were regular Missions Commission meetings back in Manila, in Pasadena, Brazil, Canada, Thailand and Holland. Each meeting was a personal encouragement and growth experience for me, and certainly for others who were present.

One amazing characteristic Bill has is to listen intently to people. One of the mottos of the Missions Commission has been to "listen to the grass roots." I suspect that not just the grass roots, but just about anyone talking to Bill goes away feeling valued and encouraged to continue growing into new ideas and concepts. His enthusiasm is contagious.

In my view one of the major contributions Bill's 20 years has made to the Missions Commission and to missions worldwide, is a stack of literary resources to enrich any teacher's or missionary's library.

After some very good consultations, the books Bill edited about them were even better: *Global Missiology for the Twenty-First Century*, *Internationalizing Missionary Training* and the Journal *Connections* have been especially important for missionary trainers like myself.

Another vital accomplishment under Bill's leadership was the ReMap I and II studies. The statistics and discoveries have aided churches, schools and sending agencies to understand positive and negative factors for missionary perseverance on the field. I have personally shown transparencies of these studies to all my students and in innumerable churches. The Association of Missions Teachers in Brazil (APMB) has often utilized the ReMap information for helping new missions teachers.

These tools will not soon grow old or outdated. I feel that Bill's work these twenty years will last for many more years as these relevant and essential tools are passed on. His foresight in knowing what would be lasting, what would make a difference, will perhaps produce more fruit than he can now know.

Bill is intelligent, a gifted writer and speaker, a motivating leader and at the same time a personal and caring friend to his colleagues and, I am sure, to many other people around our planet. We will miss him, but at the same time, know that he will still be around doing something valuable. We won't lose sight of him!

The Lord bless you Bill Taylor, and your family. Thank you for these good years of being involved together in this wonderful move of God in raising up people and organizations around the world for mission.

Barbara Burns

I clearly recall the week that I met Bill for the first time. We both were attending the WEF Missions Commission meetings in Singapore and were assigned to share a room together. It wasn't long before we were sharing how the Lord had led us so far in our individual and family lives. Although our ministries had been in different continents we felt a bond of fellowship from that time.

At this time the Missions Commission was a loose association of individuals who represented the major western missionary sending nations. It met occasionally and was led by Theodore Williams of India who traveled regularly to speak at mission conferences in different parts of the world. It had no active program of its own.

During the meetings in Singapore I became aware that Bill had been invited by David Howard, the WEF International Director, to attend with the possibility of him becoming involved as its Executive Officer. This was news to me and other representatives attending the meetings. Bill quickly began to realize while we were in the meetings that such an invitation was extremely challenging with little indication of any structure or guidance as to what was expected. After his name was proposed to the meeting and he had accepted the invitation the size of the task began to dawn upon him.

In the next few months and years we regularly communicated with one another as Bill developed the vision and activity of the MC. It has been a real privilege on my part to be involved in supporting him and seeing how the Lord has enabled him to develop the MC into an effective network of mission leaders that now has global significance for the church and for the Kingdom of God.

Bill's ability to inspire, encourage and involve new people in the MC network has been a tremendous asset to the MC. His unusual sense of vulnerability and humility at a personal level has enabled many mission leaders to identify with him and his work in the MC. He has contributed immensely in a host of ways to the global missionary movement through his scholarship, speaking ability, incisive writing with insight into the challenges and changes taking place in the missionary movements around the world.

The Missions Commission he has developed is very different to the one he joined in 1986. It now includes leaders of many of the key non-western missionary sending nations and is truly global in its spread. Its publications have been extremely important and its task forces vital for the advance of global mission.

Alongside Bill throughout his ministry has been Yvonne, who has supported and stood by Bill through the many challenges he has faced. They have faced tough times and good times together and I thank the Lord that He has kept them over these years.

I look back with gratitude to Bill as a friend, brother and fellow servant of the Lord in His Great Commission.

Stanley Davies.

Honorary President, Global Connections, U.K.



Honouring dr. William Taylor

The middle pages of this issue of Connections are dedicated to Dr William D. Taylor, the Executive Director of the Mission Commission of WEA (MC) for the last 20 years. Dr Taylor is stepping down from the executive position during the MC Consultation in Cape Town in June this year and will continue as a senior staff member, becoming MC's Ambassador at Large.

The Mission Commission of World Evangelical Alliance was quietly established in 1974, an important year for the Evangelical mission movement worldwide. During the first decade of its existence, the MC played an important role in encouraging the emergence of mission movements in Asia and Latin America. Countries that had been traditional missionary receiving nations, such as India, Nigeria and Brazil, began sending missionaries.

The first director of the MC was the Korean mission leader, Dr Chun Chae Ok, who held the position until 1979 when the Indian mission leader Dr Theodore Williams assumed leadership. The period from 1975 to 1990 was marked by numerous initiatives for cross-cultural mission in the so-called Majority World, changing the paradigm of world evangelization. The combination of factors—including the active participation of the MC, the emphasis on Integral Mission as stated in the Lausanne Covenant, plus the strong winds of the Holy Spirit of God—resulted in a new mission force from the South, and in a revolution of the dominant missiological theories.

Since 1986, William Taylor, born in Costa Rica of American missionary parents, has served as the third Executive Director of the Mission Commission. Bill, as we all know him in the MC, was appointed to the position during the General Assembly of WEA in Singapore. He has presided over the development of the commission into its present form and strength and formed a team of staff and collaborators known today as “reflective practitioners.” Dr Jonathan Lewis, also with a Latin American background from Argentina, came on board in 1992, taking responsibility for the missionary training program and for MC publications. In 2000, I had the privilege of being integrated into the staff team and in 2004 a new colleague joined the staff, Kees van der Wilden from the Netherlands.

The MC has grown during these 20 years from a few committed people to a worldwide community of mission leaders, representing both old and new sending countries. The diversity of global mission movements is reflected in the Global Leadership Council (GLC), a consultative board that establishes important links to regional and national movements, chaired by Dr K. Rajendran from India.

As colleagues in the staff, members of the GLC, leaders of Task Forces and Networks and MC Associates, we would like to express our gratitude to Bill and our profound admiration and respect for his leadership and ministerial example. Our thanks also to the Taylor family, particularly to Yvonne, Bill's wife, for her important role in the ministry of Bill.

Bertil Ekström

Risktaker and friend of younger generations

Willing to take a risk on new, untried people. That was my first impression of Bill Taylor. It was during the Mission Commission conference at All Nations Christian College in England in April 1996 that I first formed this view. I had just joined Global Connections UK (then still called the Evangelical Missionary Alliance) as its Associate Director. In fact, it was my first week in the post. I was expecting to drift around at the back of the event, watching, learning, and being ignored as a new kid (I was, after all, only 29, so what would I know?). So when Bill asked me to facilitate one of the small groups that met throughout the consultation, and then when I found out this would include Paul McKaughan of EFMA and John Orme of IFMA, then, yes, I freaked. But I survived, the group worked, and they even said a few nice things about me.

Bill did it again at the next MC consultation, this time in 1999 in Iguassu. As well as leading the inevitable small group again, and giving a short talk at the start of one day on the spirituality, community and missiology of the Moravians, it was a conversation with Bill at the Iguassu Falls themselves that really had an impact. I was lamenting that, for a consultation on the future of world mission, younger voices had not been taken into account much, and that many of us were feeling a significant disconnect between our passion for Christ and his mission on the one hand, and the mission agencies in which we were serving on the other. The outcome of this conversation was the Holy Island Roundtable, held in March 2001, at which 17 younger leaders in their 20s and 30s, working in Western mission agencies, met together for 5 days, along with Bill and Yvonne Taylor, to share our stories and to try to find ways of making it work (staying in mission agencies and helping them to change, that is). One of the outcomes of that meeting was the book *Postmission*, which became a top seller and which has helped to change the discussion in mission agencies from “how can we help younger generations to fit in to what we do?” to “how can we (the mission agencies) change to suit younger generations better?”.

Bill’s input into my life didn’t stop there. Privileged to be invited to attend the first meeting of the MC Global Missiology Taskforce in January 2001, I offered to create and lead a small working group on the subject of globalisation and its impact on mission. At a March 2002 meeting of this working group in Chicago, I learned that Bill wanted to make globalisation the main theme of the next major MC gathering, near Vancouver, Canada in June 2003. And that our planned book on globalisation should be ready in time for this consultation. And that my working group should provide most of the plenary speakers on the theme. Speaking at the opening session on the conference theme, to 300 gathered mission leaders from around the world, was up there in nervewrackingness with the first time I ever preached. But thanks, Bill, for taking risk with me and my team. I hope we didn’t let you down.

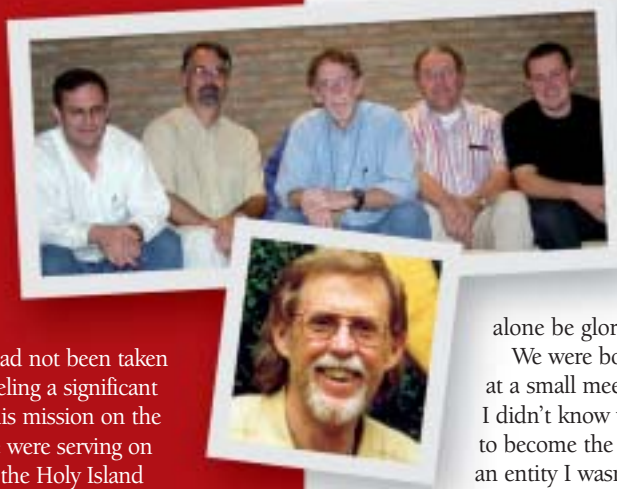
The example of Bill Taylor and the risks he took with me have shaped the way that I act, now that I am the chief executive of a mission agency myself. Two of my three senior staff, whom I have appointed, are in their 20s. What they may lack in wisdom and experience, they make up for in energy and creativity (and the wisdom will come). We need more Bill Taylors in the global missionary movement. My prayer is that one day I might be one of them.

Thanks, Bill.

Richard Tiplady

British Director, European Christian, Mission. www.ecmbritain.org

His keen mind, accumulated missiological knowledge, a gift for communication combined with melancholic mood suited for contemplation have given him inspiration after inspiration; discerning what just are the key issues confronting the global evangelical mission community and translate that into manageable projects and consultations. The need for emphasizing the missionary training, a partnership in mission, member care, missiological explorations and the issue of globalization were some of the themes that he led the global mission community to grapple with. Needless to say that he was not alone in all these. He was fortunate to have such exceptionally gifted coworkers as Dr. Jon Lewis and a wider range of coworkers more recently to form a high impact team.



Dr. Bill Taylor and Yvonne, you have invested the golden period of your lives for the cause of the global mission for the past twenty years. You have done well. We are convinced that the Lord has been glorified through all you have done and dreamt. May the rest of your lives be even more fruitful as you continue to witness the afterglow of your days and years in the WEA Mission Commission, often lonely and “tear-full.” May God

alone be glorified.

We were both young men back then. I first met Bill Taylor at a small meeting I was invited to attend by David Howard. I didn’t know why I was there but Bill was being interviewed to become the successor to Dr. Theo Williams who had led an entity I wasn’t very familiar with. I knew that World

Evangelical Fellowship existed and that Theo Williams directed something called the Missions Commission but that was the full extent of my knowledge. That day every thing started to change because of Bill Taylor. As the director he took a relatively unknown entity and shaped it into the dominant expression of the new world wide mission movement.

Taylor is a unique amalgam of talents and gifts. Bill is an intellectual with advanced degrees who can communicate to the un-schooled person committed to mission. He is a passionate Latin Spirit who can make sense to a hard headed business type from North America or Europe. Bill is at home with the emerging Pentecostal missional majority and yet senses the need for the bed rock of Biblical theological traditions that have been passed down from our forefathers. Taylor was absolutely the right choice to head up the world wide mission movement at a time when the two thirds world Church was awakening to it’s global missional responsibilities and becoming the dominant global missional presence.

I have worked closely with Bill now for many years. We have collaborated as he has been used of the Lord to build what has become the relational, financial and intellectual foundation for today’s Mission Commission. Sometimes during those years the parent organization of the MC has floundered yet because of Bill the Missions Commission has always remained a growing and focused entity.

Bill Taylor and I are chronologically about the same age, we have over the years passed through some of the various stages of life together. Bill has been a true friend. He is also an honored colleague who has been a leader I have been proud to follow. The world of cross cultural missions today works together more closely and is a far more globally representative body because of the life and ministry of Dr. Bill Taylor. Bill as we both move into this next phase of life and ministry, I trust you will continue to challenge me with you love for our Lord and his work of discipling the nations.

Your friend and colleague ...

Paul McKaughan, EFMA Ambassador at Large

Streams

Seminars and Sessions

These seminars and sessions are open to everyone and are either individual sessions or comprise two sessions. With 9 sessions all together you can mix and match connecting with the issues and subjects that are most relevant to you and your ministry.

Building healthy mission movements

Sessions 1-7
Building healthy national and regional mission movements: Bertil Ekström, Kees van der Wilden and team. There will be a Francophone team and an Anglophone one.

Worth Learning-Worth Keeping

Sessions 3 & 4 or 5 & 6
Developing good practice in your organisation means you are much more likely to keep your mission partners – here we look practically at how to do that, using the materials from the official consultation book Worth Keeping.

Ministry in a context of HIV/AIDS

Sessions 2, 3 & 4 or 5, 6 & 7
Dr. Elijah and Eunice Mahlangu

South African Pastors Mission Seminar

Sessions 2, 3 & 4 or 5, 6 & 7
Under the leadership of Willie Crew and Peter Tarantal of South Africa, this focused group works toward becoming a viable and visible national mission movement in SA.

Networks and Taskforces

At the heart of the Mission Commission are a number of Networks and Taskforces whose work continues between the triennial gatherings but during the consultation extensive time is dedicated to their teams meeting and progressing their ongoing work.

Some of the teams are working in “closed sessions” (by invitation-only) during the first part of the week and then open up for broader participation. The times for “open” sessions will be posted in your delegate pack that you will receive on arrival. These include:

International Missionary Training Network

Sessions 1-7
The IMTN works through a specific focus on how

to equip missionary trainers, and gives final shape to a new book on the subject.

Global Missiology

Sessions 1-7
The international team of missiologists are working on a selection of missiological initiatives including books on missional ecclesiology, religious pluralism, and contextualization.

Global Member Care Networks

Sessions 1-7
With 5 regional member care movements this focuses on the pooling of ideas and works for the further development of this new and vital area.

Refugee Highway Partnership

Sessions 5, 6 & 7
The RHP draws together the many mission initiatives who are working with refugees around the world.

Missions Mobilisation Task Force

Sessions 5, 6 & 7
The MMTF continues their intense work on the international research project on issues related to mission mobilisation.

Joint Information Management Initiative Sharing (JIMI)

Sessions 5, 6 & 7
The JIMI team works with issues related to ministry project viability and funding matters.

BAM—Business as Mission

Sessions 1,2,3,4; and 5,6,7
This seminar will be given twice during the week with a focus on business *as* a calling and *as* a ministry in its own right. BAM is to do business with excellence, professionalism and integrity. BAM is manifesting the Kingdom of God in the Market Place and people being transformed spiritually, economically and socially

Ethné—Towards the Least Reached Peoples

Sessions 5, 6 & 7
This team reports on their global work, particularly following their recent international consultation in May 2006 held in Bali, Indonesia. The focus will be on “next steps”.



TIE—Tentmaking International Exchange

Sessions 5, 6 & 7

The TIE leadership team will meet in business meetings at the start of the week, and then open the agenda for all interested in bi-vocational/tent-making ministries. Come prepared for some creative access case studies.

Mingling and Networking

Connecting with old friends, making new ones and having the opportunity to discover others working in your field or with your focus are important parts of SA06. We have allowed over 25 hours (including coffee and meals) within the programme to ensure that we can all network with colleagues around the world and encourage one another.

And Thursday afternoon is dedicated to open time for a wide variety of groups to meet and for some of the working teams to give reports. Some of these new items include:

- The options on starting an MC global network for mission agency leaders
- The options on starting an MC global network of Business as Mission
- The opportunities of “Business as Mission” (BAM),
- Deeper reports on religious persecution, China, Russia, Reg Reimer
- Trauma realities/healing for the church in Africa and beyond
- Creative and mobile models of missionary training, Jon Lewis and Omar Gava
- Other task force and network reports
- Business as Mission summary presentation, BAM team
- World Evangelical Alliance report by Geoff Tunnicliffe
- Lausanne update
- “Live School” report by Willie Crew and team
- Others as they emerge

What is the status of the gospel in the world? The starting point for a clear assessment is to make sense of the enormous amount of information collected by Christian churches on their members. Every year, churches of all kinds initiate a census costing \$1.1 billion, sending out 10 million questionnaires in 3,000 languages, covering 180 religious subjects. This “mega-census” includes massive church surveys, such as the Roman Catholic’s *Annuario Pontificio*, and also detailed country studies done by evangelical alliances and others. In addition, over half of the world’s governments include a question on religion in their decennial censuses. These two major sources, and dozens of others, produce more than adequate information for Christians to evaluate the status of the gospel in the world today.

Seven Signposts of Hope and Challenge in Global Christianity

Two contrasting views of church statistics

Nonetheless, two contrasting views of church membership censuses have emerged. The first view is the so-called objective view. In the 1960s, scholars in western universities were fond of predicting the complete demise of organized religion, including Christianity. In 1968, renowned sociologist Peter Berger told the *New York Times* that by AD 2000, “religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture.”¹ At the same time, a second view was emerging as missionaries around the world were noticing the rapid expansion of Christianity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Anglican missionary David Barrett published an article in the *International Review of Mission* in 1970, projecting that by AD 2000 there would be “350 million Christians in Africa.”²

In 2006, it is more than obvious that the second of these views was a more accurate depiction of what Christianity and religion look like around the world. Nonetheless, there is still a latent tendency to consider

church statistics as “exaggerated” and “notoriously unreliable.” Fortunately, the enormous annual documentation of church members around the world provides strong evidence that counting Christians is a thorough and reliable discipline.³

Todd M. Johnson

Bookkeeping vs. accounting

If the churches collect so much valuable information, what is the role of researchers dedicated to collecting and analyzing church

statistics? One parallel can be found in the financial world with the distinction between bookkeeping and accounting. Bookkeeping is “recording financial transactions,” whereas accounting is defined as “the system of classifying and summarizing financial transactions and analyzing, verifying and reporting the results.” In the financial world, no one would say that only bookkeeping is necessary. Accounting is essential to make sense of financial transactions. In the same way, researchers in global Christianity are needed to make

Table 1. Global Religious Demographics

Religion	Floor Area, sq. m. per person	Human Development Index	Male Literacy %	Female Literacy %	Gross National Product per capita
Christians	23	73	88	81	\$8,224
Evangelicals	22	64	82	72	\$8,038
Atheists	15	67	92	79	\$3,544
Buddhists	17	69	92	82	\$8,951
Hindus	12	45	65	38	\$441
Muslims	11	54	68	48	\$1,655
Nonreligious	16	68	91	78	\$4,176
Tribal religionists	11	48	75	56	\$998
Non-Christians	13	58	78	60	\$2,907

1 “A Bleak Outlook is Seen for Religion” in *New York Times*, April 25, 1968, p.3.

2 “AD 2000: 350 million Christians in Africa” in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LIX, No. 233, January 1970, p. 39-54.

sense of the information collected by churches. For example, a web article recently stated that, “there are 2.3 million Episcopalians in the United States, compared to 62 million Roman Catholics and 16 million Southern Baptists. (Note: the numbers game is a dicey one in religion reporting because churches have different standards for membership, but you get the idea).”⁴ Notwithstanding the humor in the note, one quickly finds that the three numbers quoted above are not comparable. Roman Catholics and Episcopalians count baptized infants and children, whereas Southern Baptists do not. Therefore, without adjustments, the numbers are not comparable.

Global religious demographics

Once data on global Christianity and world religions is collected and adjusted, it can be directly related to demographic data of all kinds. Examples of the intersection of demographic data with religious affiliation are shown in Table 1.⁵ Note that Christians (or Evangelicals) take up twice as much floor area per person⁶ as tribal religionists or Muslims. Another trend is that Christians and Buddhists are approximately 40 times wealthier than Hindus.

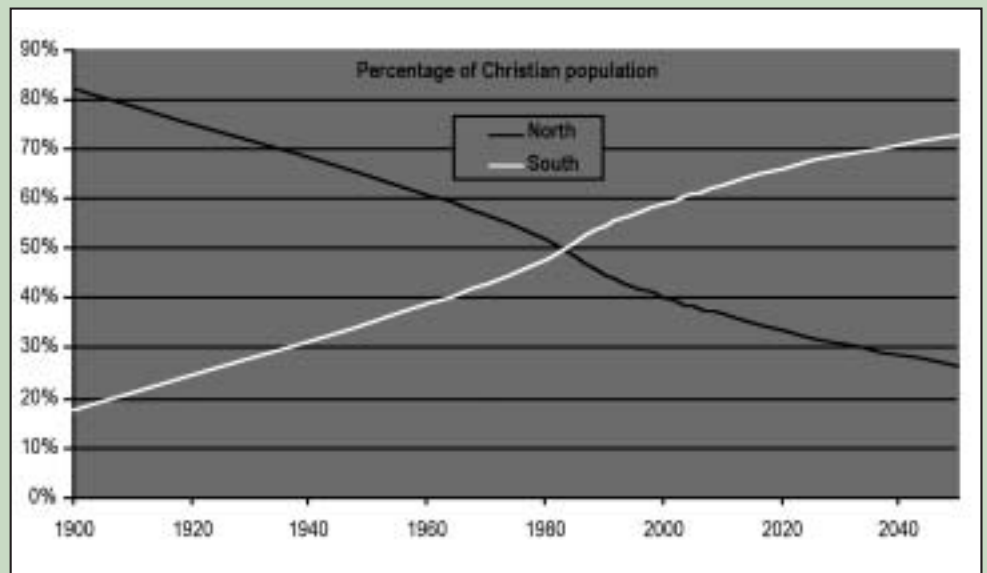
The mega-census of churches and religions intersects with other data to reveal at least seven signposts or trends in global Christianity.

Signpost #1: Christians are found among thousands of peoples, languages, and denominations

Christians now form 38,000 denominations ranging in size from millions to less than 100 members. These are listed for each of the world’s 238 countries in the World Christian Database. These can be grouped into six major ecclesiastical mega-blocs and can be further divided into 350 Christian World Communions.⁷ The six mega-blocs, classified by us but based on their own membership figures, are:

- Roman Catholics 1,129 million
- Independents 433 million
- Protestants 381 million
- Orthodox 220 million
- Anglicans 81 million
- Marginal⁸ 35 million

The fastest growing mega-bloc is the Independents, which includes 20% of all Christians. Today, we are witnessing some of the fastest Christian expansion in China with 10,000 new converts (babies born to Christians as well as adult conversions) every day.⁹



Graph 1. Christians, North and South, AD 1900-2050.

Table 2. Top 10 countries with the most Christians, 2005, 2025, 2050

	2005	Christians (millions)	2025	Christians (millions)	2050	Christians (millions)
1	USA	252	USA	295	USA	329
2	Brazil	167	Brazil	193	China	218
3	China	111	China	173	Brazil	202
4	Mexico	102	Mexico	123	DR Congo	145
5	Russia	85	India	107	India	137
6	Philippines	74	Philippines	97	Mexico	131
7	India	68	Nigeria	95	Nigeria	130
8	Germany	62	DR Congo	91	Philippines	112
9	Nigeria	61	Russia	85	Ethiopia	104
10	DR Congo	53	Ethiopia	67	Uganda	95

3 Evidence for this is the popular series *Operation World*, which under the authorship of Patrick Johnstone (and now Jason Mandryk) has informed millions of users about the status of Christianity since 1974. (Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, Paternoster Press, 1974)

4 University of Southern California Online, Kelly McBride, (www.usc.edu/schools/annenberg/asc/projects/soin/poynteronline.html) accessed March 2004.

5 Most of the statistics in this report can be found in one of four places: (1) Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press, 2001), (2) Barrett and Johnson, *World Christian Trends, AD 30-AD 2200* (William Carey Library, 2001), (3) Barrett, Johnson, and Crossing, “Missiometrics 2006: Goals, Resources, Doctrines of the 350 Christian World Communions,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, (Vol. 30, No. 1, January, 2006), pages 27-30, (4) World Christian Database, online subscription service found at www.worldchristiandatabase.org.

6 “Floor area in square meters per person” is a United Nations designation defined as the sum of the area of each floor of all buildings in square meters divided by the number of individuals residing in the country.

7 See Barrett, Johnson, and Crossing, “Missiometrics 2006.”

8 Marginal Christians are defined as “members of denominations who define themselves as Christians but who are on the margins of organized mainstream Christianity (e.g. Unitarians, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Science and Religious Science).”

9 Recent documentation on the house churches includes D. Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Regnery, 2003), Brother Yun with P. or Hattaway, *The Heavenly Man* (Monarch Books, 2002), and T. Lambert, *China’s Christian Millions* (Monarch Books, 1999).

At the same time, Christianity is growing outside of its own cultural and ecclesiastical borders in the form of non-baptized believers in Christ (NBBCs).¹⁰ In 2006 this movement involves approximately 14 million people (the majority counted as both Hindus and Christians).¹¹

At the same time, Philip Jenkins has highlighted the consequences of the southern shift of gravity of Christianity.¹² In 1900, 81% of all Christians were living in the North, but by 2006, this dropped below 40%. Graph 1 (see previous page) illustrates this phenomenon.¹³

Though it may be fashionable to speak of Southern Christianity or non-Western Christianity, it is important to realize that this is by no means a monolithic, homogeneous category. In fact, Christians in the South¹⁴ are comprised of 22,500 denominations, 6,000 peoples and 10,000 languages. In a similar fashion, Christians of the North¹⁵ represent 11,300 denominations, 3,000 peoples, and 3,500 languages. Table 2 (see previous page) illustrates that although the largest Christian countries are shifting to the South, by 2050 the largest Christian country in the world will still be the USA.

In light of this reality, there are still unique roles for Northern Christians in the future of global Christianity. The following are a few examples:

1. Engaging culture on a missiological, philosophical, theological, and ecclesiastical level
2. Bioethics and genetics
3. Financial accountability
4. Reaching postmodern youth
5. Radical contextualization beyond Christianity
6. As members of multinational churches and missions

7. Science and theology
8. Pilgrimage sites
9. Scholarship on pre-modern Christianity

Another reality is that Christianity has yet to be represented among the unreached peoples: 13,000 cultures not yet penetrated with the gospel and are therefore not represented among the “ethne” of Matthew 28.

Signpost #2: Christians are sharing their faith in numerous ways

Every year, Christians expend enormous amounts of time and energy in global evangelization. For example, regular listeners to Christian programs over secular or religious radio/TV stations rose from 22% of the world in 1980 to 30% in 2000. At the same time, Scripture distribution has grown dramatically. Non-Christian countries have been found to have 227 million Bibles in place in their midst, more than needed to serve all Christians, but poorly distributed.

Christian martyrdom also plays a unique role in world evangelization; 70 million Christians have been martyred since Christ and over half of these were in the 20th century.¹⁶ Today, the 5 most dangerous vocations (greatest likelihood of being martyred) are bishops, evangelists, catechists, colporteurs, and foreign missionaries.

However, the most significant finding in our survey of evangelization is that with 1.27 trillion hours of evangelism produced by Christians in 2006, there is enough evangelism for every person to hear a one hour presentation of the gospel every other day, all year long. The irony cannot be lost that over 1.7 billion people still have no opportunity to hear of Christ, Christianity, or the gospel.

Signpost #3: Christians have enormous resources for evangelization

The personal income of Christians globally is approaching 16 trillion US dollars. 78 countries each have Great Commission Christians whose personal incomes exceed US\$1 billion a year. Nonetheless, emboldened by lax procedures, trusted church treasurers are embezzling \$22 billion each year out of church funds, but only 5% ever get found out. Annual church embezzlements by top custodians exceed the entire cost of all foreign missions worldwide (\$21 billion).¹⁷

Signpost #4: Christians are still planning to evangelize the world

All throughout the 20th century, Christians of various traditions were putting forth books (in italics), conferences (C), and campaigns (M) on how the world could be evangelized in a relatively short period of time. We call these “global plans.” A short list appears here.¹⁸

- 1900 *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation*
- 1908 *The Modern Crusade*
- 1910 *The Whole Church Taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World* (C)
- 1912 *Reaching Every Home* (M)
- 1914 *Inauguration of the Kingdom of God on Earth* (M)
- 1929 *Each One Teach One* (M)
- 1930 *Bringing Christ to the Nations* (M)
- 1934 *Evangelize to a Finish to Bring Back the King* (M)
- 1943 *Into All the World*
- 1946 *Complete Christ's Commission* (C)
- 1950 *Help Open Paths to Evangelize* (M)
- 1956 *The Gospel to Every Creature*
- 1957 *Global Conquest* (M)
- 1959 *Two Thousand Tongues to Go*
- 1963 *The Master Plan of Evangelism*
- 1967 *Crusade for World Revival* (M)
- 1974 *Let the Earth Hear His Voice* (C)
- 1976 *Bold Mission Thrust* (M)
- 1980 *A Church for Every People by the Year 2000* (C)
- 1984 *Strategy to Every People* (M)
- 1986 *One Million Native Missionaries* (M)
- 1990 *Decade of Universal Evangelization* (M)

One can instantly spot a strong tendency to recreate plans without reference to previous plans. The most significant problem with this list of plans is the passage of time. One can see this in Samuel Zwemer's *Unoccupied Mission Fields of Africa and Asia* (1911). He wrote this book in response to a request for a

10 Defined as members of non-Christian religions who become converted to faith in Christ as Lord but choose not to join Christian denominations but to remain in their religions as witnesses there to Christ.

11 See H. Hoefler, *Churchless Christianity* (William Carey Library, 2001) and D. Bharati, *Living Water and Indian Bow*, (ISPCK, 1997).

12 Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford University Press 2002).

13 For a more detailed analysis of the center of gravity of Christianity throughout its entire history, see Johnson and Chung, “Tracking Global Christianity's Statistical Centre of Gravity, AD 33- AD 2100,” in *International Review of Mission* (Vol. 93, No. 369, April 2004), pages 166-181.

14 South is defined as 16 current United Nations regions (185 countries): Eastern Africa, Middle Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa, Eastern Asia, South-central Asia, South-eastern Asia, Western Asia, Caribbean, Central America, South America, Australia/New Zealand, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

15 North is defined here in a geopolitical sense by 5 current United Nations regions (53 countries): Eastern Europe (including Russia), Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe, and Northern America.

16 See Part 4 “Martyrology” in *World Christian Trends* (Barrett and Johnson) for complete documentation.

17 See Part 20 “Finance” in *World Christian Trends* (Barrett and Johnson).

18 For a more complete list see Part 27 “Geostrategies” in *World Christian Trends* (Barrett and Johnson).

pithy survey on the unfinished task from the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Reading this book today one can immediately see that little of what Zwemer wrote has changed in nearly 100 years. In other words, his description of the unfinished task in 1911 stretching from Morocco to Indonesia is largely true today.

There is one simple explanation for the ultimate failure of all of these global plans. Over 90% of all Christian evangelism is aimed at other Christians and does not reach non-Christians. As long as this is the case, the world will not be evangelized and the unreached peoples will not be reached.¹⁹

At the same time, two other developments should be noted. The first is that global plans continue to be launched at an alarming rate. Some recent examples include Rick Warren's PEACE plan, the Global Pastors Network Billion Soul Campaign, and YWAM's 4K plan. The second is that Christians still remain largely out of touch with non-Christians. Recent research seems to suggest that nearly 90% of all Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims do not personally know a Christian.²⁰

Signpost #5: The least reached peoples are the most responsive to the gospel

At the same time, research has uncovered a remarkable fact. A study of the responsiveness of the world's peoples (baptism rate divided by hours of evangelism) has revealed that the most responsive are the least reached! For peoples over 1 million in population, the top five are the Khandeshi of India, the Awadhi of India, the Magadhi of India, the Bai of China, and the Berar Marathi of India.²¹

Signpost #6: Postmodern youth are uniquely situated for world mission

Converging with these trends is the changing nature of today's global postmodern youth. Many church and mission observers see this solely in a negative light (e.g., encroaching relativism). But a positive side of postmodernity is found in the conference, "Out of the Christian Ghetto: French Roast Tall Latte Evangelism in a Decaffeinated, Nonfat, Post-Christian World," or in Steve Taylor's recent book, *The Out of Bounds Church: Learning to Create a Community of Faith in a Culture of Change*.²² These and many other resources²³ illustrate how Christian youth around the world are making missiological adjustments to their evangelism to more effectively reach people in their cultures and in other cultures.



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From the evangelical context, this must be done, as David Wells writes²⁴, in an "ambassadorial" fashion, where the Word of God is properly represented and communicated among the peoples of the world.

As a result of this focus on faithfully engaging culture in a postmodern context, a new vocabulary is emerging in missiology and philosophy: critical realism, epistemological humility, generous orthodoxy, chastened rationality, faithful uncertainty, and non-modern metanarrative.²⁵ This vocabulary does not promote relativism, but rather is an admission that even in a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ, there is a great deal that one does not know. Millard Erickson clarifies this by stating, "It is one thing to have absolute truth; quite another to understand it absolutely."²⁶ Global youth today are developing some perspectives such as, (1) learning to operate in the context of global Christianity, (2) partnering with young Christians with post-colonial perspectives, (3) celebrating the world's cultures, (4) an openness to dialogue with and learning from other cultures and religions, (5) a desire for community, (6) a comfort with uncertainty and doubt, and (7) a strong faith without the need to have all the answers. These seven characteristics could make today's youth some of the most effective missionaries in Christian history.

Two other trends need to be considered in light of these opportunities in a postmodern world. The first is globalization, which

can have a negative top down effect. At the same time, tribalism is pushing local culture up to the global level. In both cases, mission is impacted.²⁷

Signpost #7: The face of Jesus is emerging among the peoples of the world

Books about Jesus in today's libraries number 175,000 different titles in 500 languages, increasing by 4 newly published books every day. At the same time, one can talk about the changing face of Christianity, both in the changing ethnicity of Christians around the world referred to earlier, and in the way that each culture offers a differing cultural perspective of Jesus. No culture has as an unhindered view of Jesus. Only when all peoples worship Jesus will we see his face clearly.²⁸ In this way, one can speak of the "missing faces of Jesus" belonging to those peoples not yet reached with the gospel. Nonetheless, we can conclude with the strong assurance that we have from the Scripture (Rev. 5:9) that as every tongue, tribe, nation, and language is represented at the throne of God, our worship of Jesus will reach new heights. It is towards this that the church and its mission inevitably move: the glory of God revealed among all the peoples of the world. <<

19 For encouraging signs of change in missionary deployment see D. Bloecher, "How Shall They Believe? Evangelical Missionary Deployment vis-à-vis the Least Reached Peoples," in *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, (Vol. 22, No. 4, October-December 2005), pages 147-152.

20 Johnson and Tieszen, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, forthcoming.

21 See Part 26 "Georesponse" in *World Christian Trends*.

22 Youth Specialties, 2005.

23 One of the most substantial is P. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Trinity Press International, 1997).

24 See David F. Wells, *Above All Earthly Powers: Christ in a Postmodern World* (Eerdmans, 2005), p. 10.

25 These are discussed in S. Grenz and J. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

26 Millard J. Erickson, *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* (Baker Books, 1998), page 39.

27 One of the most entertaining and insightful books on this subject is Franklin Foer's, *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization* (HarperCollins, 2004).

28 See Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Orbis, 2002), pages 77-81.

Some Reflections on *How to Read Signposts*

a response to Todd Johnson

Todd Johnson's interesting article is both comforting and disturbing. It is comforting—because it gives signs of hope, and affirms the potential within the worldwide Christian community for reaching out to those who have still not heard about Jesus as the only way to salvation. It is disturbing—because in spite of all the resources and efforts of evangelizing the whole world, we have not achieved more. The seven signposts on the road to the fulfillment of the Great Commission are only seen by those who walk along that path; therefore, the contribution of Johnson is important and challenging for those of us who walk along that path, in order that we may act on the information we have been given. The article is based on reliable data, collected and analyzed by the team of researchers that includes Johnson and David Barrett and published in the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and *World Christian Trends* (William Carey Library, 2001).

The statistics presented show how widespread Christendom is, being the most global of world religions. Although the term 'Christendom' is old-fashioned and perhaps does not mean much anymore, it denotes an important distinction between the official religion attributed to a particular country and the Christian believers within this country. The statistical material works on the assumption that all people belonging to a specific group called Christians declare themselves as Christians, and since they do that, they should be considered as such. This is based on the available data from censuses done through representative samples in each country and the estimates given by the religious groups. There is, as I see it, a problem when applying those numbers to mission.

Let me illustrate this dilemma with Brazil, the second largest Christian country in the world. Any Brazilian you meet on the street will say that he or she is a Catholic, except around 16% that will declare themselves 'Evangelicos' (Evangelicals and other Protestants) and 10% or so that will confirm that they belong to Spiritism or to another world religion, or that they are non-religious.

In the official statistics of the national census (IBGE), Catholics plus 'Evangelicos' will comprise something like 85-90% of the population. In reality, only 15-20% of the Catholics are loyal to the Roman traditions, which has been a major concern for the Catholic leadership in the Vatican for some time. Around 35-40% of the Brazilian population are syncretists, blending Christian and animist beliefs, attending Spiritist centers of different kinds. The African and Indian (of the Brazilian Indigenous tribes) religions are growing faster than the Christian faith. The growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic groups in Brazil is real but, in many ways, a circular moving from one movement to another. Churches tend to not revise their statistics, keeping in their records those who have moved to other churches, where these people are counted once again. It would be difficult for any committed Christian in Brazil, Catholic or Protestant, to accept that 167 million Brazilians (98.2% of the population) are Christians.

One of the critiques against the Edinburgh Conference in 1910, coming

mainly from the church leaders in Africa, Asia and Latin America who were not invited, was the way the challenge of mission was defined and how countries were chosen for missionary work. Excluded were the nations that were not colonies to 'Christian European Empires' or that had already been declared 'Catholic.' In the case of Latin America, a conference was held by Evangelicals in Panama six years later, affirming the need for evangelizing the continent. The consensus among the participants in the conference of 1916 was that Latin America should not be considered evangelized in spite of the fact that Christendom was the official religion. It seems that the old idea of *Corpus Christianum* continued to divide the different Christian traditions at the beginning of the 20th century. Johnson touches this problem with statistics and their interpretation, and I think it is good to be aware of that.

The reason for these remarks on the distinction between Christendom and Christianity is that we easily draw conclusions that appear to be statistically correct

Bertil Ekström

along the Mission Road

but that do not consider the complexity behind them. This is particularly true when we are dealing with the potential for world mission. If it is just a comparison with other world religions, the generic understanding of Christians is acceptable since the other religious groups are treated in the same way. However, it is important to be realistic and see both the potential, as Johnson does, as well as the limitation of resources linked to the people who are really committed to the Great Commission. I am not suggesting that we should consider Catholics as less Christian, but that in the countries and regions where a state religion has dominated, or where one ecclesiastical tradition has had monopoly on Christian faith, the tendency has been towards nominal Christianity.

Without any claim of being an expert on bookkeeping and accounting, I would like to take Johnson's analogy further, and propose the need for an external revision of the accounting. It would not be neutral and external if people involved in mission do the revision, but a good analysis of the way we use our accounting categories could be achieved through a South-North dialogue, in order to establish relevant parameters for evaluating the mission movements in our days. Perhaps, a century after the Edinburgh Conference, it is time to revisit the stereotypical categories we have been using. The final revision of our bookkeeping and accounting will be made by God and surely we are all glad for that!

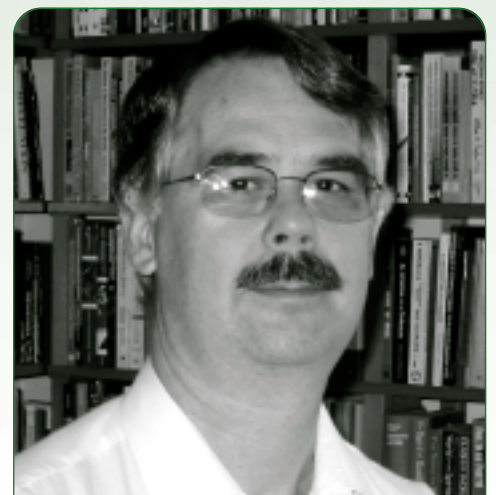
One of the signposts mentioned by Johnson is that Christians have enormous resources for evangelism, and this also helps illustrate the interpretation I would like to make. The richness of Christians is

in many ways their weakness. From my experience in Europe and Latin America, the main contributions to cross-cultural mission do not come from rich churches or rich Christians. In many places, it is the less rich, elderly people and the smaller churches that are supporting missionary work. The rich middle class is, by and large, so busy in augmenting their wealth and their consumerist potential that they have very little to offer for God's work. Although the potential exists, the fact does not say much about the real possibility of using these resources for evangelizing the world.

The list of global plans is intriguing and revealing at the same time. I agree it is a good sign that we still are planning to evangelize the world. However, another reason that there are so many plans is that we all know that slogans do not change the world and that they can be at best important pedagogic tools to encourage people to get involved. I believe that we need a much more mature approach to the whole issue of global evangelization. Johnson pictures something of this maturity in the seventh signpost when he describes the 'changing face of Christianity' and the different "faces of Jesus." A paradigm shift needs to take place, giving space to new forms of mission work and to new categories of missionaries. Could the post-modern youth take part in that? Yes, if they become committed Christians, and some are. Perhaps the strongest missionary force is still to come from those who have not yet reached a post-modern stage and are willing to volunteer as long-term missionaries.

In the Amazon region in northern Brazil, it is common to find road signs with the distance to other parts of the country.

The signs are really impressive, marking the thousands of kilometers to Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo in the southeast, or to Porto Alegre in the south. The Amazonian signposts give the traveller the hope that there will be ways of getting to these places on trafficable roads. The challenge is to find the roads because large parts of these routes do only exist on maps. <<



Bertil Ekström is the past president of the Brazilian Association of Cross Cultural Agencies and COMIBAM, the Latin American Continental Missions Network. He serves the WEA Mission Commission as Executive Director Designate. He is a staff member of Interact, a Swedish Baptist Mission, and is also with the Convention of the Independent Baptist Churches of Brazil. During the consultation in South Africa, June 18 – 23, he will take over the leadership of the Mission Commission from Bill Taylor.

Global Christianity:

A Reflection on Statistics from the Two-Thirds World

Engaging the Issues

Globalization is no longer a mere catch phrase that we hang on our doorposts. It has affected almost every area of our lives today, whether one resides in the West or non-Western World. The presence of the global church in the twenty-first century has a different meaning altogether than in the mid-twentieth century when the first Lausanne movement was born. Christian presence, however meager it may be, can be found in almost all nations today, although there is still much ground to be plowed when one looks at the present world from the perspective of people groups.

Moreover, the once held mission equation of the Western church going to the non-Western world is no longer valid. There are approximately equal numbers of missionaries sent from the Two-Thirds world churches as Western missionaries when one considers doing missionary work both within and without the national borders. The majority of the Two-Thirds world missionaries are ministering to unreached people groups within their own national boundaries, often not reachable by outsiders. India is a good example of this. There are vast pockets of unreached people groups and unreached areas scattered through out the globe that need both mobility and



David Tai – Woong Lee is the director of the Global Missionary Training Center in Seoul, Korea, Chairman of the board of directors for the Global Missionary Fellowship, and a member of the WEA Mission Commission Global Leadership Council.

financial backing. Both the Western missionaries and some of the Two-Thirds world missionaries often reach these with needed financial support from their constituents. The West is no longer “Christendom.” Mission is from virtually everywhere to everywhere, including the West.

These are some of the changes that are taking place among churches in the Two-Thirds world. Some Asians (such as Koreans) have had unprecedented breakthroughs in missionary work in such areas and countries as in parts of Central Asia, Mongolia and China. They are gradually beginning to expand their sphere of missionary activity to the West.

There are a number of ways to communicate this phenomenon. One is to approach it as a statistical viewpoint. This has no doubt been helpful to the global church at large. The Two-Thirds world church has been the recipient of the benefits of the research, costing enormous amount of resources, both human and monetary. At the same time, one must raise a flag of caution as statistics can reduce the facts to a single phase. This can at times portray quite a different picture of the complex scene by reducing the factors to the minimum.

Local perspectives expanding to the global scene

Another way to look at global Christianity is to begin from a local standpoint. There is a need for localization of research projects to give more a complete picture of the local scene without disregarding the global aspects. “Glocalization” of the research could reduce some of the unnecessary reductionism in the research currently done by the major researchers of mission by portraying a local picture of what the global statistics say.

At times, Mega research results seem to give an overly optimistic view of the current mission progress. Let us take, for example, the Southern superiority in terms of numbers of all Christians. Supposedly more than 60 percent of all Christians reside in the

Southern Hemisphere. Included in the top ten countries that have the largest number of Christians are China, the Philippines and India from the Asian continent.

But the perception of most of the Asian evangelical churches is that these are some of the areas where the most active missionary work has been taking place in the past decade or so. Except for the Philippines, these countries still are in need of active missionary work. In China, it has been said that there were two windows that work counter to each other. The window of free marketing will continue to open up as the time progresses, especially with the coming of 2008 Olympic games scheduled to be held in China. The other window of the hearts of the people, which are expected to close as China modernizes herself. Now is the window of opportunity for helping the Chinese church to be strong enough to evangelize its own nation of more than 1.3 billion and to self-nurture its own church. We are aware that more and more missionary work is directed towards the training of missionaries and pastors who are pastoring the house churches. There is still great demand for these kinds of ministry.

Hands-on research by the missionaries and mission executives on the field, with much prayer and a feel for the people of the land, will fill-in the final analysis of the statistics and determine the direction the missionary organization will take. When these local attempts are matched with global research results, there will inevitably occur a “glocalization process” of the mega mission scene, which is closer to the real picture.

*David Tai Woong Lee
Global Missionary
Training Center*

Missiological/theological values should take precedence over cultural/contextual necessity

No church, whether it is a church of the West or a church of the Two-Thirds world, should excuse herself from active evangelism and church planting. As we discuss global Christianity on a grand scale, we often hear that the role of the Western missionaries should be different because the Two-Thirds world missionaries are actively doing evangelism and church planting (although these are not the only ministries that they are engaged in). It may be true that the Western missionaries are better acquainted with modernity and post-modernity, as often they have been reared in those environments. One must not forget that some of the Two-Thirds world missionaries have also experienced the cultures of the modern world, with all of its implications. Yet, they should not confine their missional ministries to what is compatible with their contemporary cultural milieu, any more than the Western missionaries. We must not forget that 1.7 billion will never get to hear the Gospel unless someone dares to go to them and tell them the Good News. Even with the optimistic figure of the current statistics, there are still at least 2.7 billion plus additional people who are without Christ that belong to the so-called evangelized world. So no one is exempt from doing evangelism along with other integral missionary work.

In closing, let me mention several other brief points. Japan and Thailand are some of the least reached mega-people groups that are extremely unresponsive to the Gospel. We need to continue to pray and persevere in our missionary work among these people. One day, God may open their hearts and they suddenly could become ripe for the harvest.

Further, although the global statistics show that there are plenty financial resources, without deepening of the commitment to the Lord and His vision, the responsibility of funding the global mission will always lay on the shoulders of sacrificial minority, both from the West and the Two-Thirds world. These points show that “global” and “local” need to be kept in balance in order to give a better picture of the global reality of the mission at large. May these dialogical communications continue so that we can get a more focused view of the global reality of the mission for the twenty-first century. <<

The twentieth century saw amazing growth in the world church—its extent geographically as well as numerically. For that we should give thanks to God daily! On the one hand we rightly long for more and more, because we want the Lord to receive the worship and honor that are his by right. On the other, we accept that there are mysteries in the work of the Spirit, and that sometimes we are puzzled when the much prayed-for breakthrough does not appear to come. We do well to remember that in many places where the church is now thriving, a few generations back our forebears wept and labored for many years without seeing the fruit of that faith-full ministry. In many cases, today's generation reap where others sowed.

Global Missiology Report

The Scripture neither allows us to sit back and passively leave everything to God, as if we had no responsibility, nor does it allow us to believe that if only we could hit on the right scheme or strategy then the world would all be won in no time for Christ. The challenge for us is the same as it has been in every generation: how can we engage in mission in such a way as to recognize in practice, not just in theory, that God alone can build his Kingdom and his Church, and bring men and women, boys and girls, to new life by his Spirit; while at the same time be visual aids for the gospel in all its fullness, explaining and living the truth clearly and compellingly, contextually and compassionately? This is the calling, not just of a few individuals, but of the whole people of God, living out in community a flesh-and-blood reality of the marriage of grace and truth, of faith and hope and love.

‘Global Missiology’ probably sounds a bit grandiose, and if it offends I apologize. What we are trying to do, in this extraordinary world church setting in which we are so privileged to live, is to bring together groups of ‘reflective practitioners’—those who are passionate about mission praxis, but also about wrestling with the Word and every kind of study to inform us, to keep us in step with God, to provide the yardstick by which we assess whether what we do is on target or not. As never before, we all need one another, with all the rich colors of brothers and sisters from many cultures and people groups, to help us evaluate what we are doing, and even more importantly to try to discern what God is doing in our day. In the twentieth century, most of the missiological voices

which shaped what happened were western. Now we need—and have the opportunity—for a far richer chorus.

In our Global Missiology working groups, we try to provide a safe forum where honest reflection can take place, where east and west, north and south, can all listen to one another and seek together to make our mission praxis more biblical, more contextual, more faithful, more fruitful—for the glory of God and for the good of the church. The Task Force exists to serve the church, not to set its own agenda. So in response to requests from around the world, we will be working in groups on topics as diverse as Encounter with Other Faiths, Missional Ecclesiology, Mission Spirituality, Contextualization Revisited, Suffering and Persecution. The first two of those groups have already made significant progress towards publishable books. By the end of SA06, we aim that the remaining groups will have identified the key areas to explore and have begun to bring valuable fresh material together. And SA06 may well itself identify further topics for working groups to wrestle with. If you are interested in contributing to any of these projects, each with a life of 2 to 3 years, in person at SA06 or by email before or afterwards, please contact Bill Taylor or Rose Dowsett. <<

Rose Dowsett



Rose Dowsett serves as International Chairman of Interserve International, is a member of the WEA Theological Commission and a WEA Mission Commission associate.

Interdev Partnership Associates

Update on IPA

- Our numbers have increased from 14 to 23 members. With this increase, the following teams have been strengthened: Southeast Asia mainland, Southeast Asia Islands, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and theme-specific partnerships across regions. In addition, we now have direct representation in the Turkic region. Our members are currently serving 89 partnerships and networks.
- New partnerships have been started and ailing ones revived: [People group names withheld for security]. Our Asia team is helping lead the partnership called Ethne 06, to bring together those working toward the remaining unreached peoples.
- Several IPAs have been asked to, and have assisted in coordination of disaster response by Christian agencies in all the major world disasters from the Asian tsunami to, amazingly enough, the US Gulf region. Even as I write, some of our members are directly involved in coordinating relief efforts to victims of the Pakistan earthquake. Though this is not our primary focus, our combined skills and experience are useful and in demand in this special need.
- We have also been able to publish a book, by Ernie Addicott, "Body Matters," that collects in practical form the many lessons learned through the Interdev team. We printed 1000 copies earlier this year, and nearly half of them have been sold already. It seems we will need to print a second edition. Requests are coming in from individuals and organizations. One of the latter has already purchased 62, and intends to use 30-plus copies per year in their training program. Income from these sales will be used for publication of new editions and possibly other material.

This growth has been possible in large part because of our association structure, which has nearly all members being self-funded and affiliated with another agency. At present, we have only one IPA member who still depends partially on a central funding source through IPA, but we hope to find a permanent solution for him as well.

How have we been able to achieve these things?

1. Solid vision: The initial vision was solid, and your investment of many years led it to maturity and the inner strength that allowed it to transition from a standard-form organization to a voluntary association, without losing its power.
2. Covenant: We have formed a serious covenant with one another for mutual support, mutual learning, and faithfulness to the vision of functional unity in the church and in missions to the still unreached.
3. Flexibility of operations, which allows our members to work in a variety of ways with different partnerships and networks at different stages of development.
4. Speedy communication: Extensive use of email and internet voice communication technology to keep us in

contact on a regular basis.

5. The ability to meet as a whole team annually over the past two years for a week of fellowship, mutual encouragement, accountability and planning.
6. Sustainability: We are confident that this model is solid, worth maintaining and expanding. We hope it can be sustained on a very small operational budget.

Alex Araujo

Vision for the coming year:

1. Provide pastoral support, where needed, and coordination to the growing IPA team through field visits by the IPA Coordinator.
2. Enable team members to travel to each other's region to help with specific projects and needs. Some regions are well served while in others our members struggle alone.
3. Come together for our annual summit, to be held from 3 to 7 April 2006, for planning, mutual learning, and accountability.
4. Continue to edit, produce and distribute training material.

There are many forces threatening to pull us apart and dilute our strength, and these four things are essential to hold us together and enable us to grow. <<



Alex Araujo coordinates the field team of INTERDEV under the new structure, Interdev Partnership Associates (IPA). Interdev, and now IPA, promote strategic mission partnerships among the last reached peoples of the world. Alex, born and raised in Brazil, has served with IFES in Portugal, Comibam in Brazil and Partners International in the USA. Married to Katy, Alex has three adult children and one grandchild.

Towards South Africa 2006:

An Agenda for the IMTN

During the last meeting of the International Missionary Training Network (IMTN) in Langley, Canada, June, 2003, participants agreed that the IMTN should be about promoting “holistic” or “integral” ministry training that addresses the needs of the whole person. Part of our mission is to help missionary training institutions and programs throughout the world adopt this integral approach to training through contextually appropriate training practices. In essence, this means helping training programs shift from heavily cognitive or knowledge centered training to that which also focuses very intentionally on character and skill development. This represents a major paradigm shift with significant challenges to implementation.

To address this challenge, a foundational course has been developed since the Langley meetings, entitled “Integral Ministry Training Design and Evaluation” (IMTDE), and has been offered to national groups of trainers in Argentina, Nigeria and India. The course builds on the earlier MC work, *Establishing Ministry Training* (Ferris, 1995), by adding three additional components: Philosophical Foundations, Integral Ministry Training Theory, and Adult Education Principles and Practices. The initial response to this course has been very positive. It is very practical, enabling those who take it to develop outcomes-based integral training curriculum through a step-by-step process.

On the agenda for the South Africa meetings will be the presentation of the key concepts of this course and discussion focused on practical implementation of guiding principles.

Structural Issues

Recommendations coming out of the Langley meetings also addressed structural questions, including leadership and membership. In January 2005, MC leadership released Jonathan Lewis from some responsibilities in order to pursue the development of the IMTN. The appointment as director was made until the next international convocation (South Africa 2006). Two other colleagues joined him almost immediately in expressing their desire to provide some level of “staff” support. Rob Brynjolfson, founder and cur-

rent program director for the Gateway Missionary Training Centre in Langley, and Omar Gava, current international coordinator for training for COMIBAM, the Latin American missions movement, and director of a regional training center in Cordoba, Argentina.

During 2005, this team has pursued the development and offering of the IMTDE course on three continents, created a skills and understanding profile for a missionary trainer to use in developing an M.A. for trainers in Latin America, and developed a web site from which to offer training in multiple languages.¹ They have also been involved in consulting activities, ranging from regional consultations in Guatemala and Argentina, national consultations in Honduras, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and helping a group establish an integral missionary training program in Mexico. A fuller report on these activities and the strategy behind them will be presented in South Africa.

The question of IMTN staffing will also be discussed in South Africa. Rob Brynjolfson has worked concertedly to disengage himself from other ministry responsibilities in order to offer his services full time. Jonathan Lewis and Omar Gava will continue to provide staff support as well. But it is clear that achieving

¹ The www.theIMTN.org is now offering a basic, church based course for those with a calling to serve as tentmakers. Having developed this platform, it is envisioned that other courses will soon follow.

the goals of the IMTN will take much more than the efforts of two or three individuals.

Networking Is Not an End in Itself

Although the Langley recommendations envisioned a network of individual members led by a central director who promotes member interaction, the structure does not represent much of an advance over the loose knit “fellowship” concept of the past. The potential of the IMTN lies in the fact that it is part of the broad, WEA MC platform. Its weakness is that it has been cast in the mold of a fellowship of individuals with little or no implicit institutional commitment towards achievement of common goals. If the IMTN is to be effective, it must structure itself in ways that produces synergy through institutional commitments to a mutual agenda. In essence, that means organizations releasing people and resources to work with the IMTN. Otherwise, we will come together again in South Africa to discuss the difficulties inherent in pushing along a wet noodle.

While missionary trainers do sometimes express a need for greater levels of connectedness, the fact is that our networking follows personal lines of contact rather than a general “forum” approach. Attempts to create common access through an IMTN Yahoo group has not evoked a significant response. Likewise, charging a single person with the responsibility of collecting names in a database in order to generate and coordinate a global program will not be effective. IMTN must meet real needs. And if the IMTN’s agenda is going to meaningfully address needs, it has to generate common commitment at an institutional level. This implies the release by organizations of people and resources around a common strategy and plan.

Jonathan Lewis



Jonathan Lewis has been on staff of the Mission Commission since 1991. As from 2005 he has a consultant /advisory role to the MC staff. He also is leads the International Missionary Training Network.



Existing and suggested Key Center locations

The need to further explore IMTN stakeholder relationships and commitments led to an IMTN “Resource Partners” meeting in Colorado Springs, USA, February 9-10, 2006. Participants included representatives of organizations providing on an international scale, specific training for missionary trainers, and organization development consulting to missionary training programs. Attending the meeting were representatives of Bethany Fellowship’s GO 100 program, Worldview Resource Group, and International Training Partners, as well as the representative of a major foundation and the three IMTN “staff” previously identified. The following represents discussion and conclusions of this group, which will be brought forward in South Africa.

Functional Elements of the IMTN

The meetings clarified the following roles and relationships within the IMTN:

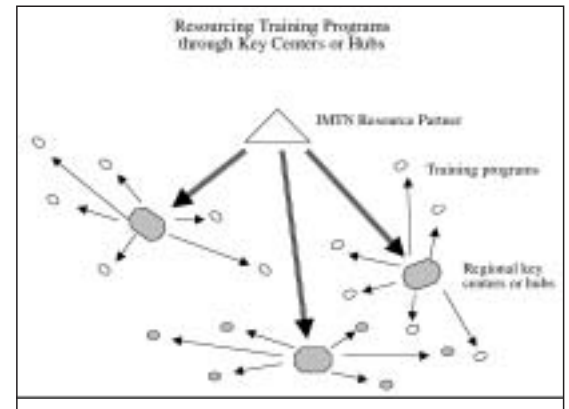
1. Organizational membership/clients: Missionary training institutions and programs in regionally and nationally defined areas of the world.
2. Key centers or “hubs”: Training institutions within a given region that have the capacity to equip these clients by training their trainers and equipping their programs.
3. Organizational Resource Partners: Missionary training resources providers including course packages, training materials, infrastructure development, scholarships, etc.
4. Regional & National Directors: Persons fully responsible for fostering the IMTN values and goals in their region. They are usually closely associated with a key center. They facilitate networking & resource sharing, and coordinate consultations and modular course offerings to equip trainers.

2 All aspects of curricula would include the following ten components: selection criteria, training objectives, curriculum content, delivery systems, training environment, designed learning experiences, trainer qualifications, evaluation standards, on-field consultation objectives, and life-long learning goals.

5. IMTN Associates: Select individuals whose organizations releases them for a portion of their time to carrying out the goals and objectives of the IMTN nationally, regionally or internationally as directors, consultants, staff and resource persons.
6. IMTN Staff: International personnel whose primary work is the IMTN and the pursuit of its goals.

IMTN Clients, Resource Partners and Strategy

The IMTN “clients” are our “members.” But these are not *trainers* as envisioned in Langley. They are the hundreds of *institutions and programs* around the globe that offer, or want to offer quality, missionary specific training. In order to be strategic, we must focus our resources on centers that have regional or national influence and are willing to serve these IMTN clients/members in their own spheres of influence. These regional centers are referred to as “key centers” or “hubs.”



In order to be strategic, the IMTN Resource Partners must jointly design and implement plans that are “high leverage” and offer easily transferable products and services in a coordinated and synergistic way, following “process” guidelines. During the meetings, the following graph was produced to illustrate this strategy (see table 1)

Table 1: IMTN Values

The IMTN values...	Therefore, the IMTN envisions...
A process vs. product approach to missionary training	Missionary training centers that are learner and learning centered
Intentionality	That missionary training be outcome-based (understandings and skill sets), with all aspects of curricula ² derived from competency models (local missionary profiles describing knowing, becoming, and doing)
Integral whole person training	Training that equips the whole person – understandings, character development, and ministry capabilities
A triad of training methods – formal, nonformal, and informal	Missionary training that incorporates formal, nonformal, and informal training methods as necessities for whole person training
Training that is transformational	Training that transforms both the trainers and trainees into the image of Christ
Training design and delivery that are reproducible and easily transferable	The sharing of best practices among 15 key networked global training “hubs” for the purpose of equipping missionary trainers for increased effectiveness
Authentic ministry internships	The incorporation of authentic ministry internships, which will take place in a ministry setting, for the development of ministry skill-sets.
Contextualization	Missionary training centers adapting and applying globally accepted principles of whole person training
Knowledge as an instrument rather than an end in itself	Global training centers understanding knowledge as instrumental for the development of understandings and skill sets
Training that is derived and driven effectiveness in real world ministry settings	Training that is developed, revised, and evaluated on the basis of by effectiveness in field situations
Ongoing evaluation criteria	Curricula, trainers, and program effectiveness evaluated on the basis of training objectives and field effectiveness
Effectiveness	Training and ministry that are truly effective in glorifying God, advancing Kingdom principles, equipping missionaries, and reconciling man to God

Relationships Based on Shared Values

Because a common commitment to core values is foundational to IMTN relationships, a significant portion of the meeting was spent identifying and discussing common values (Table 1). Bob Strauss of Worldview Resource Group refined these further and suggested how the IMTN might envision them in practice.

While not a comprehensive list, it is a good start towards articulating the values

that these IMTN resource partners are committed to. These values define what we do and how we do it.

Conclusion

Unless the IMTN can begin to function with institutional support and persons fully dedicated to a common agenda, it is unlikely that we can foster the development of programs around the globe that share our common commitment to integral missionary train-

ing. We have found an eager and receptive audience to these concepts and continue to press for the implementation of transformational principles that are needed to equip effective people for effective cross-cultural ministry. We must bring these critical issues to the table during the South African consultation and plan for a way forward. <<

Ethne06:

Strategic Planning Trans-Nationally

The Ethne06 Consultation on Unreached / Least Reached People Groups (UPGs/LRPs) is focused on developing strategic actions across regional lines. In the plenary sessions, church and network leaders will emphasize the crucial nature and reality of local, regional and global collaboration and strategies. These leaders are from SEAsia (6), Africa (2), S. Asia (4), C. Asia (1); Latin American (3), N. Asia (2); Middle East (1) and N. America (1).

Much of the consultation is focused on Consultative Groups. These groups will develop strategic plans together by gathering people from different nationalities, giftings and vocations. Thus, rather than dividing into a pastors' group, a church planter group, a member care group, a translators group, a "fundings" group, etc., all of these different giftings will be in the same group working together. All groups suggest steps toward developing the global prayer initiative on the UPGs/LRPs (which are found in every continent) and the ensuing strategy initiatives. This prayer and strategy initiative will be mutually launched in June 2006. Global Prayer Digest (www.global-prayer-digest.org/) will provide daily prayer requests, and Joshua Project is offering specific links to data by region (www.joshuaproject.net/ethne_globalregion.php).

The Consultative Groups include 4 Strategy Groups (9 hrs—each participant can choose only one) which will develop strategic plans. The Workshops (5 hrs) will be more specialized, but also seek to develop some specific strategy commitments. Seminars (2½ hours) will be more informational. Each participant will choose either one Workshop or two Seminars.

Strategy Groups include:

Wholistic Gospel Movements (WGM) will develop integrated efforts among UPGs to see the Body of Christ started/reproducing/ serving/transforming their own communities and other unreached peoples, cities, and nations.

Kent Parks

Frontier Crisis Response Network (FCRN) will explore ways to cooperate in crisis situations including, but not limited to, natural disasters, war, economic disasters, and terrorist attacks, in a way that will ultimately lead to Gospel movements in transforming societies, especially through increased cooperation of crisis responders around the world.

Harvest-Linked Prayer Strategies will launch and facilitate the first year of an ongoing prayer and harvest initiative by (1) increasing awareness of the remaining 6,900+ Least-Reached Peoples (LRP); (2) connecting prayer movements to specific strategic initiatives; and (3) developing models, resources and training globally.

LRP/UPG Workers in a Changing World will identify and offer solutions to some challenges and issues related to placing, training, and caring for laborers in various sending and receiving contexts, among the LRPs/UPGs.

Workshops include (1) Raising up the Next Generation of Mission Leaders; (2) People on the Move (e.g., nomads, immigrants, students, generations); (3) Communication Strategies for Missions ("low tech," such as chronological storytelling, and "high tech"); (4) Member Care among the LRPs; (5) Mission Mobilization Processes and Models (globally, locally regionally); (6) Information/Resources (opportunities, gaps & joint projects).

Seminars include (1-4) Strategy Group Reports; (5) Assess and Inform (Key Research, Gaps, Future Trends); (6) Maximizing Church-Centered Initiatives; (7) New Generation Leadership Transition in LRP Missions; (8) Partnership Principles; (9) Ethne: Shaping a LRP/UPG Global Network – Steps Forward. <<



Kent Parks, and his wife Erika has served in SEAsia for 17 years, working mainly among Unreached People Groups and in helping develop UPG ministry networks, as well as nation-wide and region-wide UPG-focused networks. He served seven years as a Baptist pastor in the US before serving in SEAsia as a seminary professor (Ph.D. in missiology), and as a Strategy Coordinator focused on stimulating trans-denominational and trans-national efforts among UPGs. He is currently serving as SEAsia Regional Facilitator for the Network for Strategic Missions and as the Facilitator for SEALINK, and emerging SEAsia UPG network. He also serves as Co-Facilitator (along with Beram Kumar) for the Ethne06 Global UPG meeting which will be held March 7-10, 2006 in SEAsia.

Global Member Care Resources (MemCa) was officially launched in 1998 as part of the WEA Mission Commission. Key to our formation was the commitment to apply the learning from the ReMAP project on missionary attrition and to intentionally connect together as member care leaders/practitioners.

Doing International Member Care Well

MemCa at SA06

MemCa is a partnership of member care networks that develops resources to help support mission/aid workers. Our special focus is on workers/sending groups from the A4 regions (Africa, Asia, Arabic-Turkic, America-Latina) and those working among UPGs (unreached people groups). Currently we are a group of about 20 people. The different networks (geographic and speciality) connect to MemCa via their “links” who are part of MemCa. Many examples of what we do can be found in the *Global Briefings* archives on our web site (www.membercare.org).

Let's meet at SA06! Here's our MemCa members:

- Links for Geographic Networks
 - Marina Prins (Africa)
 - Rachel Kull (Africa)
 - Anke Tissingh (Africa)
 - David Allen (Mediterranean)
 - Annemie Grosshauser (Asia)
 - Judi Chow (Asia)
 - Pramila Rajendran (India)
 - Grace Alag (The Philippines)
 - Moon-Gap Doh (Korea)
 - Marion Knell (Europe)
 - Carlos España (Iberoamérica)
 - Macia Tostes (Brazil)
 - Laura Mae Gardner (North America)
 - Brent Lindquist (North America)
 - Don Smith (Oceania)
 - Other geographic networks: TBA

- Links for Speciality Networks
 - Marion Dicke (Africa; Crisis Care)
 - Harry Hoffmann (Asia; Member Care Hubs)
 - Siny Widmer (Europe; Radio/Media)
 - Debbie Lovell (Europe; Humanitarian Aid)
 - Kelly O'Donnell (WEA-Mission Commission)
 - Other speciality networks: TBA

What are we doing at SA06? - Come to a special session!

In addition to actively participating in the overall conference program, we are meeting each day as a MemCa “consultation/collegium.” As a *consultation*, we will exchange updates from our respective regions/ministries in member care, share resources, discuss trends and issues, review current/future goals, and spend time together to strengthen our personal relationships. As a *collegium*, three MemCa members will offer “masters training sessions” on a topic of their expertise. The topics are presented in the context of *proveloping* (providing/developing) member care in difficult settings, and possibilities include: doing spiritual warfare as member care, helping survivors and relief workers in mass disasters, building multicultural capacity in the member care field, and forming quality standards for member care workers. Finally, the SA06 conference participants are warmly invited to an open MemCa session in which we will share some updates from around the world, and discuss

Kelly O'Donnell

any concerns/issues that our guest-colleagues might have.



Quality people and quality projects

In MemCa we build ongoing relationships in order to *support quality people with strategic influence who are doing quality projects with strategic impact*. We prioritize four “clusters of projects” which we call our “Four Directions”:

- Strategic Gatherings (Connections via conferences and consultations)
- Strategic Information (Communication via telecommunications and internet)
- Strategic Training (Development via courses and workshops)

- Strategic Materials (Publications via books and articles).

Core distinctives for MemCa

We embrace 10 distinctives (a mentality) which guide our work in international member care:

- Identifying member care gaps and new directions (commitment to help *shape/support* member care)
- Considering international issues/needs in addition to our own ministry areas (commitment to a *globe-all* focus)
- Developing resources intentionally in addition to providing resources (commitment to *provelop* resources)
- Contextualizing knowledge/practices in light of the diversity of the mission/aid community (commitment to *multicultural diversity*: national, linguistic, disciplinary, generational)
- Working together and building relationships in Christian mission/aid (commitment to *proactive/ongoing connections*)
- Connecting with sectors/resources outside of mainstream Evangelical missions (commitment to *multi-sectoral connections*)
- Establishing good communication links/updates globally and regionally (commitment to *knitting the net* of practitioners)
- Focusing on mission/aid workers from A4 regions and UPGs. (commitment to the *underserved/at-risk groups*)
- Maintaining a passionate and visionary voice on behalf of mission/aid personnel (commitment to *member care advocacy*)
- Seeking the Lord together in prayer and humility in all that we do (commitment to Jesus Christ, the *Best Practitioner*).

What can we expect from SA06?

In general, at SA06 we expect to reconnect as MemCa both personally and professionally and become more *cohesive*. The last time we met was in Vancouver in June 2003. We also are really looking forward to actively mingling

with our fellow Mission Commission friends and colleagues. Finally, we expect to increase our *contributions* to the mission/aid community as we review and expand our “Four Directions” which are overviewed below.

Direction One: Strategic Gatherings (Connections)

Global Faces. Connect influential member care workers (MCWs) from the A4 regions with international MCWs at specific consultations around the world, including UPG partnerships.

Field Faces. Send small member care teams to service A4 field workers among UPGs.

Direction Two: Strategic Information (Communication)

MemCa Web Site. Resource the global mission/aid community with quality member care materials and help member care workers to stay current and connected as a field.

Member Care Video. Produce a DVD to overview the essential components of member care, with translation in five languages and available by the end of 2006.

Direction Three: Strategic Training (Development)

Trauma Training Course. Provide trauma training courses for pastors/Christian workers (two locations/year); and member care overview courses (two locations/year).

On-line Member Care Course. Offer an overview course with 10 topic areas and a three person “virtual faculty”, offered twice/year, and on going via independent study.

Direction Four: Strategic Materials (Publications)

Translation and Distribution. Translate/write and distribute member care materials (written and audio) in two international languages used by many UPGs.

Books and Articles. Compile a multi-edited book of international case studies and new articles in member care (*Global Voices: Case Studies from the A4 Regions*). <<

NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICANS AROUND THE TABLE

A roundtable of church and mission leaders from Brazil and the United States of America was organized in São Paulo in November 2005, gathering representatives from the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA), one of the main mission associations in the United States, and the Brazilian Association of Cross-Cultural Missions (AMTB). The initiative was taken by Rev. Paul McKaughan, executive director of EFMA, and the idea was strongly supported by the leadership of AMTB. The sessions were led by Rev. Marcos Agripino, vice-chair of AMTB and Brazilian representative of COMIBAM. The group, comprised of 12 North Americans and 23 Brazilians, met with an open agenda and with an emphasis on fellowship and mutual sharing. A brief presentation was given on the history and development of the mission movements in North America and Brazil. Each participant gave also a short presentation of the organization represented. With a mixture of small group dynamics and discussions in the larger group, both Brazilians and North Americans had the opportunity to bring to the table key issues related to mission. Everything was bilingual, with translation to Portuguese and English.

The main outcomes of the three days together were:

1. A better understanding of the reality of the missionary context in the US and in Brazil;
2. The discovery of common issues related to the practical sides of the missionary work; and,
3. The initial steps of a deeper relationship between leaders from the two countries that will certainly continue through personal contacts and collaborative efforts

A roundtable such as this between EFMA and AMTB requires investments in time and financial resources. However, the assessment by the participants was that it was worth the effort and that the meeting gave an important opportunity to broaden perspectives and to build new relationships with peers from another cultural context. <<

Bertil Ekström



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A Kingdom-Oriented Framework for Encountering Buddhist Worldviews¹

The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the Missional Heart of God

The Need for Christian-Buddhist Encounters

Christianity's relationship with non-Christian religions is a key missiological inquiry for Evangelicals concerned with the Great Commission. Traditionally, Evangelical missions have concentrated on proclamation of the gospel and avoided interfaith approaches (John Stott, 1975). Increasingly, most missionaries in Asia work within restrictive environments which prohibit direct evangelism. Do we have a theology of witness for genuine encounter with Buddhists? In the West, the privatization of religious faith is increasingly making direct evangelism socially unacceptable. Globally, rising ethnic-religious tensions threaten peace and racial harmony in many countries in Africa, India, Indonesia and the Middle East, to name a few places. Even in seemingly "peaceful" Buddhist countries, Christian proselytization efforts are problematic. Another concern is the partial conversion of people groups in Asia, where Church growth is not accompanied by worldview transformation. From a variety of perspectives then, wherever the gospel is preached, there is a need for deeper encounter with traditional Buddhist worldviews. The purpose is not to compromise the gospel but to confront under-

lying belief systems at their deepest level.

Some key questions for this study are: What theological implications does the kingdom of God have for the interfaith encounter with Buddhists? In particular, can conservative Evangelical theology provide an adequate and creative foundation for a genuine interfaith encounter with other truth claims such as Buddhism? How will a distinctive Evangelical encounter be different from pluralist models?

I define interfaith encounter as an inter-religious conversation whereby both the Christian and the Buddhists desire to witness to their faiths as well as listen and learn from the neighbour's faith. Worldview can be said to be "a set of shared framework of ideas of a particular society concerning how they perceive the world" (Burnett 1990, 13)

The article begins by outlining a brief survey of the Buddhist scriptures which influenced East Asian worldviews, followed by an outline of a distinctive Evangelical theology of the kingdom of God that places Jesus as the unique King over the nations. My goal is to illustrate the theological framework of an Asian Evangelical living in multifaith community who by nature of his or her commitment to Christ, is required to live out his faith without 'ghettoism'. However, interfaith con-

versations in the context of friendship, and living multi-culturally need not require a reductionism of other religions nor of one's personal faith in Christ. Instead, one is challenged to live out the authentic Christian life in the context of full religious pluralism.

Scriptures in Buddhist Traditions

Although we do not have good historical evidence on the life of Buddha, Christians must be willing to engage with the Buddhist scriptures because these are the sources of their religious beliefs. While it is true that the extant versions of Buddha's life were created long after his death by his followers, our purpose in religious encounters is to understand what Buddhists believe and how the Christian gospel addresses those belief systems.

The words of the Buddha, which became the Buddhist scriptures, are stories of how he seeks after truth and finally achieves *Nirvana*. The words he spoke were intended to exhort others to enter into the same experience of

Tan Kang San

¹ Part of this paper is adapted from a lecture given at Bible and Nations Conference at Regent College, June 2003.

release. These words were new and different from the handed down Hindu Vedas:

That this was the noble truth concerning sorrow, was not, O Bhikkhus, among the doctrines handed down (i.e., the Vedas), but there arose within me the eye (to perceive it), there arose the knowledge (of its nature), there arose the understanding (of its cause), there arose wisdom (to guide in the path of tranquility), there arose the light (to dispel darkness from it). (Harold Coward 2000, 140)

Buddhists hold that the authority of Buddhist scriptures arose out of Buddha's enlightenment experience. Unlike the Christian position on the Bible as divinely revealed and inspired, Buddhists are open to subsequent scriptures from "other Buddhas." Tradition records that within the year that Buddha died (c483 BC), 500 monks gathered and agreed to codify the Rule of the Monastic Order. Ananda, Buddha's closest follower and relative, was reported to recite all the "remembered words" which were then approved by the world community (*Sangha*). Ananda is said to have recited the original five *Nikayas* (also called *Agama*) in the *Sutra Pitaka*, or the *Basket of Discourses*. Centuries later, these were compiled into *Sutras* (Buddha's teachings) as part of the Buddhist canon. In addition, the School of Elders (*Theravada*) expanded texts (*Abhidharma*) were judged necessary part of the *Dharma*. Consequently, we have the *tripitaka* or "three baskets of scripture": *sutra* (Buddha's teachings), *vinaya* (monastic rules) and *Abhidharma* (philosophic treatise). Many Theravada Buddhists felt that only these transmitted sayings of the Buddha could be part of the scriptures while others take a more open view of the Buddhist canon. These more open groups accepted the same general *sutras* and *vinayas* but developed their own *Abhidharma* or *sastra* (philosophic literatures). The Mahayanas also add many new *sutras* such as *Prajnaparamita Sutras* and the *Lotus Sutras*. Later, other devotional texts such as *Tantras* (inspired words of Buddhas) and *Jatakas* (popular stories or fables about Buddha) were developed.

Although folk Buddhists may not be literate in Buddhist scriptures, it is arguable that the teachings of Buddha shape the world-views of Asian societies. There is certainly more to Buddhist religious life than their doctrines, but with the revivals of Buddhist intellectualism and the complexities of various streams of Buddhism, it will be very difficult for the Christian missionary to gain an appreciation of what Buddhists really believe without a good grounding of Buddhist doctrines as found in these scriptures.



God's Kingship as the Basis For the Christian-Buddhist Encounter

Central to the above Buddhist scriptures requires that genuine Buddhists will ultimately negate the existence of a Creator God or a supreme personal Being, although in some streams of Buddhism, they do believe in the existences of divine beings and deities (Paul Williams 2002, 25). In this regard, the Christian who holds to the divinity of Jesus needs to address the atheistic viewpoint of his Buddhist friends. At some point, it will be necessary to introduce the ontological argument for God. Buddha is an ordinary human being who discovered the true way that brings release from an infinite series of sufferings and rebirths. The remedy to our sufferings lies in letting go of our attachments to things or beliefs (including God). While Christians cannot prove that God exists beyond reasonable doubt, we can begin with the humble confession that we believe in a creator God, as revealed in the Christian scriptures.

Three theological implications from God's sovereign kingship may be highlighted as providing foundations for a kingdom-oriented theology of religious Encounters. First, God's character and his sovereign dealings with humankind provide the basis for engagement with humans. As a righteous and holy God, Yahweh cannot tolerate sin. Because humanity has sinned and continually rebels against God's kingship, God intervenes in history as judge. Interfaith relations cannot ignore humanity's persistent rebellion against God's kingship.

Second, in the midst of judgement, God provides salvation due to his mercy. Yahweh is not only a God of wrath, but also a God of mercy and boundless grace. This pattern of "sin-judgement-salvation" provides a paradigmatic approach to all religions. The emphasis is on salvation as the goal of the kingdom, although judgement is also clearly communi-

cated as an inevitable consequence on those who continually reject God's kingship.

Third, an encounter that is firmly rooted in God's sovereign character must hold both aspects of God's righteous judgement and loving kindness in creative tension. Without such "biblical realism," Christianity's approach to other religions is bound to fall into reductionism. Christopher Wright comments:

The fallen duplicity of man is that he simultaneously seeks after God his Maker and flees from God his Judge. Man's religions, therefore, simultaneously manifest both these human tendencies. This is what makes a simplistic verdict on other religions—whether blandly positive or negative—so unsatisfactory and indeed, unbiblical. (1984, 5)

Thus Christians who are the recipients of God's mercy and who are worshippers of the righteous and holy God, have an epistemic and ethical duty to engage in dialogue with Buddhist people, even if they are atheistic or agnostic. In a stimulating and intensely personal book, *The Unexpected Way: On Converting from Buddhism to Catholicism*, Professor Paul William, Professor of Indian and Tibetan Philosophy at University of Bristol, among other things, presented the arguments for the existence of a God. After over 20 years as a Buddhist, William was profoundly challenged by Thomas Aquinas writings in seeking after the question: "Why is there something rather than nothing?" He struggled over two viable alternatives:

The Buddhist position: The fact that there is something rather than nothing, and the way things are, in terms of causal processes and so on, as discovered by the Buddha, just is how it is. End of the matter.

The Christian position: The reason why there is something rather than nothing, and

things are the way they are, is because they are grounded on a necessary being who has in some sense brought it about. (William 2002, 33)

Beyond William's philosophical arguments, a kingdom-oriented theology of religion moves on to the affirmation that God's kingship is universal. God's universal kingship in the Old Testament is reflected in the repeated accounts of God's ruling activities over Israel and the nations. In particular, God is often depicted as exercising his power over foreign nations in the following examples: his concern for Nineveh in the book of Jonah, his use of the Assyrians and Babylonians as instruments of judgment on Israel, his sovereign rule over Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1-4), his use of Cyrus as agent of restoring his kingdom (Isa 44:28, 45:1, 13), and his providential use of Xerxes as agent of preservation of Israel in the book of Esther. Believing that God is actively at work among unbelievers, Christians can approach non-Christians looking for evidences of his work.

God's kingship is not only universal, but also covenantal. This is where the uniqueness of Jesus as the Kingdom bearer of God's redemptive plan for the nations becomes central in any religious conversation that is authentically Christian. God's redemptive action is expressed and exercised through successive covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and culminating in the New Covenant (Dumbrell 1984). In the Old Testament, God's kingship is associated most closely with Israel, a particular people with whom God has chosen to establish a covenantal relationship. In the New Testament, God's covenant people are identified with the Church of Jesus Christ. Membership in the kingdom is predicated upon the "new birth" (John 3) which is possible today only through faith in Jesus Christ. The theological implication for interfaith relations is that, at some point in the dialogical process, kingdom-oriented dialogue will issue the call for a covenant relationship with God through faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

In summary, God's sovereignty as expressed in his kingship provides the basis for a missionary encounter with Buddhists. God, who is already the Heavenly King, must become king in the hearts of people. Therefore, those who are already subjected to God are obligated to persuade others to submit themselves to God. This is the philosophical basis for interfaith relations. It is based on the fact that there are others who do not acknowledge God's kingship and that their search for truth has something to teach us about God and His Kingdom.

Yet, why should the interfaith encounter be



utilized instead of simply relying on proclamation as the means of propagating the gospel? The primary reason is that God's rulership must be brought to bear on the existing faith-commitments, presuppositions and worldviews of our Buddhist friends. However, in order to be genuine, their submission to God cannot be coerced or manipulated. Therefore, Christians need to enter into dialogue in order to witness effectively and persuade others regarding the challenge of God's kingship.

The Kingdom-Oriented Encounter is Christ-Centred

Salvation is accomplished through the unique person and work of Christ. Commitment to Christ is the precondition for the kingdom-oriented encounter, after which Christ becomes the model for approaching Buddhists. Although God's salvation plan begins with the call of Abraham and the nation Israel, it ultimately looks forward to Christ, the seed of Abraham. Due to Israel's failure to be a faithful instrument of the kingdom, God has invaded human history through the work and person of Jesus. In contrast to Israel's misguided ethnocentrism, Jesus makes it clear that all people are welcome into God's kingdom, with special attention being shown to the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized. Not only is Jesus the embodiment of the kingdom, he alone ushers in the kingdom of God. No one enters into a relationship with the Father except through Jesus Christ.

What are the implications of a Kingdom-oriented Encounter where Jesus is confessed as Lord? First, Jesus is both the ultimate judge of all truth and the criterion against which conflicting truth-claims are evaluated.

"Jesus is for the believer the source from whom his understanding of the totality of experience is drawn and therefore the criterion by which other ways of understanding are judged" (Newbigin 1981, 4).

More specifically, a distinctive Evangelical theology of religion (in contrast to an Ecumenical perspective) holds a high Christology that does not compromise the truth of the supremacy of Christ over all the world's religions. Christ is the only way to the Father, and without him as King there is no kingdom of God. Evangelical encounters with other religions, therefore, reject any form of relativism that undermines the unique person and work of Christ in bringing salvation to the world.

High Christology need not mean rejection of the truth of other religions such as Buddha's teaching on morality, or that Christians cannot learn anything new from Buddhists, truths which the philosophical riches of Mahayana Buddhism may bring to Christian views of life, purity, disciplines and meaning of sufferings. Buddhist background Evangelicals have a tendency to degrade everything about Buddhism as idolatry and pagan. I think it is possible to retain a high level of sympathy and even admiration for Buddha's compassion and his teachings, if only one ventures with love for Christ and the Buddhists He so loved.

In a Christ-centred encounter, Jesus becomes the model for approaching unbelievers. His preaching and teaching methods, lifestyle and his commitments are the way that Christians should approach unbelievers. In particular, Christ's incarnational model provides the key toward meaningful dialogue. Jesus radicalized the law of love, "that we love God by loving our neighbour as we love ourselves, with neighbour unlimited, as the only measure of membership in God's reign" (Groome 1991, 16). Such an approach to Buddhists needs to be shaped by Jesus' total mission. And his total mission encompasses the challenge of discipleship, the confrontation with demonic powers and religious authorities, a compassion for the broken and the lost, and the creation of a new society. The implications for interfaith encounters are profound. In particular, Christians are not merely to be interested in sharing the gospel, but also to be seeking the total transformation of the person and society.

Finally, Jesus is the message. In interfaith encounters, the Christian makes accessible the gospel story about the Christ who brings salvation to the world. However, our message must be presented with humility and grace. "The cross is not merely the centre of the message

2 While I may not fully agree with the views of individual writers, I commend Rita Gross and Terry Muck's *Buddhists talk about Jesus, Christians talk about Buddha* (New York: Continuum, 2000) as one attempt toward deeper exploration of Christian-Buddhist dialogues.

of salvation; it is crucial for Christian living and ministry” (Ralph Covell 1993, 169). Therefore, commitment to Christ is both a prerequisite and a goal for an Evangelical engagement with Buddhists. With a deep commitment to Christ, Christians will naturally and logically enter into missionary encounters for the purpose of persuading their dialogical partners about the truth of the gospel.

The Trinity and the Interfaith Encounter

Johannes Verkuyl proposes that a kingdom-centred theology of our faith must be thoroughly Trinitarian in nature, “It is a theology that has God the Creator, the Redeemer and the Comforter at its very heart” (Verkuyl 1993, 72).

Within a Trinitarian perspective of Interfaith Encounters, one needs to take into account the role of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the Church. George Peters insightfully distinguishes a pre-Pentecost ministry and an extra-Pentecost ministry of the Holy Spirit,

The pre-Pentecost ministry is fully exposed in the Old Testament and in the gospels, while the extra-Pentecost ministry relates to world missions. We may speak of it as the general or universal ministry of the Holy Spirit, keeping in mind that the Holy Spirit is the presence of God and is omnipresence. (1972, 76)

A more recent attempt was made by Amos Yong in his article, “Discerning the Spirit(s) in the World of Religions” (ed. John Stackhouse, 2001). Yong sought to make a methodological claim that “a pneumatological theology of religions not only commits but also enables Christians to engage empirically the world’s religions in a truly substantive manner with theological questions and concerns” (Yong 2001, 38).

What implications can we draw from the universal work of the Holy Spirit for Christian Encounters with Buddhists? First, Christian-Buddhist encounters are possible because the Holy Spirit is the one who reveals the mystery of the kingdom, and has been active before Christ’s earthly ministry and continues to reveal God’s truths to all people, Thais and Japanese included. Evidences of the hidden work of the Spirit include revealing truths about Christ in dreams to unbelievers, planting in the minds of unbelievers an irresistible desire to worship the Creator and convicting unbelievers of their sins through their conscience that was created in the image of God.

Second, the active work of the Holy Spirit assures Christians that despite the rebellion of humanity and the depravity of certain practices within other religions, humanity has not

been totally left alone (John 16:7-8). “There was total depravity but not total destitute and deprivation” (Peters 1972, 79). The element of mystery coupled with the ongoing role of the Holy Spirit points to the place of prayer and spiritual discernment in Christian engagements. Recognizing the hiddenness of God’s working in people’s minds and hearts, the role of the Christian in interfaith encounters is to explain truth in an intelligible fashion and to help unbelievers discern God’s work in their lives. God’s part is to make that truth effective. In the process of encounter, God can open the spiritual eyes of unbelievers. God can also open the spiritual perceptions of his children. Therefore, the interfaith encounter is a discovery process about God for Christians and Buddhists alike.

Third, a pneumatological engagement also reminds the Christian of the spiritual battle of the kingdom (Eph 6:10-18). The real enemy is Satan, who blinds the eyes of unbelievers, and not unbelievers themselves (2 Cor 4:4). The interfaith encounter proceeds with a combined attitude of prayer and spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness as well as reconciliation and compassion toward unbelievers. Prayer that centres on the real enemy will generate within believers an attitude of dependence upon the Lord as well as an attitude of humility and compassion in relation to people of other faiths.



Kang San Tan worked several years for OMF International as the Director for Missions Research in Malaysia. At present he teaches at Redcliffe College, UK. He is also a member of the Global Missiology Taskforce of the WEA-Mission Commission. His interests are on Asian Theology and Christian Encounter with Muslims and Buddhists.

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Drawing to a Close

In conclusion, the ultimate uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the heart of God began since the salvation history of Israel of God establishing His kingship over the nations through Israel. The Asian church today is a pilgrim community that continues in this continuing story of redemption. At the heart of God’s kingdom is a King named Jesus. Without naming the King as Jesus, no community of the King can claim to usher in the biblical kingdom! Therefore, real encounter can only be undertaken when the Christian is committed to the Lord Jesus but then seeks to allow God to teach and reveal Himself within a penultimate framework of understanding. He is open for Buddhists to teach Him about God. This is possible due to his willingness to submit to the Lordship of Christ, who is bigger than his traditions and his church, and then to allow the Holy Spirit of the inspired scriptures to be his guide. In encountering Buddhists, the Christian must belong to a real rather than fictitious community of faith. Therefore, syncretism will eventually be guarded by scriptures, the Holy Spirit and a local Evangelical community of faith. Ultimately, the Christian needs to possess a theological framework that places Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Lord, a framework that the theology of Jesus’ total kingship demands. <<

News from Comibam

Declaration of Santiago

COMIBAM South Cone - Santiago de Chile - December 10th, 2005

Under the motto “The whole gospel from the South to all the nations” from December 7th to the 10th delegations of the national movements of Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay were summoned. Each one of the assistants made significant

efforts to participate and together look for challenges, forces and resources with the purpose of achieving an advance in the cooperation and missionary action. The following challenges arose, which we make our own and we commit to face:

We find that this congress was a statement for the whole South Cone movement, and that COMIBAM is going in the right direction, since it emphasizes a mission based on the local church. Almost in a systematic way, its centrality in the mission was emphasized in most of the plenary ones and on the other hand, the studies were directed to strengthen and help it to articulate its involvement.

We have been called to understand the church’s mission as an act of obedience. The church has an unavoidable responsibility, to put the gospel within the reach of all. If the church doesn’t make it, it not only disobeys Jesus Christ but it also deprives etnolingüistics groups of hearing the good news of salvation.

We heard a clear call to evaluate our church, our own lives, the kind of Christians we are, and of the sources of our theology and missiology. Also, a call came forth to transform the church through its members, taking them to become unconditional Christians—active instruments in the global evangelization.

In all plenary sessions we were systematically challenged to contextualize our mission processes, not only to transplant the church but also to establish it among those who are unreached. In that way we give answers to those in need of salvation and to those that demand our involvement and service for their personal, social well-being and for their future.

We declare that:

- In spite of some difficult experiences and of some disagreements, the cooperation continues to be possible, and that is the desire of God’s heart for his church. The cooperation is the alternative for making viable the execution of the enormous missionary task of the church from the South Cone to all the nations.
- We recognized with enthusiasm that if the church, agencies, and training centers listed here took our mission seriously, the dream of a missionary force from the South would be possible to reach.

Press Release

Leadership Transition in COMIBAM International

One of the lessons we learned as Ibero-American Missions Movement during COMIBAM ’97 was that we needed to develop a renewal and training process for our leadership.

During our first International Assembly, COMIBAM took a step forward by handing the movement’s control to the base leadership of each national missionary movement. This transition experience has been a challenging one, but also satisfactory. Being aware of the dynamics and the new challenges the third Ibero-American Missionary Congress will bring to the movement, COMIBAM’s board of directors decided to establish a transition process in the chairmanship. During the first International Assembly in year 2000, David D. Ruiz M., guatemalan, was elected as president. Later, during the second International Assembly in 2003, he was re-elected for a new term which will end in November 2006.



David Ruiz



Mr. Carlos Scott

During their last ordinary meeting, COMIBAM’s board of directors elected Mr. Carlos

Scott, regional director for the South Cone, as president-elect. It is expected that Mr. Scott works alongside with Mr. Ruiz in a transition process during the next year. Carlos Scott is a business administrator, has been a pastor in Argentina and now works full time for COMIBAM in his country, as well as in the South Cone region. He is committed with the missionary movement and has done excellent work all over his region. As president-elect, he will assume COMIBAM’s chairmanship in November 2006, at the closing of the third Ibero-American Missionary Congress.

We would appreciate your prayers and your support for Carlos Scott, his wife Alicia and his children during this transition and learning process.

- The cross-cultural mission is relevant when it is biblical, following the example of Christ's incarnation; when it depends on the impulse of the Spirit, and on the power of God; but not on the plans, neither the administrative gifts, nor somebody's resources.
- This congress has allowed us, so much for the wealth of its proposals as for the cultural diversity of the companies, to grow in a more global thought of the mission and to leave the regional neutrality and by doing so to take the initiative with a learning emphasis for other geographical regions, especially those that compose the majority of the world.
- Aware of this, we make a call to the churches in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay so that they may restore the primordial purpose of the church which is to recover the preaching of the whole gospel that allows the sinner to know not only his distressing situation but also salvation's hope, to be constituted of a community that acts by directing the lost ones of the ends of the earth with a call of "come," to recognize that the time is short, that the coming of the Lord is imminent, and that our duty is to make a bold effort to contribute to the inclusion of all ethnicities, tribes, towns, and nations in the glorious adoration of the Lamb, just as it is shown in John's vision in Revelation.

Santiago de Chile, December 10th of 2005 <<

advertisement

GOD IS BRAZILIAN *Film Review by Bertil Ekstrom*

"I am tired of all the mess you create and I have decided to take a vacation, because nobody is of iron, so I need a rested saint who can take care of things during my absence." (God, in *God is Brazilian*)

The Brazilians are probably not the only ones that claim that God identifies himself with their nationality. But, due to the richness of the country, the enormous variety of species in the flora and the fauna, the beautiful blend of races, and the peaceful behavior of the population, one can wonder if God is not Brazilian after all.

In 2002, a movie called *God is Brazilian* premiered and has enjoyed great success in the country. The film is available with English subtitles, but has not been sold outside of Brazil—perhaps because only Brazilians believe in the title. The movie, based on a novel by João Ubaldo Ribeiro, tells the story of God coming to Northeast Brazil looking for a saint that could replace him for a month. God is played by Antonio Fagundes, one of the most famous actors of TV novels in the country. God, tired of trying to bring order into the mess human beings always create, needs a holiday. Being Brazilian, he tries to find a "countryman" to take over His burden for a while.

The first person God meets is Taoca, a fisherman and tire repairman with big debts. Taoca soon realizes that guiding God during his search for the "saint" can help him fix his financial problems. Taoca is played by Wagner Moura, known for his ability to play regional characters with local colloquialism. On their first stop in the Northeast of Brazil, God and Taoca find Mada, a young lady played by Paloma Duarte, who follows them in their journey through the interior of the states of Alagoas, Pernambuco and Tocantins.

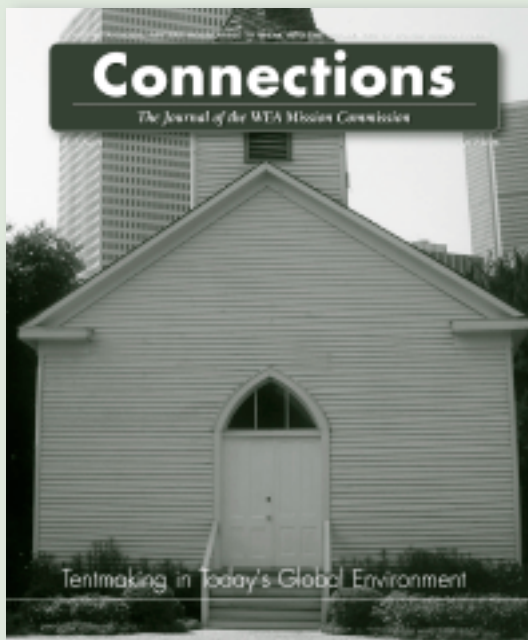
Quinca das Mulas is the man God is looking for. God has heard about the generosity and the abnegation of this man, and believes that he is the one who could replace him. Eventually, they find him in the Amazon, living with an Indian tribe. The problem is that the "Saint" Quinca das Mulas is an atheist and does not want to take God's place.

Taoca has other suggestions of people who could take the job, including himself, but God decides to go back to heaven and wait on the vacation for another occasion.

Most significantly, apart from the beautiful landscapes and the humoristic way of telling the story, the film portrays many beliefs and prejudices that people have about God. The expectation of divine miracles, the idea of someone who fixes everything in the end (the famous Brazilian "jeitinhos"), the spiritual masks that people use believing that they can deceive God... these are some of the themes the film deals with. The only person that receives praises from God is a humble protestant pastor celebrating a wedding in a poor village, who is talking more about the greatness of the Lord than following a traditional wedding liturgy.

In a syncretistic context like Brazil, with an official church that has incorporated a lot of superstition, animistic beliefs and spiritualistic rites, the film presents an unexpected realism and self-criticism of Brazilian society. It shows also that a nation permeated by Christian traditions has enormous difficulties in the cohesion of faith and practice. Certainly, that is as true for the Evangelicals as for other Christians in our country. Thankfully, our hope is based on the grace and the mercy of God. After all, He is Brazilian.

Title: God is Brazilian (Deus é Brasileiro) - Director: Carlos Diegues - With: Antonio Fagundes, Paloma Duarte and Wagner Moura - Based on a novel by João Ubaldo Ribeiro. 2002



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Christianity Reborn, The Great Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century

Donald M Lewis (ed), (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2004) 324pp.

This is the most recent volume in the "Studies in the History of Christian Missions" series. Written mainly by historians of religion it analyzes and explores the expansion of evangelicalism (including charismatic Christianity) in the Majority world. The book is divided into five sections. The first section looks at the historical background of the rise of evangelicalism. The second section discusses the growth of evangelicalism in parts of Asia and Oceania in the twentieth century. The third section has two chapters on Africa, the continent where evangelicalism has been growing most rapidly. Section four surveys the recent scholarship on Latin American Pentecostalism in a single chapter and the final section gives a sociological analysis on the global spread of Christianity by David Martin

The book is interesting for the range of material it covers – from historical questions of evangelical identity in the West to the rapid expansion of evangelicalism including the rise of Pentecostalism and indigenous churches which gives evangelicalism a very different look from its expression in the West. The first background chapters do set the scene for the rest of the book, discussing the many ambiguities inherent within evangelicalism – its association with colonialism and yet how the new emerging churches are often found among the least powerful in society. The unseemly scramble for Africa is there, the understanding of mission as modernization as well as translation into the vernacular which nurtured a growing ethnic consciousness and an evangelicalism that could flourish within their own cultures and contexts.

The chapters from the various countries provide some fascinating

insights – Daneel argues from Zimbabwe that the AICs are essentially grassroots liberation movements, very different from Latin American liberation theology of which they have never heard, but rather liberation as “an intuitively lived reality” (194). And so their liberation is lived out at a variety of levels including political and environmental. Davidson argues that in the South Pacific the missionaries did not understand the new indigenous movements, treating them as aberrations and so contributing to their continuance. A fascinating chapter on China looks at the reasons for discontent in the Chinese church with a plea by the author to focus on inclusion and cooperation rather than exclusion and confrontation. He concludes that China’s need for “cultural legitimacy and a strict, unbending orthodoxy” (107) is a fundamental cultural problem that needs to be overcome. The chapter on India is wide-ranging mainly considering the

Cathy Ross



Cathy Ross completed an MA in French and German from Auckland University before studying with her husband at All Nations Christian College in the UK. They spent time in Rwanda and Belgium prior to working with the Anglican Church for three years in the Democratic Republic of Congo. From 1991 – 1998 she worked for the Church Missionary Society. She is married to Steve and they have three children. Cathy completed her doctorate in 2003 and spent the latter half of 2003 lecturing at Uganda Christian University with her family.

evangelical rhetoric of conversion within the Indian context and how this has led to misunderstandings and violence.

The chapter on Latin American Pentecostalism attempts to survey the main characteristics of Latin American Pentecostalism including its recent and rapid growth. Freston warns us to be cautious with statistics of Pentecostalism and he investigates the reasons for the segmentation of Latin American Pentecostalism. He argues that Pentecostals are doing better than the Roman Catholics because they are closer to popular culture, they accommodate the poor in general, there is a clear break between the old and the new as transformation of lifestyle is emphasized and there is less racism as Pentecostals are darker in leadership and membership. He also explores the growth of female membership and how Pentecostalism has been good for women.

Hanciles offers a thought provoking chapter on the growth of Christianity and the nature of conversion in West Africa. He clearly points out that much of West Africa is not Christian, that it has to contend with Islam and that primal religion is still strong. He makes a plea for balancing a positive global perspective on Christian growth in Africa with local and regional realities and effectively illustrates this from West Africa. The final chapter by David Martin provides a kind of synthesis where he briefly considers the influence of evangelicalism on global society, picking up some of the book’s themes and providing a helpful global overview. Overall, the book provides an in-depth, balanced and careful assessment of the impact of evangelicalism during the last century. Books such as this force us to acknowledge that evangelicalism really is a global movement which requires serious study, analysis and assessment. This collection of essays certainly helps us to do just that. <<

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