

GOING 'BEYOND THE EDGES OF THE KINGDOM'

the STRATEGY DIVISION

BY CHONG H. KIM

My predecessor, Tim Lewis, popularized the in-house phrase, “beyond the edges of the kingdom” to describe those things the Strategy Division of the U.S. Center has to be concerned about. We believe, “what is not happening” should dominate our thoughts and lives. The desired outcome of the Strategy Division is to discern why what is not happening is not happening and to make sure that changes appropriately. Additionally, “what is already happening” also often deserves a second close look to evaluate whether the strategy being used will bring the most effective result and outcome.

The Strategy Division of the U.S. Center for World Mission was for years tasked with the job of assisting the global body of believers to understand the nature and the sheer size of the task that God has given us. In our earliest years of formation, what was foremost in our minds was to find out where the unreached people groups were all around the globe. Earlier, “where are the unreached people groups?” was the focus, now “what do we do when we get there?” dominates our thinking. One major reason has to do with the fact that the remaining task is still quite daunting when it comes to Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and the nomads around the world. Two foundational questions emerge: Why is the remaining task still very much remaining? Do we understand what this work or task is about?

In recent years, we have heard reports that there are more Muslims and Hindus who are following Christ than Muslims and Hindus who have “converted” to Christianity and thus become “Christians.” Naturally, questions arise, such as: “Can Muslims and Hindus remain as Muslims and Hindus culturally and still follow Christ?” What does following Christ entail as cultural Muslims and Hindus? What kind of gospel are we preaching—the gospel of the kingdom or a gospel of Christianity?



In partnership with other agencies, Band Barnabas is and has been asking contextualized questions particularly regarding Muslims in Asia. Regarding Hindus, the Re-

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thinking Forum has led the way in highlighting the urgent need to reach out to caste Hindus and creating dialogue, debate, and discussion on what it means for a Hindu to be a follower of Jesus. The Institute of Nomadic Studies, as the name suggests, focuses on reaching the nomads wherever they may roam and on presenting ways to solve the challenges in getting to them and communicating the gospel effectively.

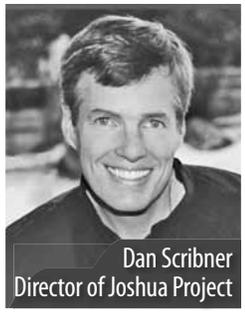
Other issues that we are currently debating include: What about the kingdom of God? Is it a kingdom to come, a kingdom that is already here, or both? In the contexts of poverty and global recession, especially after a local economy has been systemically swallowed up by the global industrialized economy, how should we go about presenting the gospel? Where is the credibility of the gospel when millions are dying of hunger, malnutrition, and currently incurable diseases, while Christians are only speaking of the life to come? On the other side of the spectrum, how do we dialogue with people who are educated and friendly to science? Can God and science coexist peaceably? And how do we communicate the truth without using “faith” as an answer to all scientific discoveries, mysteries and problems?

One of the significant current topics has to do with the migration of peoples and how it poses both a God-orchestrated opportunity as well as a complex global challenge. As a result, a handful of our staff in the U.S. is reaching out to Muslims on the doorsteps of America. We also have a few of our staff working overseas among the caste Hindus and Muslims while trying to address questions mentioned above. One definite outcome of the global migration of peoples is the ubiquitous presence of biculturals globally. The Strategy Division is positioned to garner the insights and lessons learned from these people, and then to promulgate our findings through various means such as publications and gatherings.

There are others who are doing the work as trainers and mobilizers in cross-cultural contexts. The *Perspectives* course is not just an American phenomenon anymore. It has truly turned into a global movement, having been translated into several different languages. The *Perspectives* Global Ministry does the critical work of coordinating and facilitating a global-level

partnership surrounding the *Perspectives* Family curricula (www.perspectives.org).

Effective cooperation and partnership within the Church in the Global North and Global South is crucial, both on the local and regional field levels as well as on a global level. The latter form of partnership hasn't been in existence until quite recently with the formation of the Global Network of Mission Structures in 2004 (see the January–February 2009 issue of *MF* for more on this new network). There have been country—and/or region-wide partnerships among mission structures, e.g., the India Missions Association, the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Alliance, and the Third World Missions Association. The Strategy Division is working to assist and promote the cause of the GNMS and is sponsoring the Tokyo 2010 Conference. Among other things, the GNMS is working to track the global migration of what Ralph Winter has called “global peoples.” The Joshua Project in Colorado Springs, as part of the Strategy Division,



is geared to assist this effort based on their many years of experience and expertise in tracking and gathering information both from primary and secondary sources. (See page 2 for more information.)

The other global-level partnership that the Strategy Division is involved in is the re-creation of the Global Network of Centers for World Mission (also featured in the January–February 2009 issue of *MF*). The GNCWM, as a network of Center for World Mission organizations around the globe, focuses on getting the whole Church involved in frontier mission work through mobilization, training, strategy, and research. The GNMS, on the other hand, is a global network of mission *sending* structures that are actually deploying workers to the field. The GNCWM reaches back to the Church for strategic involvement, while the GNMS's concerns are for the unreached people groups.

Effective and careful consideration of strategy is needed more than ever in the history of missions. In part, we need to look back and evaluate what we have done, since evaluation and reflection often gives us clues to move forward. We see strategy in the context of obedience to God. Strategy employed well is related to “loving God with all of our mind.” f

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES NETWORK UPDATE

In 2008 a great deal of effort was focused on the *Perspectives* 4th Edition revision project for the North American program. Fortunately, Christy Graham joined the global team before the revision project started. She was able to keep up on global correspondence and new inquiries even though she was also an important part of the revision team.

In June, we took advantage of the *Perspectives* National Conference in Dallas to expose our global partners to the current vitality of the North American *Perspectives* Program. Program directors from Nigeria, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and India attended and were given the opportunity to share exciting reports about the growth of *Perspectives* in their countries as well. The follow-on conference, or “huddle” as we referred to it, gave us an opportunity to discuss challenges and opportunities and plan some of our next steps.

In 2009, we are able to focus once again on serving existing programs and helping to launch new programs in strategic locations and languages. One of our first priorities is to share with our global partners what is new in the 4th Edition of *Perspectives* and help them understand the rationale for those changes.

The editors of the Portuguese version, which is based on the 3rd Edition, were eager to incorporate as much of the 4th Edition as they could in the final stages of going to press in the Fall. The South Pacific program has its own unique pathway through the material. They also began the process of adapting to the 4th Edition before it was even printed. Steve Hawthorne has already traveled to Korea this year to discuss collaboration on editing a new Korean edition. This year, we also hope to finally see some solid progress on the translation of *Perspectives* into French and Spanish.

Members of the global team, Bruce Koch and Steve Hawthorne especially, will be traveling far and wide this year to support existing and developing programs and facilitate the expansion of programs into new strategic settings. Our priorities for this year will be to assess how we can respond to the great needs and opportunities in China, to build on the success we have seen in Nigeria, to assist in the development of programs in other African countries, and to invite leaders in more Asian countries to consider how *Perspectives* might serve their mission goals. f