



Most mission enigmas hinge on our interpretation of the Bible.

Ralph D. Winter



Dear Reader,

This issue of *Mission Frontiers* focuses once more on the incredible importance of the emergence of a major Hindu—a *culturally* Hindu—movement to Christ. Curiously, our biggest problem in digesting this kind of startling information is understanding the Bible correctly. So let's talk a little about the use and misuse of the Bible.

In the Bible, to be sure, we find the drastically different and “pagan” Greek way of life becoming a suitable garment of faith for Greeks, however unsuitable it may have seemed to many Jewish believers.

That is parallel to the drastically different “Hindu” way of life that is now becoming, in India, suitable clothing for Biblical faith.

The Bible is “the Problem”?

As a matter of fact, most mission enigmas hinge on our interpretation of the Bible. Here are a couple of examples of Bible problems.

For example, is the Bible trying to tell us that God shifted gears drastically from a Jewish tradition to a Greek tradition? Does the latter now “supercede” and replace the former? Or is the Greek tradition in addition? Is, after all, the Bible portraying for us the basic legitimacy of the personal faith of people within either cultural tradition, and, eventually in all cultural traditions?

Missionaries do well to acknowledge the latter case to be closer to the truth. If they don't, they will end up simply extending into, say, India, a Western type of religion that will be considered

foreign by most of the people in India. However, in India, as Biblical faith has begun to surface significantly in Hindu cultural garments (for millions of cultural Hindus), it is a scandal to many people both there and here.

But this is not the only issue of interpretation of the Bible. Another fascinating complexity is that the Bible seems to have two different ways of explaining things. One way, mostly in the Old Testament, has to do with *ultimate meaning and final purpose*, the other describes the *immediate cause*.

Take the movie, “The Passion”, for example

Does the Bible—does the movie, “*The Passion*”—say that the Jews killed Jesus? Yes and no.

Does the Bible give us two quite different reasons for Jesus' death? Yes.

Did some Jews kill Jesus? Sure, indirectly. But we should not say that “THE Jews killed Jesus,” because that would implicate them all – Zechariah, Elizabeth, etc. Think of the crowds of Jews that heard both John the Baptist and Jesus “gladly.” Were they all present in that mob that opted for Barabbas?

Even if, more accurately, we say that “some Jews” killed Jesus, that is in one sense no more than to say that *some people killed Jesus*.

John Piper's recent book, *The Passion of Jesus Christ*, gives 50 reasons why Jesus went to the Cross. However, these 50 reasons are not fifty *causes* but fifty *purposes*, as the back cover carefully points out.

In any case, one thing about the Cross of Christ is fearfully undeniable. People in the Jewish tradition had been killing the prophets routinely for

a long time. After the Cross, Jewish people would kill Stephen. Later, Jewish people reacting negatively to Paul's preaching would stone Paul and leave him for dead. *Soon, however, the Romans would kill more Christians than the Jews ever killed anyone of any kind.*

In other words, THE Jews are not unique in this gruesome narrative. The same pattern is seen across the centuries in the history of missions as fearless missionaries have dared to penetrate the dangerous domains of “those who sit in darkness.” Remember, in Scripture, *darkness* is not merely the absence of light but the presence of a dark, intelligent, evil personality. Paul explained to Agrippa that his call was to “open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the dominion of Satan to God.” Those three phrases are synonymous.

Thus, for me, the immediate reason for (cause of) Jesus' death fairly jumps out of “The Passion” movie, namely, the fact that a terrible evil was committed by human beings goaded and deluded (“they know not what they do”) by an evil power that to this day still ranges across this planet even though ultimately to be defeated.

Our biggest problem in digesting some kinds of startling information is understanding the Bible correctly.

A second reason (purpose) for why Christ died is, of course, for Mel Gibson, for most Catholics and for many Protestants,

the fact that God sent His Son to die for the sins of the world. This *purpose, not a cause*, we understand from the perspective of the sovereignty of God.

Both interpretations are true. Apparently, to understand the Bible it is necessary to realize that the Bible itself often gives two different reasons for the same event.

The Biblical paradox behind all this

Sometimes the Bible is exasperatingly difficult to understand. Two things in apparent contradiction can both be true. A “*dual perspective*” is essential, and to be faithful to the Bible we must get comfortable with it.

For example, the Bible very plainly and straightforwardly states that



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When the Bible describes something in two radically different ways, we stumble seriously if we feel there must be a contradiction.

1) Joseph was sent to Egypt because of the ill will and initiative of his conniving brothers. Later, Joseph himself insists to his brothers equally plainly, 2) "You did not send me to Egypt. God did (Gen. 45:8)." One statement is a *cause*, the other a *purpose*, both true!

In the same vein, probably the most paralyzing paradox in Scripture is the startling fact that 1) in 2 Sam. 24:1 King David is "incited by God" to do wrong, while in the parallel account 2) in 1 Chronicles 21 it says unmistakably that David was "incited by Satan" to do that same wrong. Yet, Biblically, both are true.

Joseph's and 2 Samuel's accounts 1) speak from the perspective of the over-arching sovereignty of God and His *purposes* while the alternate statements 2) speak of the actual *cause*, the functioning instrumentality, the vile, evil, destructive work of Satan who often works through human beings.

Thus, in the Old Testament especially, harm, danger, blindness, deafness, illness, plagues, even hardening

of the heart, etc. are usually described as 1) directly from God, while in the New Testament Peter's statement is more typical about the origin of evil, 2) "Jesus went around ... healing all who were *under the power of the devil* (Acts 10:38)."

In fact, in the Old Testament the Hebrew word *satan* usually means simply *adversary*, while in the New Testament the word almost always means Satan. (It still means *adversary* when Jesus uses it in connection with an adverse reaction of Peter. But Bible translators working in the New Testament are right that in the New Testament *satan* almost always means Satan.)

So what? (This is very serious.) In both the Bible and daily life today *we badly stumble if we resort to only one of these two Biblical ways of describing things.*

Here is a crucial point.

- The fact that God sent Joseph into slavery does not excuse his brothers in the slightest.

- The fact that God "incited" David to count Israel does not excuse Satan in the slightest.
- The fact that God sent His Son to the Cross does not excuse certain Jews and Romans (and Satan) in the slightest.

Modern-day examples of this paradox may be more delicate for us to deal with. For people visiting the dying in hospitals it is not good enough to say "God gives and God takes away," or that "God knows what He is doing," or that we must believe that "God has a good purpose for this."

We must also recognize that, as true as these statements of *God's purposes* may be, they do not excuse the role of Satan, or diabolical pathogens, or perhaps misguided doctors in the slightest.

Most important, relaxing in God's overarching purposes does not excuse believers from the obligation to go all out in mission to extinguish causes. *Can we wrap our inactivity under the cloak of a superficial Evangelical fatalism that relaxes with the thought that "God has His mysterious reasons"?* 🌐

New Members of the Frontier Mission Fellowship

INTRODUCING



← **James and Julie Butare** and family have joined us under loan from Wycliffe Bible Translators. James has a doctorate in applied linguistics from Sorbonne University, while Julie has a diploma in business studies and office administration. James has been appointed to the faculty of William Carey International University as a curriculum developer, and Julie assists in the university library.



Elias and Sonia Rivera → and family, originally

from Puerto Rico, have come to us after pastoral service to three congregations in Puerto Rico and North America. Sonia is assisting the Latin American Mobilization Division and overseeing subscriptions for the *Global Prayer Digest* in Spanish. Elias teaches *Perspectives* and mobilizes Spanish-speaking churches to complete the unfinished task.



Is God calling you to join them in the Frontier Mission Fellowship? The FMF is the agency behind the U.S. Center for World Mission and other key projects in the frontier mission movement. To learn more, contact David.Flynn@uscwm.org or see www.uscwm.org/explore.

Dear Mission Frontiers,

I am responding to Ralph Winter's editorial comment in *Mission Frontiers* (January-February 2004 issue).

At present, there is no cure for autism. Nor do children outgrow it (see <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/autism.cfm>). There are a host of diseases and maladies in this world that are incurable. How does God view the incurable maladies, and how does He view our response to them when we are personally affected?

The point of your column is to identify a new frontier for Christian missions to seek eradication of diseases such as malaria or AIDS. The desire is to bring glory to God through saving lives from malaria and AIDS....

Eternal life in heaven far outweighs the sufferings of this world (Romans 8:18). Modern medicine continues its thrust with or without the mission money of Christ's church....

If it is God's plan to start a new mission frontier to eradicate malaria and AIDS, He will raise up people and resources to accomplish the task. Please adjust your tenor in this forum.

I have an adopted son who is 31 and mentally handicapped by chromosome defect. My wife died suddenly from pulmonary embolism three years ago. My mother passed away in 1989 from Alzheimer's disease.... God is sovereign over this world. Nothing can thwart His purposes (Job 42:2). Jesus is coming soon (Revelation 22:20).

Bozeman, MT

Ralph Winter's response:

It is obvious that this dear brother is absolutely besieged with tragic events over which he has no control, and he points out that autism (of which I spoke) has "no cure."

My response is, first, to point out that I made no reference to "curing"

diseases or "treating" disease, much less curing autism. My concern is for Evangelicals as a body to recognize an obligation to devote prayer and energy, maybe in lifelong calling, to discovering the reason so many millions of children in this country are suddenly turning up autistic. Granted, once autism appears, there is not a whole lot that can be done. However, is it not a clear responsibility to investigate the causes of autism?

This brother writes:

If it is God's plan to start a new mission frontier to eradicate malaria and AIDS, He will raise up people and resources to accomplish the task.... Nothing can thwart His purposes.

Do we leave this for the world to do? Is it not God's plan to destroy the works of Satan? Isn't He trying to "raise up people and resources (Evangelicals?) to accomplish that task"? Granted that God's purposes will not fail. Is He not expecting us to get at the causes? This case is likely where "without His help we can't, without our help He won't." (More in my editorial on pages 4-5 about the difference between unchangeable purposes and removable causes.)

Dear Dr. Winter,

[A letter concerning Professor Al Hammond's article on faith/science conflicts]

I would ask you to publish at least an excerpt of this letter.... I challenge you to publish it because I am confident that you.... may not want *Mission Frontiers* to be seen as taking sides.... Both the religious mainstream and the scientific mainstream are on the wrong paths currently ... Both communities are closing their ears to irrefutable evidence from God's universe if it does not confirm what they already believe....

There is no conflict between the Bible and science.

The underlying assumptions of such a statement are:

- 1) The Bible is without error.
- 2) Scientific evidence doesn't conflict with the Bible.
- 3) Where there is apparent conflict between scripture and scientific evidence, we are either misinterpreting the Bible, or we are misinterpreting the scientific evidence, or we are misinterpreting both the Bible and the scientific evidence.

This revolutionary idea is the foundation of Reasons To Believe [the ministry of pastor/scientist Hugh Ross]. It is also my own conviction.

Tallahassee, FL

Ralph Winter's response,

Well said. Your perspective is ours as well. For centuries Christian leaders have spoken of "God's Two Books, scripture and science." Psalm 19 clearly speaks of both. Theologians speak of both General and Special Revelation. Both, if rightly understood, are of God. From time to time we may tend to underestimate one or the other.

Dear Dr. Winter,

To say that God is not in control of children born with defects sounds too much like the "health and wealth theology." To call those who accept difficult situations from God's hand as "fatalistic hypercalvinistic" is not only unkind, but in our thinking, unchristian ... To talk about controlling the malaria parasite is unrealistic. To malign Christians ... for not doing more to research the disease was not fair.

Wheaton, IL

Ralph Winter's response:

God's sovereign control is not in question. My concern is for us to do what we can, because what we can do God usually expects us to do. He does not expect us to pray that He will paint the back fence.

Martin Luther and John Calvin did not know about germs. Had

they known, I do not doubt that they would have recognized Satan's distorting intelligence in that area as well and would have incorporated in their theology the human obligation to do all that can be done, as knowledge increases, to eradicate dangerous germs.

Time was when tuberculosis and duodenal ulcers were both considered the result of conditions (dampness, stress), not infections. Now we know that we need to specifically eliminate the deadly infections that cause them.

Today, for example, there is substantial evidence that infections, not merely conditions, underlie heart disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, and schizophrenia (see the cover story, February 1999, *The Atlantic Monthly*, pp.41-53). However, our medical/pharmaceutical colossus is being paid to focus almost exclusively on the healing of these diseases, not the elimination of their infectious origin.

Many devout believers simply say, when one of these diseases appears in their circle of friends, "Too bad, but God knows what He is doing," or "No doubt God has some reason for this; we must trust Him." Obviously, God has His reasons, and can draw much good out of terrible tragedy. But that is no excuse for us not to do what we can to track down and eliminate the infections causing all the enormous pain, suffering, and death dealt by these five diseases alone.

Furthermore, we undersell and misrepresent our God if we blandly assume that He is the one in the business of making people suffer from disease. Where is Satan in all this? Do we do well to leave this fight to the world to deal with? Does He really want us to concede that we can do nothing about the emergence of autism in our country, or the persistence of malaria in Africa?

Dear Mission Frontiers,

Thank you for the "Editorial Comment" by Ralph Winter in the March-April 2004 issue of *Mission Frontiers*. He has said

very eloquently what we have believed for many years. While I believe that short-term missions is a valuable door to long-term service, I have felt that many churches and certain agencies have overemphasized short-term to the detriment of career commitment to missions. May the Lord, through your wise counsel, stimulate the Evangelical community to reevaluate what we have been doing in missions and bring about a refocus on long-term involvement.

Ed Moran
SIM (Serving In Mission)
Rocky Mountain Regional
Director

Dear Mission Frontiers,

I read with great interest Mark Snowden's article, "Orality: The Next Wave of Mission Advance," in the January-February issue of *Mission Frontiers*. Great stuff, but it raises a concern: that this Orality thrust may well have a negative impact on the Bible translation effort. In my view, this would be a most unfortunate consequence. The Orality people need to be aware of this likelihood and use their influence to counteract such a potentially negative response.

The challenge to all Bible translators is to take into account the insights and experience that the Orality people bring to the discussion and to apply them in their translation effort. The final product of Bible translations intended for giving God's Word in audio (or written, for that matter) must be the dynamic equivalent of how people in that culture speak and communicate. I am speaking from my personal experience as a Bible translator....

My hope and prayer is that the Orality movement and the Talking Bible movement will encourage and supplement a total effort which must be made

in our time and which is represented by these two complementary movements. May God give us eyes of faith and daring spirits to obey all He shows us.

Harvey Hoekstra
(Author, *From "Knotted Strings" to Talking Bibles*, see pp. 20-21)

Dear Rev. Parsons,

I have just read your article in the March-April issue of *Mission Frontiers*. I have always enjoyed the articles. Missions is my passion.

You asked a question: "Does your favorite North American author really know what to say to suffering believers in Myanmar? Or any other foreign mission field, for that matter?" I would like to suggest that not only do our favorite North American authors not know what to say to suffering believers, but I believe it is presumptuous for us to even try....

Elsie Mayyasi

Dear Editor,

Thanks for your excellent editorial in the March-April 2004 issue. Your illustration from Islam was particularly well-chosen. As to the approaches you mentioned, one could also make the same points regarding ministry to Muslims in this country. The harm done is often far greater than we are willing to admit!

Anonymous

Would you like to tell us your response to what you read in *Mission Frontiers*? Send E-mail to mission.frontiers@uscwm.org or postal letters to *Mission Frontiers*, 1605 Elizabeth Street, Pasadena, CA 91104, USA 🌐





Land of Dharma

Herbert Hoefler

Foreword to *Living Water and Indian Bowl*
by Dayanand Bharati (William Carey Library, 2004).
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India is a land of many different religions. Hinduism is a way of life with many different belief systems. It is significant that the proper name for “Hinduism” is “Sanatana Dharma” or “the eternal way of life.” You can have whatever beliefs you like, but you are expected to live out “dharma.” Your religion is expected to participate in the values and customs and organization of society.

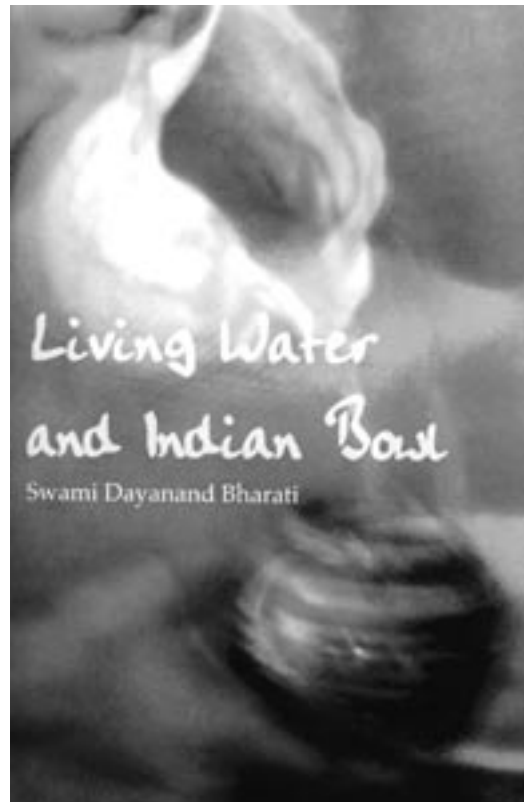
For Westerners, it can be disconcerting that Dayanand Bharati in this book does not address many philosophical or theological issues. In this regard, Dayanand is very “Hindu” (in the cultural sense) in his outlook. The emphasis is not on orthodoxy but on orthopraxis. Dayanand’s critique of Christianity is not that its teachings are heretical or false in India. His critique is that Christians do not follow dharma. They do not participate in the Indian way of life. For Westerners, these external matters can seem peripheral, but in the Indian context it’s the way you live and act that matters, not what you believe.

Hindus respect any religious person. Even as a foreign missionary, I have always found a willingness by Hindus to give me the benefit of the doubt. They

assume that I am a person of spiritual character. To that extent, they anticipate that I am participating in the dharma of the land. Any Christian pastor is generally welcomed into Hindu homes for prayer and teaching. If a Hindu finds you to be a person of character and propriety, it does not matter to him that much if you have differing theological beliefs. What matters first and foremost is that you are a person of dharma.

I was speaking with an evangelist in South India about a new congregation that had been started in a slum area. At the dedication of the small worship facility, local Hindu and Muslim leaders were invited to address the crowd. He reported that they all praised the congregation and the work, even though converts had come from their own religions. They said they rejoice that the congregation’s ministry had brought more dharma into the community: order, respect, decorum. The bottom line is not what you believe but what you are.

**In the Indian context
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believe.**



Rejection of Dharma

It is argued that the Christians do not want to be part of dharma. The vast majority are from the "dalit" background, i.e., the untouchables and tribals. Even though they were counted among the Hindu population, they never felt a part of the religion. In fact, they strongly resented the Hindu way of life, for they were excluded and demeaned by it. Millions of dalits have become Christian precisely in protest against the dharmic way of life that had opposed them for so many centuries.

At the time of the British colonization, when most of the conversions took place, becoming a Christian had a double payoff. On the one hand, it was an assertion of human dignity over against their Hindu persecutors. On the other hand, it was a move into the prestigious world and benefits of the Western powers in the land. The converts often got special treatment, including education opportunities, overseas travel, and employment from their Western co-religionists.

During the period of the mass conversions among the dalits, there was a popular opinion that Western civilization was more advanced than Indian civilization. By joining the Christian religion, dalits were not only rejecting an oppressive civilization but joining a higher one. In the South, there were enough numbers of converts that they could safely and conveniently remain in their villages. In the North, however, the numbers were fewer, so many of the converts moved into the towns and cities to become part of the Western mission life there.

These movements of socio-religious revolt against Hindus continue to this day. No longer is there any opinion that Western culture is superior, but there is strong opinion among dalits that the oppressive attitudes and practices of Hindu dharma will never change. This conviction continues to be the impetus for many conversions to Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. These movements are highly political, for converts change their voting patterns and social allegiances. They no longer accept the Hindu ideologies that they feel have kept them oppressed for so many centuries. They want justice now, not in some future life.

As dalits, Christian converts had no desire to be a part of the general culture, the dharma, of the nation. They resented and rejected it. Much of our Western view of the Indian caste system has been colored by the experience of dalit Christians.

However, those 600 million who are in the caste system of India very much value it and enjoy it. They are embarrassed by the centuries-long oppression of the dalits and, since Independence, have generously effected "affirmative action" programs seeking to undo the suppression, at least economically.

Of course, the anger of the dalits remains, and we see it reflected in the "dalit theology" of today. Often this theology is full of vituperative and antagonistic analyses of dharma. Such attitudes certainly are understandable and to some extent relevant. However, it must be clear that such theology from India is not "Indian theology." It is the theology of the dalit church. It speaks to the 20% of the Indian population who are dalits. It does not speak to the 12% who are Muslim or the two-thirds who are in the castes.

India is a land of many different cultures and many different religions. Within Hinduism itself, one can identify hundreds of different religious traditions. Indigenous Christian theology grows out of the thought forms and quests of the culture. In the Indian context, there would then need to be hundreds of different theologies.

Dalit theology does not speak to the 12% who are Muslim or the two-thirds who are in the castes.





One of these indigenous theologies has begun to develop, the dalit theology. It has its legitimate place. The church with its Westernized forms also has its place. The Christians are comfortable with its forms of worship and governance. They are Western forms, but that is why they were welcomed, and now they are well-rooted in the dalit church.

However, we must be clear that these forms and this theology do not speak to the vast majority of the land. The vast majority will never join the dalit church. We cannot expect the dalit church to have an effective outreach beyond its own dalit community. Certainly, as only 2.5% of the Indian population, the Indian church has plenty to do in evangelizing and serving their fellow dalits.

A Dharmic Theology

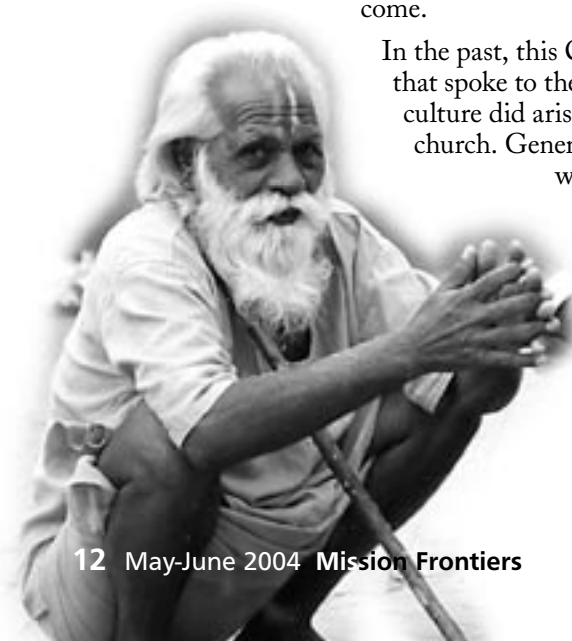
In this book, Dayanand Bharati does not propose to write an Indian theology. His role is more negative than positive, more iconoclastic than constructive. Dayanand attempts to show why the existing church in its structures and practices and thinking cannot relate to the two-thirds of

India who are in the castes. In the Western world, it took centuries for a John of Damascus and an Origen and a Thomas Aquinas and a Martin Luther to arise. These great theologians arose from the culture and spoke to the culture,

in very different ways. It may well take some centuries for their equivalents to arise on the Indian scene. In this book, Dayanand attempts to clear the path for such Indian greats yet to come.

In the past, this Christian voice that spoke to the general Hindu culture did arise in the Indian church. Generally, these were the voices of caste converts, who were attempting to relate their

Culturally rooted dharmic theology will have to grow in a different soil than that in the organized church of India.



Christian faith to their own cultural identity. They needed to do this both for the sake of their own comfort in the faith and for the sake of conveying the faith to their fellow "Hindus." However, we cannot realistically expect those voices to be heard in the church today.

As part of the social movement toward personal dignity among dalit Christians, dalit leaders have asserted that their agenda will be the agenda of the church. They will speak for the church, since they are the vast majority. The voice of the church will be a dalit voice. They did not leave Hindu dharma in order to once again fall under caste Hindu leaders and theologies. In Protestant churches, dalits want dalit pastors and they elect dalit leaders.

With this reality, the place of the caste Hindu in the church is problematic. It will be very difficult for a dharmic theology to develop. The soil isn't there to nurture and support it. The dharmic way of life simply is not the culture of the vast majority of Christians, whether in outcaste villages in the South or in mission cantonments in the North.

Culturally rooted dharmic theology will have to grow in different soil than that in the organized church of India. Dayanand Bharati's unique role has been to serve as a spiritual guide and interpreter for some of the "Jesu bhaktas" (devotees of Jesus) around the country. I don't know that anyone else has ever attempted this ministry in the history of Christian mission in India. Because Dayanand's voice is unique today and significant, we must give it special attention. If a theology that is rooted in dharma is to develop, it will have to develop outside the church. Dayanand is crucial in keeping that spark of possibility alive.

A Dharmic "Church"

However, in the Indian context, a dharmic Christian theology will remain secondary to the development of a dharmic Christian way of life. Western Christianity is always asking for and promoting theology as the life and sign of the church. My guess is that the historical emphasis, even to this day, on developing an Indian theology has much more to do with pleasing the Western church than to relating to the real interests of the Indian people. Our church leaders are trained in the West and trained to speak to the West, and our seminary curricula and content are modeled after Western interests. Our church theologians rejoice to please their Western audiences.

A truly dharmic theology will have to develop outside of these precedents and expectations. It will have to be a church significantly different from the organized church that we have now, largely populated and determined by dalits. It will have to be a church characterized much more by dharma than by theology.

Here is where our attention turns to the hundreds of thousands of Jesu bhaktas living outside the organized church. They need to be strengthened and guided in their lonely struggle to be faithful to our Lord. We can only hope and pray that many more Christian gurus like Dayanand Bharati will respond to God's Spirit. They won't come out of the formal seminaries, but out of the soil of the land, just as the great gurus of Hinduism do. They will need to arise in each of the hundreds of caste groups where Jesu bhaktas live and pray. These Jesu bhaktas need nurture not only to remain steadfast in the faith but to share it effectively among their families and communities.

Even though the Jesu bhaktas (for the time being, at least) must remain separate from the church, they also sorely need the church. They can easily slip into heresy. They can easily compromise their faith and their witness. They can easily get exhausted by the struggle and meld back into the Hindu religious fold. At least until they have their own Christian gurus, they will need pastoral guidance and support. They need the affirmation and support of the organized church, though not its control and direction.

I hope that this book will motivate church people in India and around the world to appreciate the struggles of the Jesu bhaktas. They are the key to reaching the dharmic world of India. The Jesu bhaktas

must be enabled to develop a church life that is rooted in dharmic soil where they live. This book should be a resource for all of those who even now reach into the lives of the 600 million people who live in India's caste system, through mass media, evangelistic conventions, pilgrimage centers, literature, Bible correspondence courses, etc.

Thanks to this book, we have a good idea of what we shouldn't do and some suggestions as to what we should do.

Will we respect the dharmic culture of India, will we love the people of India's castes, will we value the courageous Jesu bhaktas, enough to change our ways? If we don't, we know we will be just as unsuccessful in our outreach to caste India in the future as we have been in the past. If we take the ap-

proach Dayanand Bharati proposes, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ may flow smoothly and powerfully, with fewer unnecessary hindrances.

Can you imagine a church in India that draws on all the beauty and profundity of the ancient cultures of India? What a contribution that would be to the great nation of India and to the worldwide Christian fellowship. Let us join Dayanand Bharati in praying and working for that day. 🌐

Hundreds of thousands of Jesu bhaktas need to be strengthened and guided in their lonely struggle to be faithful to our Lord.

To order *Living Water and Indian Bowl*, see pages 20-21.



Herbert Hofer is Professor of Theology at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon and USA Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Mission Director for India and Sri Lanka.



Not Just Here In America:

The Obstacle of Christian Subculture

John Fischer

The following is excerpted, by permission, from the April 2003 edition of *Relevant Magazine* (www.relevantmagazine.com).



In all my thinking, writing, and speaking on the Christian subculture in America, I have always assumed at least one thing: the phenomenon of a Christian subculture and its accompanying errors and blind spots only exists in America. Surely this separation of Christian and secular is unknown in other places in the world where regular people can be Christians and have a quiet, steady impact on their culture through normal channels of life and influence without getting caught in the crossfire of a cultural Christian guerrilla warfare with all

its accompanying socio-political alignments and agendas.

We've not only exported our faith, but our bad ideas as well. The Christian subculture is a force to be reckoned with worldwide.

I had this assumption shattered recently while talking with a college senior who grew up as a missionary kid in Guatemala and will be returning there to begin an

Internet consulting business upon his graduation. When I asked him how he felt about going, he had very mixed feelings. He was excited about the challenge and the fact that he felt God had opened up a door of opportunity for him there, but he was also very reluctant about it. When I pressed him about the reluctance, he revealed his major concern was having to contend with the fundamentalist evangelical Christian subculture in Guatemala.

"You've got to be kidding," I said. "Not in Guatemala."

"Oh yes," he replied. "It's worse than here."

He went on to tell me how his struggles with the

Christian subculture and its accompanying isolationist and separatist beliefs almost did in his own faith growing up as

the son of missionary parents there. That's how we became acquainted, actually, through one of my earlier books, which he credits for preserving his faith when he was almost ready to leave it for all the wrong reasons.

Apparently, we have not only exported our faith as missionaries, but our bad ideas as well. That means the Christian market is international, and the Christian subculture is a force to be reckoned with worldwide. I guess I shouldn't be surprised. Television, film, and music have exported American values throughout the world. Why not Christian television and Christian movies, books, and music exporting the thinking and values of a Christian subculture?

It is interesting to note how my friend was hesitant to return to Guatemala because of this. For some time I've been wondering if the day would come when, in order to truly minister the gospel of Christ to people, one will have to disassociate oneself from organized and institutional religion of all kinds. Perhaps that time is already here. For all intents and purposes it is here for my friend, who told me this is precisely why he is returning to the country of his origin as a businessman and not a missionary.

He is also careful to note that he is not an under-

cover missionary. He's not disguising his missionary zeal and intent. He's simply taking his newly acquired business expertise where he knows it will have a good chance of success. He is going to begin a business, and his ministry will not be any more or less a part of who he is than it would be for any Christian, anywhere. You could say we are all undercover agents for God, but that is only a way of looking at our God-given place in the world where we live out our faith. It is not an agenda . . .

I don't believe our work should be a pretext for something else. At the same time, being Christians in places of influence is a big part of God's overall plan for the church—something we have often overlooked in our attempts to create a separate contemporary Christian culture. But I see this as His strategy, not ours. Our responsibility is to do all we do to the glory of God, wherever he puts us.

Our motivation should be that which drives us to do everything well to the glory of God.

We are called to be the best at our profession for reasons that have nothing to do with evangelizing. Our motivation should be that which drives us to do everything well to the glory of God. Whatever we do professionally, we do as an end in itself, not as a means to an end. Christians need to be accepted in the workplace at face value for the kind of people they are and the kind of work that they do. Our Christianity and accompanying evangelical fervor is not a "tactic." Our faith, like our work, needs to stand on its own. Our faith infuses our work with meaning, but it stops short of turning it into cover for a covert operation. . . .

Mission Seminars—Fall 2004



WITNESSES TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

September 7–8

Orientation for residents. Orientation begins Tuesday morning. Dr. Jonathan J. Bonk, OMSC executive director. A **public reception** to welcome the 2004–05 OMSC international community of residents will be held Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. All are invited.

September 9–10

U.S. Churches Today. Rev. Geoffrey A. Little, pastor, St. James Episcopal Church (New Haven) and director of the Church Mission Society U.S.A., provides an overview with a guided tour of church life and churches in New Haven, Connecticut. There is no registration fee for this seminar.

September 13–17

How to Develop Mission and Church Archives. Ms. Martha Lund Smalley, research services librarian, Yale University Divinity School. Eight sessions, \$145.

September 20–24

The Internet and Mission: Getting Started. Mr. Wilson Thomas, Wilson Thomas Systems, Bedford, New Hampshire, and Dr. Dwight P. Baker, program director, Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut. Eight sessions, \$145.

October 11–15

Doing Oral History: Helping Christians Tell Their Own Story. Dr. Jean-Paul Wiest, research director, Jesuit Beijing Center, visiting professor of Christianity, Tsinghua University, and former director of the Maryknoll history

project, all in Beijing, China, and Dr. Jan Bender Shetler, assistant professor of history, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. Eight sessions, \$145.

October 18–22

Nurturing and Educating Trans-cultural Kids. Dr. David C. Pollock and Ms. Janet Blomberg, Interaction International, Houghton, New York. Eight sessions, \$145.

October 25–27

Leadership, Fund-raising, and Donor Development for Missions. Mr. Rob Martin, director, First Fruit, Inc., Newport Beach, California. Five sessions in three days, \$145.

November 8–12

Missions and Consequences. Professor Andrew F. Walls, honorary professor, University of Edinburgh, former director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, and emeritus professor of religious studies, University of Aberdeen. Eight sessions, \$145.

November 15–19

The Nature and Mission of the Church After 9/11. Mr. Patrick Johnstone, author of *Operation World, 21st Century Edition* (2001), former director of research, WEC International, Buckinghamshire, England, and OMSC senior mission scholar in residence. Eight sessions, \$145.

December 6–10

Peacemaking as Mission. Dr. Richard Deats, editor of *Fellowship*, The Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nyack, New York. Eight sessions, \$145.



Overseas Ministries Study Center

490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511 USA
(203) 624-6672, Ext. 315 study@OMSC.org Register online at www.OMSC.org

A 308

A City-Wide Mission Movement:

Lessons from Singapore

Michael Jaffarian

In 1980 a group of Singaporean pastors, missionaries, mission agency leaders, and other Christian leaders came together to form the Singapore Centre for Evangelism and Missions (SCEM). They shared a common vision for Singapore as a strong missionary-sending country, and wanted to work together to see that vision come to reality, by God's grace. Later in the

decade SCEM leaders met the Jaffarians and invited us to come and help them.

I believe in the value of city-wide or regional mission centers. If the

question is, "How can we foment a vital city-wide or regional missions *movement*?" the short answer is, "Organize and develop an effective city-wide or regional cooperative missions *center*".

We saw that happen in Singapore. We did some things well. We made some mistakes. There are things we should have done but didn't. Let me review our experience and make recommendations under the following "how-to" plan.

1. Gather the right leadership.

SCEM had the great advantage of an excellent membership and Executive Committee (ExCo). They also had a full-time worker on loan from a mission agency (me). I think both were necessary. Before I came, the ExCo was hindered in what they could do, due to limited workforce. On the other hand, it would have been terribly difficult for me to do SCEM-style ministry without the ExCo's ideas and backing.

2. Meet people.

I made it my practice to have lunch with someone every day – a pastor, mission agency leader, missions professor, or Singaporean missionary.

There is no substitute for personal, trusting relationships in fostering inter-organizational cooperation, and there are no shortcuts in forming them. Later on, when a pastor or leader received something in the mail about a SCEM event or activity, they could say, "Oh yeah, SCEM. I know Michael. I had lunch with him." It made all the difference for their response.

3. Start a newsletter.

A simple newsletter can gather good news, ideas, and information from the local missions movement, from missions and churches and missionaries, and spread it around to instruct, inspire, and encourage all. SCEM's newsletter also promoted our projects and events, as well as other missions activities not directly connected with SCEM.

4. Organize events.

SCEM organized a lot of mission events. We had events for pastors, to help them get missions vision. We had events for local church mission committee members, to help them do their work better. We had large-scale, three-day, city-wide mission rallies attended by as many as 2,000 people, with well-known international speakers. These "World Heartbeat" events were especially geared for potential missions recruits, and included altar calls for commitment to missionary service.

I would advocate organizing mission events for all sectors of the Christian community – children, youth, students, the elderly, intercessors, professionals, musicians, artists, and so on. We were unafraid to pack the schedule with a lot of activities. Each event spread missions vision to someone new.

5. Sponsor *Perspectives* Courses.

The *Perspectives* course has been used by God in many countries to make a dynamic impact for missions, and specifically for frontier missions. It

There are no substitutes or shortcuts for personal, trusting relationships.

delivers a strong package of well-planned content that gives a powerful boost to the missions vision, understanding, and action of many sectors of the Christian community: goers and senders, leaders and supporters, givers and intercessors, pastors and laity. Beyond that, it delivers a personal impact to hearts and lives that is often life-changing.

6. Have membership open to all.

There were many Christians in Singapore excited about what SCEM was doing for missions, once things got rolling. Membership provided a direct way for them to connect and belong.

7. Attach some specific benefits to membership.

Maybe a stripped-down email version of the newsletter can be available to anyone, with a fuller version (with pictures, on paper) available only to members. Maybe members can always be invited into co-sponsorship of events, and there can be some special events open only to members. Allow members to buy books and resources at a discount.

8. Have a resource center.

Stock missions books and resources. Take and sell them at missions events from book tables. Develop a library with books, reference books, periodicals, journals, videos, DVDs, posters, children's resources, and files on world mission. This requires some space.

11. Network with other centers for world mission.

In the same way that churches and missions in one city or region can stimulate and help each other to serve God better, so also centers for world mission in a wider area, or globally, can be a blessing and help to each other. More than that, they can work together in ways that could have a powerful, global impact for the reaching of the unreached peoples.

12. Hold to the priority of frontier missions.

Most missionaries are most eager, and most able, to recruit new workers to their own fields. Thus new missionaries tend to go where missionaries already are. What about those places where there are no missionaries, no churches, or even no Christians? Regional or city-based centers for world mission should do research, learn about, teach about, and advocate the needs of such frontier fields.

13. Respond to opportunity *and* do strategic planning.

Note that strategic questions can be asked from both the positive and negative directions. Ask, "What are the present strengths of the missions movement here, and how can we maximize them?" Also ask, "What are the sticking points? What things are holding back missions involvement from our churches? How can these issues be dealt with?"

Some things can *only* be done by inter-church, inter-mission centers.

SCEM is continuing its good ministry, and others also are helping the missions movement of that city. I am not qualified to speak on SCEM's present ministry. I'm sure they, and other missions leaders in the city, have learned many important lessons since my time there.

In the total missions task, some things are best done by local churches, some things are best done by mission organizations, and some things are best done—in fact, can *only* be done—by inter-church, inter-mission centers like SCEM. Only where there is an effective center for world mission can any city or region do all it could do, and should do, for the cause of missions. 🌐



Michael Jaffarian is Coordinator of Research for CBI International. He and his wife Dawna have served in India and Singapore, and are now based in Richmond, Virginia, USA. Michael served as an Associate Research Editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia, 2nd edition, and contributed to Operation World, 6th edition. Contact him at michaeldawna@earthlink.net.



India: It's Closer Than You Think

Nancy Tichy

For Christians, India holds both fascination and strategic importance. For kids, India provides an incredible resource and a solid framework for learning about missions.

How do we connect the children in our Christian school, home or church to India? The secular world is helpful with its emphasis on ethnic diversity in public school education. Features and news stories in the media often point to India. Resources abound: print, videos/CDs, curricula and even people with first-hand experience in India. Look around you for natural ties to what is already happening in your children's lives and "add India," much as you might put curry powder in your favorite chicken casserole.

Or make it the main dish. In the classroom consider "interest centers" with creative and interactive activities. Contests (how about the elephants vs. the tigers?), poster-making, dramatic monologues, skits, and games all lend themselves

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to getting a little wild and wacky — the way kids love it. Invite people to share first-hand experiences.

Certainly, tap into the ongoing programs of your church or school. Consider a trip to a

local Indian restaurant or cultural center. Don't forget the wonderful books now being written for kids that feature missionaries, some of them from India.

On a larger scale, partner the missions committee with the children's department and plan an intergenerational evening adventure to India. Or consider a Saturday missions festival for kids with the focus on India and Hinduism. These take teamwork and advance planning, but they are worth the time and effort. Finally, take your kids

to India on their knees. Give them opportunities to intercede for the many people groups still without a flourishing witness. Encourage them to thank God for missionary pioneers and pray for present servants of Jesus who faithfully go and share the gospel.

For more ideas and a list of resources, email Nancy at Ftichy@aol.com. Please include a "snail mail" (postal) address and a bit about your present ministry with children.

Learning About Good Resources

Gerry Dueck

A new "Rajput Kids" (Hindu) video in the "Kids Around the World" video series is now available. As with all the others, it comes with a free curriculum guide. Videos are 8-12 minutes long and are \$19 each plus S&H. Order from Caleb Project, 10 W. Dry Creek Circle, Littleton, CO 80120 USA. Or call (303) 730-4182, e-mail orders@cproject.com, or visit www.calebproject.org/reso.htm

* Three wonderful resources by the Christian & Missionary Alliance are available from Caleb Project: *Building Great Commission Kids* (\$14), *Missions Prayer Tools For Children: A To Z* (\$9), and *How To Conduct A Successful Kids' Missions Festival A To Z* (\$9). Order from Caleb Project (see address above).

* There's now a reduced price for *Adopt-A-People For Kids*, the curriculum and student manual by Gerry Dueck and Dale Burley. This contains 10 flexible lessons with activities, songs, certificates, a Missions Museum page, a resource page, and a reproducible student manual with more activities. Price: \$5.97 plus \$2.50 shipping for one, when you order from the Children's Mission Resource Center at the address below.

* For our newsletter or brochures, contact: Children's Mission Resource Center, 1605 Elizabeth Street, Pasadena CA 91104 USA, phone 626-398-2233, E-mail gerry.dueck@uscwm.org, www.uscwm.org.



Nancy Tichy, along with her husband Frank, is a regional representative of the USCWM in Southern California. She specializes in the Perspectives course and children's mission curricula.



Gerry Dueck (gerry.dueck@uscwm.org) directs the Children's Mission Resource Center at the U.S. Center for World Mission.



Sending Down *Deep* Roots: Authentic Expressions of the Gospel

Greg H. Parsons



As we reflect in this issue of *Mission Frontiers* on how the gospel can take root in different cultures, recent events in Iraq give us ample opportunity to consider various methods of outreach.

Most of us have heard about the deaths of aid workers in Iraq who, it turned out, were from the International Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention). Apparently the specific targets of radical terrorists, they were seeking locations for water purification when their car was attacked. Four died at the scene, one died later, and another survived.

The articles I've read said very little about what these particular workers were doing, nor did they mention training and skills they had. (Two who died had been serving internationally for 26 years.) Instead, the secular media have chosen to present a

picture of how "evangelicals" are bringing not only the gospel but also instability to Iraq and its emerging government.

Could we be in such a rush to be sure that people hear a quick message—right now—that we inadvertently undermine the crucial, long-term, deep discipleship that is needed to see the gospel remain long after we are gone?

For example, in one article those interviewed gave plenty of fuel to the reporter's bias. The article portrays Iraqis who now go to church because they were given supplies and because they like the lively, Western-style worship.

One pastor states his vision for a church of 10,000 in Baghdad, mention is made of gospel tracts distributed with food and supplies, and it is noted that nine new churches in the city were started by \$100,000 gifts from American churches. It was clear that the reporter felt that the purse distributing the relief has strings attached.

We wrestle with the question: what are the best approaches for establishing a long-term church there? Could we be in such a rush to be sure that people hear a quick message—right now—that we inadvertently undermine the crucial, long-term, deep discipleship that is needed to see the gospel remain

long after we are gone? While urgency is biblical, mission history reminds us that while the gospel has been in this part of the world for a really long time, it has really not taken root deeply and widely. What should we learn from that? What can we learn from several other examples in recent history where Christians have rushed through open doors with Western methods—such as in Russia a few years ago?

One lesson to note is that some forms of evangelism—even if accompanied by social service—are not enough. Getting people to make decisions based on very little information rarely creates long-term followers of Christ. Many do come for the food or clothes or a relationship with an American and the possibility of a visa to the U.S. Some may truly repent and believe! But revealing studies (such as those conducted in the former USSR) demonstrate that when researchers return in a few years, these people won't still be in the churches. In many places in the Muslim and Hindu world, the church buildings won't be there, either.

Instead, we must do evangelism with a view to the establishing of the church that can carry on when we are not there. We need to see the transforming power of the gospel work its way throughout that people group and beyond to other groups.

That is hard work, the kind of work that these recently-martyred servants were pursuing. It takes time and experience. It takes figuring out—by and through the Spirit of God—how to nurture an "insider" movement, not something foreign.

We should honor and be thankful to those going into difficult places like Iraq. Yet let's also pray that any form of "rushing in" will not build long-term immunity to the gospel, and let's seek approaches that combine sensitivity with boldness. May we be urgent in our prayer, diligent in His work, and wise as serpents in our approach. 🌐



Rev. Greg Parsons is General Director of the U.S. Center for World Mission. He's been on staff at the USCWM for 20 years.