

Editorial Comment

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How, in this world of universal pain and violence, can anyone for a moment question the existence of a Satanic campaign to reduce and distort the true glory of God?

Do mission agencies need to do “member care”?

In the Second World War I was in the Naval Air Corps training to become a carrier-based pilot. Two things were obvious:

1) I was soon expected to risk my life landing on the deck of a carrier at high seas, and

2) The Navy was taking very good care of these “fly boys” through training that was extensive, meticulous and high-quality.

For example, I had already been rated as “a First-Class Swimmer” before I transferred into pilot training. But that was “nothing” compared to what they expected of pilots who were supposed to be able (if shot down over water) to stay afloat without any floating equipment for a minimum of 19 hours. I think they called that “sculling”—just keeping your nose out of water with very slight movements of the hands.

Back then “taking care” of people in the armed forces emphasized safety, not softness. It was not a case of what was good for servicemen but what was good for the war effort. We were very well taken care of, but it was “you’ve got to learn how to swim because we can’t afford to put \$140,000 of special training into you and then have you sink out of sight the first time you’re shot down.”

Today, the mission agencies are a close parallel in some ways to the armed forces. That is, people don’t become missionaries in order to advance themselves but to advance the gospel. To pray “Thy Kingdom

come on earth” is to promote the glory of God in a captive, darkened earth, riven with evil and suffering, and to do so in direct defiance of a powerful and intelligent enemy who is out to get you and to trip you up in any way he can. (You don’t believe that? Then, that shows how skillful he is in “covering his tracks”—which, according to my pastor, is his greatest achievement.)

Right! The largest single blind-spot in American Evangelicalism is the near total absence of awareness of the larger contest between the Kingdom or rule of God and the forces of Satan. Most believers are merely fighting a personal battle, trying to do what is right and avoid sin. They may be “keep’n busy for Jesus” (bless their hearts) but they are mainly oblivious of the global, historical war.

Indeed, some mission work stresses merely resolving the sin question in individual lives. That is an important but partial picture. Jesus said, “He who seeks to save himself will lose his life, while he who will lose his life for My sake and the Gospel’s will save it.”

Member care and repair

This is why missionary “member care” often needs to be “member repair.” A movement can’t go in just two generations from a 5% divorce rate to a 50% divorce rate and still

produce missionaries who don’t need a lot of “member repair.”

It is soberingly true that in my years on the field member care was not a big thing but that now mission personnel directors are saying that if they did not recruit people who bring a lot of problems with them they would have very few from which to choose.

That is the tragic fact about missions today. Some young people are even expecting that by running away from their homeland they can outrun deep-seated problems, even problems not of their own making.

In the past few months *TIME* has run cover stories about millions and millions of children and adults who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, other millions who have autism and other millions who are “bipolar.” This incredible explosion of the number of children who (at a minimum) are learning-disabled appears in missionaries’ families, too and pulls whole families off the field.

All this is added to many other instabilities in the American home. You wonder if we have very much to offer the world.

I am getting tired of pointing out that Americans have “invented” adolescence by a questionable prolonging of school incarceration to take a 17-year bite out of people’s lives in essentially non-functioning and non-serving roles, in the process alienating children from parents in extended absence from family life. But, miraculously, many a missionary family avoids a lot of this precisely by being an isolated foreign family in a sea of cultural strangeness.

It is thus still true that not merely *despite* the hazards of living in a foreign culture but *because* of it many, many missionary families and missionary kids end up with more wisdom, resilience, and maturity than those who play it “safe” and stay at home.

Some of the most remarkable people in the world are second-gen-

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eration missionaries who are unsung and of whom this world is not worthy. This is no accident. Whatever member care or member repair is needed, there is something very vital and often astonishingly healthy about those close missionary families who brave hazards to fight the forces of evil at the front lines of this darkened world.

In any case, the *MF* articles by O'Donnell, Pollock and Reddix contain a great deal of distilled wisdom on issues that are both highly urgent and highly complex.

Short-terms and careers

In this issue you will find a helpful report from a poll of 75 campus workers about the near-total absence of "short-term missionaries" going on to become career missionaries. This may be generally true only because the vast majority of "short-termers" don't really witness firsthand any career work. Years ago one of my daughters came back from a few weeks of a short-term and said, "Daddy, if I thought that was what missionaries did, I would never become a missionary." Had she not grown up in a missionary family, she would probably not have noticed the difference between 1) a short visit of students to strange foreign places, which can be excellent education, and 2) a short-term which would expose them to real and meaningful foreign mission work.

I myself would probably have never become a missionary had I not gone with some church young people for just two weeks to visit five different missionary families, see how they lived, how amazingly they had been able to get through to an indigenous tribal people, etc.

But the embarrassment of riches is that nowadays there are far more young people who want to go out and "see what it is like" than there are hard-working missionaries who have time to drop everything and help a group of young people understand what they are doing. Some mission agencies plan for this quite effectively; missionary careers are more likely to develop in such a case than if the young people never even see a missionary at a distance. ☉

Unlocking the Mystery of Life

In the Evangelical movement today the next-biggest blindspot (see my editorial for the biggest) is the funny attitude we have toward the whole world of "science." We love our cell phones and computers and all that, but basically we suspect that science is really the worst of all threats to the advance of the Kingdom of God.

In some ways science does in fact set itself up as the ungodly, proud human knowledge that prompts John Templeton, in response, to champion "humility" among both scientists and theologians.

But, rightly understood, the Bible does seem clearly to suggest that the most powerful demonstration of the glory of God is His creative handiwork. And that is what scientists are dealing with day and night. Art is the study of what man has made; science is the study of what God has made.

Why should we let the scientists be the main ones to glory in every new glimpse into the fantastic intricacy of the human cell?

Sure, scientists may seem often to be striving to beat each other out, to win grants and prizes and so on. But there is a powerful group among them whose quiet fascination with the truly marvelous and mysterious in both animate and inanimate nature partakes of almost a holy awe.

Proof positive of the holy awe which God's creation can bring is the incontrovertible record of the Moody Institute of Science and featuring the redoubtable Irwin Moon, Ph.D. (UCLA).

Missionaries made such powerful use of those ground-breaking science films that at their peak they were wowing millions in 3,000 showings per day (with an average of 500 persons per showing) throughout the world. In addition, these science films made their way into over 100,000 public schools in this country alone.

Now here is the exciting point. Irwin Moon's daughter married the man (Jim Adams) who for 15 years led the team producing these spectacular science films at the Moody Institute of Science (one of the most strategic Christian ventures in the twentieth century). She and he are still working zealously behind the scenes carrying on that incredible tradition.

This, then, goes far to explain what is undoubtedly the most impressive video ever made on the glory of God and the false moves of certain kinds of science. "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" probes a whole world of awe essentially unknown

in the early days of the Moody Institute of Science.

Its photography employs the very latest computer graphics to portray an astounding world at the microbiological level which both dazzles and confuses the best brains on earth.

It also interviews outstanding scientists, whether believers or not. One scientist interviewed wrote a whole book on molecular evolution, only to yield finally to the simple fact that there has to be some guiding hand in nature rather than the idea (that has swept science, public schools, and even legislatures) of a Darwinian "unguided" evolution.

Now here is the amazing deal which, with your faith and action, can come true if we amass orders totaling 50,000 videos. Note from the producer's Website (www.illustramedia.com) that the retail price is \$22.63 (including shipping). If you (and enough others) can imagine the good use of just eight of these videos in your church (at 8 x \$22.63, or \$181.04 total), we can then arrange for you to receive 50 copies postpaid! That is, 50 for the retail price of eight. Or you can pay the retail price for 16 and we will ship 100 postpaid. In other words, through us you can *buy in units of 50* for 181/50 = \$3.62 per video postpaid. To reserve your order of one or more case lots of 50, you may utilize our special Website (www.uscwm.org/count_me_in).

However, you may feel you must see this video before making a commitment for multiple copies. So, if you seriously feel you might get up enough interest for one or more units of 50 copies, we will rush you one copy (via first-class mail) for \$10, as a sample. (We will send only one copy in this situation.) If you are pleased with this powerful evangelistic tool, you can then utilize our Website to commit yourself to \$181.04 for each unit of 50 you feel you and your church, school, or fellowship can handle. You can turn around and give them away or sell them for any modest price. This video will wear well and will be passed around enthusiastically.

To obtain a sample copy under these conditions, send your check for \$10 (payable to the "Frontier Mission Fellowship") to Jeanne McKinney, 1605 Elizabeth St., Pasadena, CA 91104. (Inquiries may be directed to Jeanne at 626-296-7501 or jeanne.mckinney@wciu.edu.) *Do not send us any money other than \$10 for a sample copy. You will receive separate directions for payment for the case lots of 50.*