

# EDITORIAL COMMENT



## Will Tokyo 2010 Be Remembered Like Edinburgh 1910?

RICK WOOD, EDITOR, *MISSION FRONTIERS*

Every few years major global meetings of mission and church leaders take place in various locations around the globe. I have attended a number of them over the years. They have always been wonderful experiences and great opportunities to meet people, network and learn about how others are viewing the task of world evangelization. But do these global meetings move the cause of world evangelization forward? Do they move us closer to the goal of establishing a church-planting movement within every people and pocket of humanity so that every person has access to the transforming power of the gospel? Are these large meetings worth the time and resources they require? Literally millions of dollars are spent to make these meetings a reality.

This year we will have, not one, but four such meetings, each in its own way commemorating the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference. Many conferences have been forgotten, so what made Edinburgh 1910 so successful?

In this issue we report extensively on the first of these four meetings, Tokyo 2010, which took place May 11-14 with 967 delegates from 73 countries attending. It is our goal to let you know what happened at this meeting and why it matters for the future of world evangelization.

### The Three Elements for Success

As Edinburgh 1910 demonstrates, not all global mission meetings are created equal. I suggest that the key elements that make the difference between a profitable global meeting and one that is perhaps a waste of time are *the focus,*

*the follow-through and the delegates of the meeting.*

### The Focus

If the focus, vision and goals of a meeting are clear and dedicated to finishing the task of providing gospel access to every people and person and developing effective strategies to overcome every barrier to the spread of the gospel, then the meeting has the potential to be of great value. In the case of Tokyo 2010, there was a clear emphasis on reaching peoples and specifically completing the unique missionary task of penetrating peoples for the first time. The official theme of the conference was "Making disciples of all peoples in our generation." They got the focus right. Notice the move from simple evangelism to discipleship. That is an important step forward in mission strategy.

### The Follow-Through

Often the significance of a global meeting is not known for some time because so much depends on what people do as a result of the meeting. An important question is, "Does the conference establish effective structures and means by which there is ongoing planning, coordination and cooperation after the meeting, as Edinburgh 1910 did?"

Dr. Yong Cho, director of the Global Network of Mission Structures (GNMS), says on page 16-17, "The Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference is remembered primarily for what emerged from it. For example, the International Missionary Council helped the mission movement network together for many decades, and facilitated the development of strong national churches with indigenous leadership, of which Korea is a shining example of success. We are the fruit of

healthy mission cooperation going back over a century." Dr. Cho explains in his article that there are many mission leaders and organizations who have made specific plans for regular meetings for cooperation and coordination after Tokyo 2010.

Ralph Winter, recognizing the tremendous contribution of the International Missionary Council that resulted from Edinburgh 1910, brought together a small group of mission leaders from around the world in 2005 to discuss how to develop a global network of mission organizations that could foster the inter-mission cooperation that is essential in order to bring the gospel to every tribe and tongue. Out of this meeting, the Global Network of Mission Structures was born. The GNMS now has a major role in helping to foster inter-mission cooperation after Tokyo 2010.

### The Delegates

Focus and follow-through are important, but so is the selection of participants for a meeting. If the people who attend have no power or influence to implement the vision of the meeting, then little will result long-term.

In 2009, Ralph Winter said about Tokyo 2010, "No one will be invited! All participants will be selected and delegated by mission associations and mission agencies. This is what happened in 1910, and that would seem to be one reason why the 1910 meeting has had such an impact across the years — the huge New York meeting ten years earlier that attracted up to 200,000 has been almost forgotten." Apparently, it is quality, not just quantity, that matters.

Yong Cho reports about Tokyo 2010 in his article, "Almost all of the top leaders of the largest mission associations were

represented at Tokyo 2010, and they have agreed to begin meeting together regularly. In addition to these leaders, many international mission directors and regional field leaders were also present. A good number of these gathered together for the Global Coordination Task Force at Tokyo 2010, which looked at how to better tackle the issue of the unengaged and under-engaged, unreached peoples at the regional level.”

At Tokyo 2010 a list of 632 unengaged peoples, each with a population over 50,000, was presented to mission leaders, and 171 of these peoples were selected by the agency leaders for outreach in the next three years. This is real progress with the potential of making a major, long-term impact in the lives of these peoples. These mission leaders should be commended for their sacrificial decision to reach out to these unengaged peoples. Tokyo 2010 had enough of the right people to make a difference in missionary deployment.

**The Right Vision for the Future**  
The most encouraging element about

Tokyo 2010 is the vision for the future expressed by the leadership that planned and carried out the meeting. Yong Cho was intimately involved in this process. As the director of the Global Network of Mission Structures, he is committed to fostering the ongoing global and regional cooperation and networking that is essential if we are to reach the unreached peoples.

Ralph Winter expressed last year why global cooperation is so important, “Because, like an avalanche, the peoples of the world are now more and more global in their location. That is the reason for the new Global Network of Mission Structures — to track peoples and offer to mission structures the data essential to an approach, people by people, that will take into account the location of the members of any given ethnic group in the entire globe. This kind of research cannot as easily be done by national or even regional associations of mission agencies.”

In Yong Cho’s article on page 16-17 he casts a sweeping vision, “Might we

for the first time in history develop a global strategy with wide inter-mission cooperation to finish the task? Can we work together to recruit, train and place 100,000 additional missionaries among the least-reached peoples in the next ten years?”

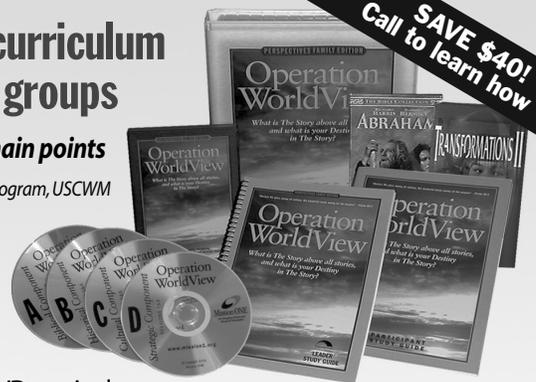
**Let’s Do It!**

Let’s continue what was started at Tokyo 2010. Let’s give our full support to the ongoing work of the Global Network of Mission Structures (GNMS). Let’s regularly bring together mission leaders from around the world to plan, strategize and deploy 100,000 new, well-trained missionaries in a coordinated way to all of the remaining unreached peoples, so that all have access to the gospel. Let’s set aside the promotion of our own kingdoms and work together to build His Kingdom in all the peoples of the earth. If the fulfillment of Dr. Yong Cho’s vision is the result of Tokyo 2010, then it will have been a great meeting indeed and one that is worthy to be commemorated 100 years from now. 🌐

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— Glenn R. Felty, Pastor of Missions, Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church, Allentown, PA





# setting *the* pace

*Tokyo 2010 leads the way in celebrating Edinburgh 1910*

DAVID TAYLOR



“Come over and help us!” pleaded Stefan Gustavsson, leader of the Swedish Evangelical Alliance, to the delegates at the Tokyo 2010 mission consultation. Echoing the call of the man in Paul’s Macedonian vision almost 2000 years ago, in his plenary address Gustavsson portrayed the stark reality of Europe today, where the vast majority of the population is turning to secularism, atheism and agnosticism. What followed was perhaps the most moving response during the entire consultation, when Dr. Yong Cho, director of the Global Network of Mission Structures (GNMS), came to the podium with tears in his eyes and as the entire assembly began to cry out to God for the peoples of Europe.

The significance of this moment, from an historical perspective, was immediately obvious. We were at Tokyo 2010 to celebrate what has taken place in the last century since the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference. Yet in those same 100 years, while the Church exploded in Africa, Asia and Latin America, one of the greatest tragedies in the history

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*David Taylor (pseudonym) is Research Director for the Global Network of Mission Structures.*

of Christianity also took place in Europe. As we began to pray, we could all perceive the deep sense of gratitude, obligation and loss felt by the non-Western mission leaders who were at this very meeting because of the efforts of European church and mission leaders a century ago. How is it that a Church that weathered so many storms for centuries could be at risk of virtually disappearing in the next 50 years?

“Not on our watch!” was the response at Tokyo 2010.

## **A Changing of the Guard?**

By its very nature, Tokyo 2010 represented many significant contrasts. As an historical marker, this Global Mission Consultation may very well be regarded as the symbolic end of one era and the beginning of another. While the largest mission agency in the Western world, the International Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention), announced they would be cutting back their personnel by 500 this year, the largest foreign mission sending agency in the non-Western world (the Global Mission Society of the Korean Presbyterian Church), announced at Tokyo 2010 that they intend to more than double their mission force in the next decade.



global meeting following the Edinburgh 1910 pattern which was organized, conducted and attended by a majority of non-Western mission leadership. Not only that, the majority of the funding came from the non-Western world as well!

### Going Further and Deeper

In the same way that Edinburgh 1910 became a decisive meeting in the history of

In many ways, large and small, Tokyo 2010 was a wake-up call that times are changing — and faster than many may have expected. For example, an interesting feature at Tokyo 2010 that surprised many Western delegates was the number of African missionaries serving in Japan who volunteered to help with on-site logistics. Ironically, as many older missions have been pulling their personnel out of Japan due to the high cost of living, God has been replacing them with missionaries from some of the poorest nations on earth!

These African missionaries are a tiny glimpse of a seismic shift that has been taking place in non-Western missionary sending over the last decade — a shift that is changing the global Church and global mission movement. Dr. Yong Cho commented on this in his Tokyo 2010 report for the GNMS (see pages 16-17), highlighting an important trend that few had previously noticed:

For the most part, the non-Western mission movement in the 20th century was primarily restricted to domestic missionary deployment. Even throughout the 1980s and 1990s non-Western cross-cultural missionaries serving outside of their country represented just a fraction of the foreign mission total. But that is changing — rapidly! The day will come when even the majority of personnel serving with international missions of Western origin will be made up predominately of non-Western cross-cultural missionaries.

With this incredible change taking place in our generation, it is altogether fitting that Tokyo 2010 should have the unique privilege of being the first

Western missions, when the history of non-Western missions is told, Tokyo 2010 will likely hold a similar place. Edinburgh 1910 had four characteristics that made it unique in Western mission history:

- 1) Its organizers brought together mission leaders as representatives of all the major evangelical sending agencies and nations of the world;
- 2) They focused on the frontiers of the Great Commission;
- 3) They sought to fill in the gaps of inter-mission field coordination;
- 4) They continued to cooperate following the meeting on the national, regional and global levels to reach the remaining unengaged peoples.

The ability of non-Western mission leaders to see the value in these four components and to seek to duplicate them shows remarkable sophistication in the movement. (The number of non-Western mission leaders with PhD degrees at Tokyo 2010 was not the least bit intimidating!) Overall, there was a strong awareness and appreciation for the Edinburgh tradition. But the non-Western organizers of Tokyo 2010 didn't stop with Edinburgh — in many ways they picked up where Edinburgh left off. Though thoroughly evangelical and frontier-focused, the Tokyo 2010 gathering took Edinburgh to the next level to address an important issue that has plagued the non-Western Church for the last century, and which its leaders felt must be corrected before it is replicated among the world's remaining unreached peoples.

The watchword of the Edinburgh 1910 generation was “World evangelization in our generation.” It

was a good watchword, but it reflected a somewhat shallow expression of the mandate of the Great Commission. Believing there is more to the Great Commission than had been transmitted from Edinburgh 1910, mission leaders from the non-Western world rethought the watchword at Tokyo 2010 and extended it in both breadth and depth. In so doing, they arrived at a solidly biblical theme. Their watchword, “Making disciples of every people in our generation,” captured both the urgency and the fullness of the unfinished task.

Furthermore, by utilizing such biblical terminology, mission leaders at Tokyo 2010 recognized that the Great Commission is not just limited to evangelization or church multiplication, but it is fundamentally about transformation at every level — from the individual, to the family, to the society as a whole. Without transformation there is no fulfillment of the Great Commission. The Tokyo Declaration issued at the consultation made this abundantly clear:

The new believer’s worldview must be adjusted to a biblical worldview; his lifestyle changed to increasingly conform to the image of Christ; and his ethical conduct progressively marked by biblical morals. Ideally, this results in individuals applying the gospel of the kingdom to every sphere and pursuit of life — from government to economics, from education to health, and from science to creation care. As a consequence, whole communities, cultures and countries benefit from the transforming power of the gospel.

In this regard, Tokyo 2010 represented a call to extend the reach and influence of the Kingdom among all the peoples of the world. It was a call to re-evaluate from where we have come and where we are going, with a healthy reminder that what has happened to the West could happen to the entire world. Indeed, after listening to Stefan Gustavsson’s address, many non-Western delegates remarked that the same trends that overtook Europe are beginning to appear in their countries as well. It was an important reminder that the mission movement must not be so preoccupied with building the Church where it is *not* that we neglect the health of



the Church where it *is*. The Apostle Paul’s missionary epistles provide ample evidence that from the earliest days the mission movement has held both concerns in balance. Tokyo 2010 carried forth that tradition with perhaps greater urgency than ever before. With the rapid spread of globalization, no country or Christian tradition can afford to function as an island unto itself.

For this reason, foremost among others, we will increasingly need each other — to listen and learn from both the mistakes and successes of every church and mission movement around the world. Tokyo 2010 was a refreshing confirmation that the non-Western church is prepared to do just that, and they want to do it together with believers in the West. 🌐



# Bloggging from Tokyo 2010

ALLEN YEH

## The most powerfully moving moment of the conference:

Stefan Gustavsson of Sweden gave a Macedonian call (“come over and help us”) lecture about how to evangelize secular Europeans, the “prodigal sons” of Christianity today. It was a good lecture, if a bit academic, but the organizer of the conference, Yong Cho, had a remarkable response. Tearfully, he called for the entire conference to spontaneously pray for Europe to regain its faith, and he invited all the European delegates to come up to the stage. In a remarkable turn, all the Two Thirds World Christians cried out on behalf of their brothers and sisters in Europe — in particular, two Koreans and two Africans (representing two of the strongest centers of Christianity) led the prayers. The Holy Spirit was moving; that was the most authentic and unforgettable part of the whole conference. I thought, if only the Edinburgh 1910 delegates could have seen this — what a difference a century makes! The Two Thirds World churches have come of age, while Europe has declined; who would have believed this a century ago? However, a Korean-American delegate said to me after that session, “What a sobering reminder to the Korean church that we should not rest on our laurels — I can already sense that we are going the way of Europe, so we should not become arrogant.” I think I, as an American, can also say the same thing of the U.S.

## Biggest glaring gap:

Lack of any mention of social justice. This is surprising, considering that Ralph Winter was at the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Switzerland, where he signed the Lausanne Covenant. That Covenant explicitly reformed the bond between evangelism and social justice as equal partners in mission. This reparation was in response to the 20th century, so often dichotomized

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*Allen Yeh is Assistant Professor of History and Theology at Biola University. In 2010 he is blogging from each of the four major conferences commemorating Edinburgh 1910: Tokyo, Edinburgh, Cape Town and Boston. To read the full blog from which this article is excerpted, see <http://www.scriptoriumdaily.com/2010/05/17/four-conferences-on-four-continents-tokyo-2010-epilogue/>*

by schisms like the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy and the Creation-Evolution debate. Today, evangelicals have tried to return to a holistic 18th- and 19th-century evangelicalism similar to that of John Wesley, Charles Finney and William Wilberforce. I was just at the Urbana '09 missions conference last December, and one of the criticisms of that conference is that it seemed to be all about social justice but hardly any talk of evangelism. I would say the opposite was true of Tokyo 2010.

## Biggest contribution of this conference:

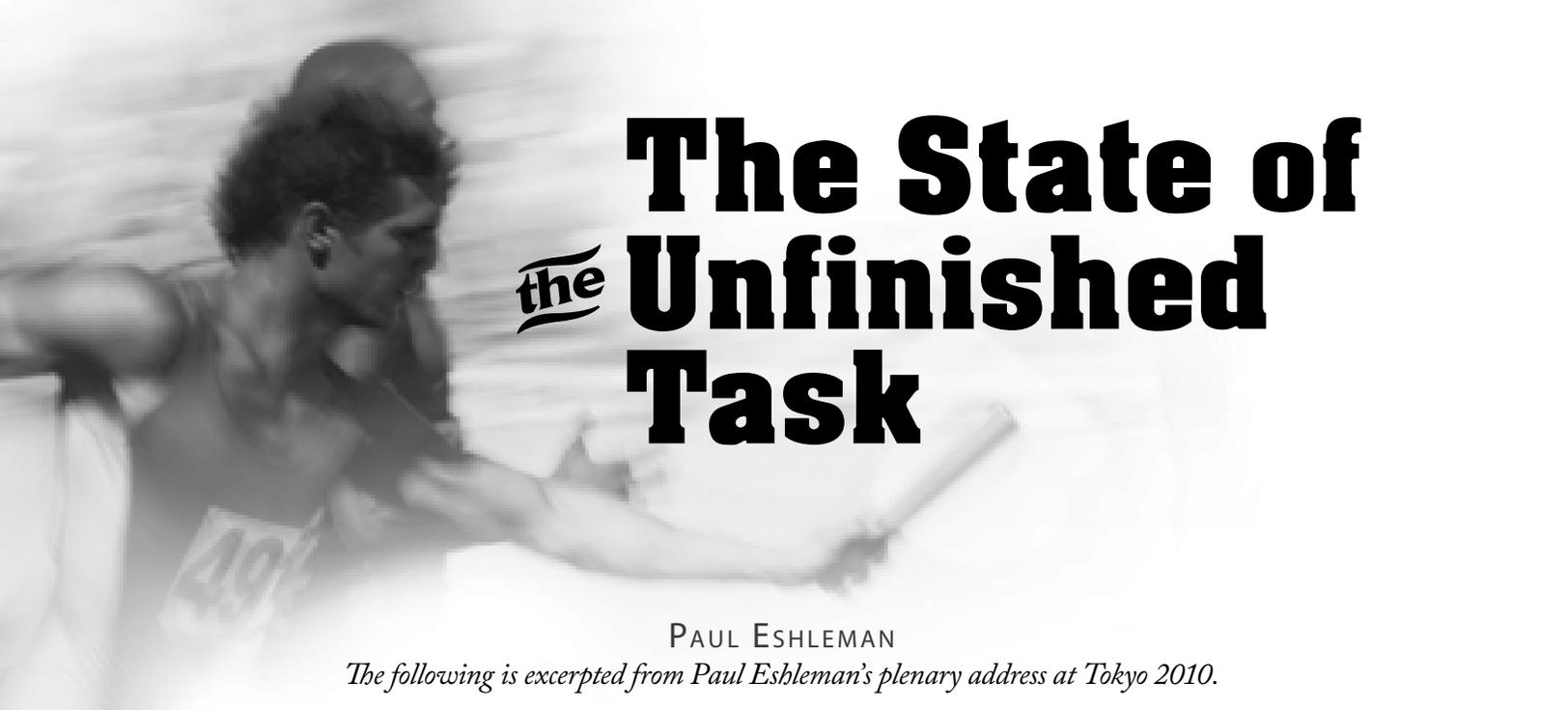
In my previous blog, I had mentioned two of the three distinctive features of Tokyo 2010 as being the emphasis on unreached people groups, and the focus on discipleship as the theme. You may wonder how these go together, since unreached peoples seem to need conversion first and foremost. But it just goes to show that Ralph Winter was about depth, not just quick fixes, as one of the seminar speakers pointed out. Americans have too often been just about conversion, but real Christians need discipleship. It is interesting to compare Tokyo 2010 with Cape Town 2010, as these are the two most evangelical conferences of the four. Tokyo's contribution is to see mission as discipleship; Cape Town's contribution (I would guess based on past precedent) is to see mission as evangelism + social justice.

## Second biggest contribution of this conference:

They had everyone fill out a Tokyo 2010 commitment form in the hope that every mission agency would adopt at least one unreached people group, to help complete the task of evangelizing every people group on earth. 🌐



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# **the** **The State of Unfinished Task**

PAUL ESHLEMAN

*The following is excerpted from Paul Eshleman's plenary address at Tokyo 2010.*

## **The Assumptions Behind The Ten Elements**

I want to talk to you today about ten elements which I think outline the global evangelization priorities for the Church. As leaders, we need to know where the Great Commission is not being fulfilled. First, let me give you five assumptions behind these priorities.

- The focus of these priorities will be towards seeing a disciple-making breakthrough in every people group of the world. Evangelism is not enough. "Teaching others to observe all that Jesus has commanded" must be an ongoing process.
- These priorities concentrate on where the Church is *not*. They don't try to address every mission that the Church is called to do. The purpose of addressing these priorities is to accelerate the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel where it has not yet been proclaimed, i.e., those people groups, language groups and geographic locations that have not yet heard the message, where the Church has not yet been established.
- This presentation assumes that every part of the world is called to go to every part of the world. No country is exempt from sending, and no country is exempt from receiving.
- We have not lived out our faith as we should. Every believer should be a humble reflection of Jesus. Our message is hollow if our lives do not back up the words we speak. The Holy Spirit is still the source of our power. And we need to be sure we are living lives that are holy and pure.

- We haven't loved one another and worked together enough. God has given each person and organization unique gifts and callings. We should honor those callings. But all of us, I believe, can give some percentage of our time and resources to help with the priorities of the whole Body of Christ. If we know what the priorities are, we can "stimulate one another to love and good deeds" — to do what hasn't been done thus far.

## **The Ten Elements**

Over the last several years, I have been meeting with a number of groups to talk about Global Evangelization Priorities.... Let's move now to the top five priorities.

### **Number 5 – Church Planting And Presence**

Number 5 on our list is Church Planting and Presence. It has always been the plan of God that people would be brought to maturity in Christ through the fellowship of a local church. If one billion people come into the Kingdom during the next decade, we will need millions of new house churches to care for these converts....

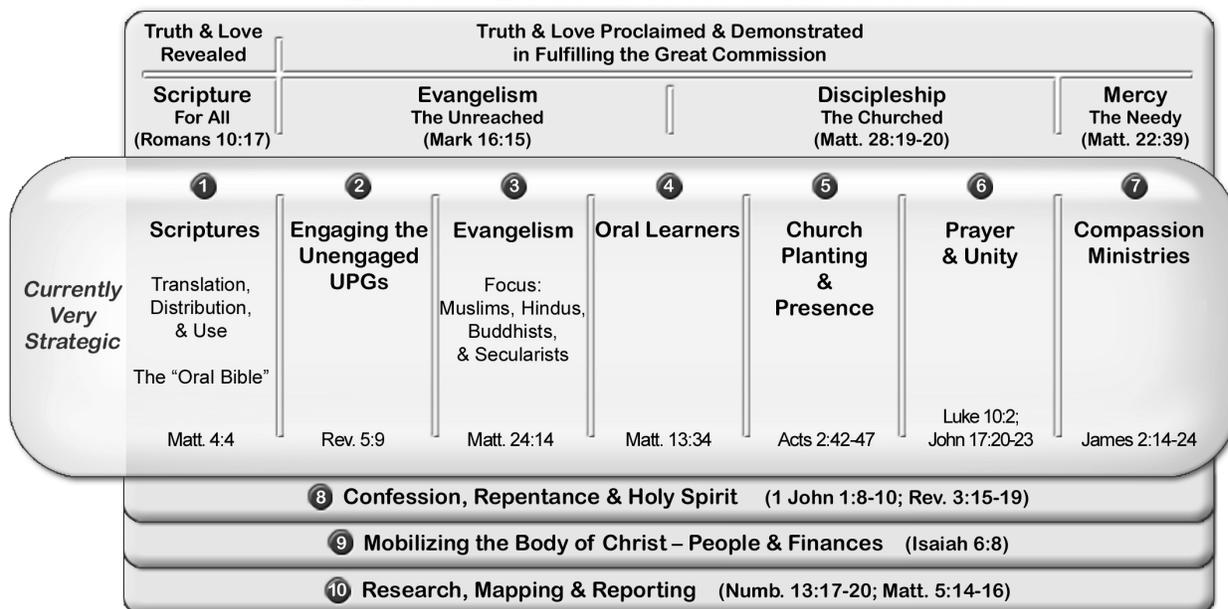
### **Number 4 – Reaching Oral Learners**

I believe the subject of orality or reaching oral learners is one of the breakthrough ideas that is just starting to gain momentum. Two-thirds of people worldwide are oral learners. That is, they prefer to learn through proverbs, music, poetry and especially stories. As mission leaders, we must rethink how we are delivering our evangelism, discipleship and church-planting strategies.

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*Paul Eshleman is the founder of the JESUS Film Project and director of the "Finishing the Task" network.*

## Essential Elements of the Great Commission



### Number 3 – Increasing Evangelization, With A Focus On Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus

We have to keep on making evangelism a priority. In many of our ministries, we have stopped asking people to receive Christ. Yet Jesus was very clear, "Except you repent, you will perish."

We need more intentional demonstration of love and prayer for the largest religious blocs throughout the world: Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. If you add the folk Chinese of China, the total population of the three groups is 3.5 billion people – over half of the world's population.

### Number 2 – Engaging The Unengaged People Groups

As of a few years ago there were 639 unengaged, unreached ethno-linguistic people groups with populations over 100,000 that were still beyond the reach of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; they numbered 535 million people. In recent years, over 470 of these groups have been engaged by over 4,000 full- and part-time workers.

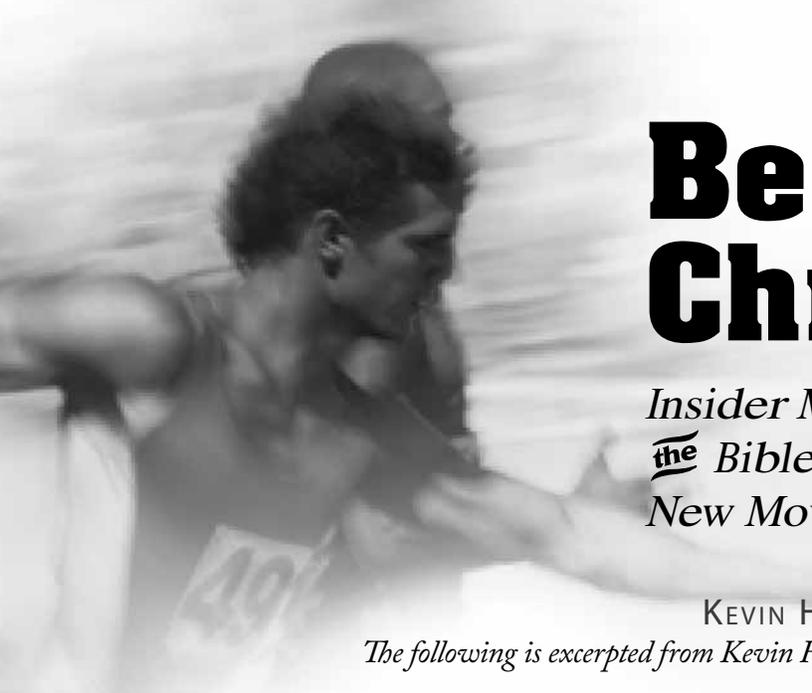
At present, there remain about 3,500 people groups (of all population sizes) that are still unengaged; the total population of these groups is over 350 million. These groups don't represent a large percentage of the world's population, but they have been waiting 2,000 years for the gospel. The need is to recruit at least one full-time worker for every 50,000 people in each group.

### Number 1 – Scripture Translation

Scripture translation is the #1 priority throughout the world because it's impossible to do ministry without a Biblical foundation. But here is the tragedy: 2,252 language groups have not one verse of Scripture, and no one is working on translations for these groups.

So, what are we going to do to change this? – Launch the OralStory Bible. Pioneer missionaries in these people groups are going back to the methods of communicating Scripture as they existed before the invention of the printing press. At that point, people remembered perhaps 50-60 stories they heard as the Scriptures were read from hand-copied scrolls. Since most people could not read, stained-glass windows reminded them of the key tenets of the faith. With this understanding, they made their decisions to follow Christ.

The same thing is happening today through storytelling the Scriptures. It is a breakthrough strategy that makes the Scripture available to all. Every Christian leader should be recruiting OralStory Bible teams. As people become more literate, they can look forward to a written Bible. We need to recruit and send out 4,000 OralStory Bible teams immediately. 🌐



# Beyond Christianity

*Insider Movements and the Place of  
the Bible and the Body of Christ in  
New Movements to Jesus*

KEVIN HIGGINS

*The following is excerpted from Kevin Higgins' plenary address at Tokyo 2010.*

The title I have been given makes reference to “Beyond Christianity” and to “insider movements.” The conference organizers have thereby drawn our attention to what God is doing to draw people to Himself at or beyond the edges of what most of us would associate with Christianity. More specifically, some mission thinkers and practitioners, including myself, have experienced and advocated for what we see God to be doing to bring men and women within non-Christian religious traditions to saving faith in Christ outside of the forms and expressions of discipleship that are typical of what we would call “church.”

When we read through the Scriptures, we cannot fail to be repeatedly amazed at the surprising ways in which God Himself works beyond the borders of our expectations, whether those borders be cultural, linguistic, national or even religious. God initiated a relationship with Job long before He called into being the covenant people of Israel. It was a Roman soldier who appears to be the first in the Gospel of Mark to see in any clear way the true nature of Jesus. And we see this in many examples both before and after these two.

However, these examples neither prove nor disprove what some of us have sought to describe based on what we see “in the field.” How then do we assess such things? How do we understand them? Is this some form of pluralism or inclusivism, or are these movements truly the fruit of the Kingdom spreading like yeast in the dough? And how do we address each

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*Kevin Higgins is the Executive Director of Global Teams. He developed a work in a majority-Muslim country that has resulted in creative evangelism among eight language groups and emerging people movements in four of these.*

other as we seek, within the wider Body of Christ, to sharpen each other's thinking and reflection?

The subject has taken a major place in recent missiological reflection. Diverse publications have published articles from different perspectives, including *EMQ*, *Mission Frontiers*, *IJFM*, and *Christianity Today*. The body of literature is growing,<sup>1</sup> as have the number of conferences and seminars.

This has all served to clarify a number of the major biblical and theological issues. But it is also clear that for many the question of whether such movements are in keeping with God's intentions and ways or not is a deeply emotional issue.

Since not all agree that the emergence of such thinking is a ground for optimism, much less a Providential response to other religions, how might missionaries, missiologists and mission leaders from all perspectives continue to assess what God is doing?

## **Core Values: Reframing the Discussion**

Much of the dialogue in the publications and events cited above has focused on either defending these new movements or questioning their validity. I have actually been writing this address while preparing for and participating in a gathering of proponents of such movements as well as followers of Jesus within various non-Christian religious traditions. Before proceeding, I would like to outline an underlying set of convictions that has been shaping our conversations. Though the words are mine, they are describing three recurring assumptions that surface over and over in our reflection:

1. The Bible is God's Word and is both supreme in its authority, and sufficient in its application,

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IN SUM, I AM PROPOSING TWO THINGS: MEETING FACE-TO-FACE AS MEMBERS OF THE BODY, AND AGREEING TO AN “ETHIC OF DISCOURSE” FOR OUR CONVERSATIONS.

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- for every dimension of discipleship, teaching, training and devotion in any movement.
2. The Kingdom of God spreads in and through social networks. It is like yeast in the dough. As such, we can and should expect that in many situations men and women and families and friends will come into the Kingdom together, as “pre-existing webs of relationship.”
  3. Men and women enter the Kingdom directly, on the basis of what the King has done for them and through faith in Him, without passing through Christianity. There are movements around the world taking place “beyond Christianity.” But such movements are inside the Kingdom and under the leadership of the King.

### **A Different Approach?**

I close with two pleas to both my fellow proponents and to those who find themselves skeptical.

First, thus far the debate and discussion has largely been carried out at a distance. We need to meet face-to-face in order to hear each other’s voices, see each other’s faces, and be able to make certain we actually understand and listen well before we articulate where we differ and why. I have made this plea before.<sup>2</sup> I repeat it here. It is likely that the best way forward is to begin one-on-one or in smaller gatherings. This will be more time-consuming than a “conference,” but also more fruitful and more real.

Second, I mentioned before that the Word of God should be the authority under which we conduct our discourse, our interactions with one another as we seek to assess what God is doing. Therefore, drawing from several biblical passages, I would like to close by making a plea for a change on both “sides” in the rhetoric of our public discourse in speeches, addresses, articles and other media. Indeed, I would plea that principles such as the ones immediately below might form the basis of an agreed “ethic” for our publications, public statements, dialogues and disagreements.

1. From Philippians 1:12-18: Can we learn from Paul to delight in the advance of the gospel even through instruments with whom we might disagree?

2. From Ephesians 4:14-16: Can we learn from Paul and, even when we disagree, learn to speak the truth in love?
3. From Romans 14:1-15:13: Can we learn from Paul and seek to refrain from judging the consciences of one another?
4. And from Acts 5:33-39: Can we learn from Gamaliel and be humble enough to realize that even in our sincerest and deepest desires to follow Him and seek His truth, we still see through a glass darkly and have much to learn? Can we all affirm that we do not want to be found opposing God?

What if we who support this paradigm are wrong, in full or in part? As we seek to live under and learn from His Word, God is able to correct and deal with us.

And what if skeptics are wrong? If God is at work in the movements we are describing, if this is something poured out from Him by His Spirit, then He too is able to correct the views of those who at present are not convinced.

In sum, I am proposing two things: meeting face-to-face as members of the Body, and agreeing to an “ethic of discourse” for our conversations.

Knowing that He is Lord, and that His Spirit through His Word will teach and correct His Body, we can, in fact, relax. We can celebrate. We can embrace. May God use us all, broken vessels that we are, as He makes disciples of Jesus among all the nations. Amen. **f**

### **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup> See for example, papers by Timothy Tennent, ‘Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques: A Closer Examination of C-5 “high spectrum” contextualization’, in *IJFM* (24:1, Spring 2007); Gary Corwin, ‘A Humble Appeal to C-5 Insider Movement Muslim Ministry Advocates to Consider Ten Questions’, in *IJFM* (24:1, Spring 2007). Kevin Higgins, ‘Identity, Integrity, and Insider Movements: A Brief Paper Inspired by Timothy C. Tennent’s Critique of C-5 Thinking’, in *IJFM* (23:6, Fall 2006). Kevin Higgins, ‘The Key To Insider Movements: The Devoted’ of Acts’, in *IJFM* 21:4; Winter 2004, pp. 155 ff. There is also a variety of approaches to be found in recent editions of *St. Francis Magazine*, for example, editions 5:4 (August 2009) and 5:5 (October 2009).

<sup>2</sup> See my article in *St. Francis Magazine*, 5:5 (October 2009).



# Tokyo 2010 Declaration

*Making Disciples of Every People  
in Our Generation*

*The following is an excerpt from the full declaration, which is available at [www.gnms.net](http://www.gnms.net)*

**W**e, representatives of evangelical global mission structures, being intent on fulfilling the ultimate objective of the Great Commission, have gathered in Tokyo May 11-14, 2010 at this Global Mission Consultation to make the following declaration. We set forth this declaration in obedience to Christ's final command, as a means of calling Christ-followers everywhere to whole-heartedly embrace and earnestly engage in "making disciples of every people in our generation"....

## **Our Responsibility**

Because of the reality of mankind's dire need and God's gracious remedy, Jesus left with His followers the missional priority of making disciples of every people (Mt. 28:18-20). By this mandate we acknowledge both the breadth of the unfinished task — all peoples — and the depth of the task — making disciples, as its focus.

We recognize the breadth of our task as geographical, by going "into all the world" (Mk. 16:15); as ethnical, by engaging "all peoples" (Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:49); and as individual by proclaiming the gospel to "every creature" (Mk. 16:15).

Furthermore, we recognize that the depth of the task contains three essentials that comprise aspects in discipling peoples (Mt. 28:19-20):

- *Penetration* ("go"): making a priority of going to those who have had little or no exposure to the gospel. Messengers go and encounter non-believers by way of personal encounters, broadcasts, podcasts, printed material, recordings, electronic communications, or any other innovative means used as a channel of penetrating witness. Thus, the importance of the ministry of evangelizing.

- *Consolidation* ("baptizing"): gathering new believers into a relationship with Jesus and other believers, which is evidenced by the identifying rite of baptism. To conserve the fruit of evangelism and then be able to systematically disciple believers takes a local body of believers living in corporate harmony. Thus, the importance of the ministry of establishing churches.
- *Transformation* ("teaching to obey"): teaching Christ-followers to observe His commands with the outcome of transformed lives. The new believer's worldview must be adjusted to a biblical worldview; his lifestyle changed to increasingly conform to the image of Christ; and his ethical conduct progressively marked by biblical morals. Ideally, this results in individuals applying the gospel of the kingdom to every sphere and pursuit of life — from government to economics, from education to health, and from science to creation care. As a consequence whole communities, cultures and countries benefit from the transforming power of the gospel. Thus, the importance of the ministry of teaching.

## **Finishing the Task**

Although none dare predict when the task of making disciples will be brought to completion, we leave Tokyo cognizant of two realities:

1. We are closer now to finishing the task than at any time in modern history.
2. God has entrusted this generation with more opportunities and resources to complete the task than any previous one. We have more mission-minded churches, more sending structures and bases, more missionaries, more material resources, more funding, more and better technology, more information and data, a deeper

understanding of the task, and a clearer focus of our responsibility than previous generations. God will require much of our generation.

However, we caution that all these advantages must be matched with a corresponding will to serve and *sacrifice*, coupled with genuine reliance upon the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge that we are engaged in spiritual warfare in which the presence and empowering of the Holy Spirit is essential (Acts 1:8). We give evidence of our reliance on God and His Spirit through frequent and fervent prayer on behalf of the world, the work and the workers (Jn. 17:20-21; Col. 4:3-4; 1 Th. 5:17).

### **Our Pledge**

Therefore, as representatives of this generation's global mission community, we pledge to obey the Great Commission. We covenant together to use all that God has entrusted to us in this obedience. We will seek to know where people are unreached, overlooked, ignored, or forgotten. We will pray for the Holy Spirit to give strength and guidance as we join with others in changing that neglect, to love and make disciples in the way of the Cross.

We confess that we have not always valued each other or each other's work. We repent of those wrongs and will endeavor to bring an end to competition where it exists, and reconcile where there is hurt, misunderstanding and mistrust. Furthermore, we will endeavor to recognize that each part of the Body has its very own purpose, whether risking their very lives to show God's passion for the salvation of others, or supporting those who lead us forward, or caring for those who quietly support, or fervently praying that His will be done throughout the whole earth. We will respect all mission-engaging individuals and groups as special vessels for God's glory, each endowed with abilities that extend His Kingdom in multiple ways.

Finally, we recognize that finishing the task will demand effective cooperative efforts of the entire global body of believers. To facilitate cooperation and on-going coordination between mission structures worldwide, we agree to the necessity of a global network of mission structures. With this in mind, we leave Tokyo pledging cooperation with one another, and all others of like faith, with the singular goal of "making disciples of every people in our generation." 

## *Signatories of the Tokyo 2010 Declaration*

### **Global Mission Structures**

- Ethne to Ethne
- Global Network of Mission Structures
- Globe Serve
- Lausanne Committee For World Evangelization
- Muslim Unreached Peoples Network
- Nomadic Peoples Network
- Third World Mission Association
- World Evangelical Alliance – Theological Commission
- World Evangelical Alliance – Mission Commission

### **Regional Mission Structures**

- Asia Mission Association
- COMIBAM International (pending ratification)
- Evangelical Association of the Caribbean
- Evangelical Missiological Society of US and Canada
- CrossGlobal Link of North America
- MANI (Movement of African National Initiatives)
- SAMA Link
- SEA Link
- SEA Net

### **National Mission Structures**

- AMTB - Associação de Missões Transculturais Brasileiras (Brazil)
- Ghana Evangelical Missions Association
- India Missions Association
- Japan Evangelical Missionary Association
- Japan Overseas Missions Association
- Korean World Missions Association
- Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association
- Philippine Missions Association
- Singapore Centre for Global Mission
- Swedish Evangelical Alliance
- The Mission Exchange, USA
- AFCM-OWM (USA)



# Challenge and Opportunity

## *for the Global Network of Mission Structures*

YONG CHO

It has been a privilege to serve as the first International Director of the Global Network of Mission Structures (GNMS). As we have begun to promote the GNMS within Asia, I see more and more the need and potential for such a structure to be developed; it is essential. From our Korean perspective we are growing to appreciate the need for better coordination in the global mission movement at every level. But not only here, around the world strong momentum is building to see international collaboration to finish the assignment our Lord gave us almost two millennia ago. Indeed, as we approach the 2000-year anniversary of the Great Commission, just 15-20 years away, it is fitting that we give our all to reach the remaining peoples and places that are still without a disciple-making movement in their midst.

Although the Church in Korea is not growing as fast as it once was in the 1970s and 1980s, the Korean missionary movement is growing faster than perhaps any mission movement in history. Other non-Western church movements are growing quickly; most peaked in their growth rates around a decade ago — the result of massive church-planting for many decades in unchurched regions. Now something amazing is happening: as these churches have grown stronger internally, a new generation of pioneers is being raised up to take the gospel beyond their borders.

What this means is that the great strength of the non-Western church in the global mission movement is just beginning to be felt. The national goal of the Korean church is to send out 100,000 missionaries in the next 20 years; the Chinese church and Filipino church have similar goals. We are witnessing an enormous shift in the center of gravity of foreign mission sending.



*Dr. Yong Cho is the International Director of the Global Network of Mission Structures.*

In the last two centuries, foreign mission sending has been the domain of the Western world. For the most part, the non-Western mission movement has primarily been contained to domestic missionary deployment. Even throughout the 1980s and 1990s non-Western cross-cultural missionaries serving outside of their country represented just a fraction of the foreign mission total. But that is changing — rapidly! The day will come when even the majority of personnel serving with international missions of Western origin will be made up predominately of non-Western cross-cultural missionaries.

While this transition confronts us with many challenges, the exciting news is, if we all work together, there are more than enough missionary personnel to finish the task. The issue is not a lack of resources to reach the remaining unreached peoples. It is simply a matter of better coordination. Therefore, it is imperative that we continually confront ourselves with some basic, challenging questions in order to effectively plan for the next decade. First and foremost, where are the highest priority places to send the next generation of foreign missionary personnel? What is the role of the expatriate mission force in today's world with so many national churches emerging in what used to be former mission fields? How can we work together more effectively between expatriate and national mission forces, and not at cross-purposes? More importantly, could a new wave of expatriate missionary deployment actually cause more harm than good in some areas? As we are witnessing even now, the over-deployment of missionaries to some fields is actually setting back the independence and growth of the indigenous church.

The time has come to begin to address these issues at the global, regional and national levels in dialogue with every major mission sending country and

agency. It is our hope that this conversation will continue following the Tokyo 2010 Global Mission Consultation. Might we for the first time in history develop a global strategy with wide inter-mission cooperation to finish the task? Can we work together to recruit, train and place 100,000 additional missionaries among the least-reached peoples in the next ten years? What's it going to take? What things do we need to change? What structures need to be overhauled? Are new wineskins required?

The first assignment of the GNMS was to get this conversation going by organizing this historic gathering of mission agency leaders, commemorating the 1910 meeting in both spirit and purpose. For the last several years we have been putting all our effort into this historic gathering. The process itself of bringing together an international coalition to organize this meeting has served to strengthen the GNMS in many ways, forging important ties and alliances with regional and national networks and mission leaders.

Almost all of the top leaders of the largest mission associations were represented at Tokyo 2010, and they have agreed to begin meeting together regularly. In addition to these leaders, many international mission directors and regional field leaders were also present. A good number of these gathered together for the Global Coordination Task Force at Tokyo 2010, which looked at how to better tackle the issue of the unengaged and under-engaged, unreached peoples at the regional level. Here at this gathering, the leaders of Campus Crusade for Christ made a commitment to help organize engagement task force

meetings in every country in the world that requires such effort.

The Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference is remembered primarily for what emerged from the conference. For example, the International Missionary Council helped the mission movement network for many decades and facilitated the development of strong national churches with indigenous leadership, of which Korea is a shining example of success. We are the fruit of healthy mission cooperation going back over a century.

One result from the Korean example of inter-mission cooperation was that when we began to send missionaries from Korea, we sought to work together on the field level as well. The Korean World Missionary Fellowship, which I served as its former general secretary and chairman, represents almost every Korean missionary on the field, with both national and regional field counterparts. Despite our denominational differences and various Christian traditions, we have been able to come together for the sake of fulfilling the Great Commission. It is my hope that we might see similar forums develop that will enable the entire global mission movement to interface on national, regional and global levels, to the end that indigenous churches might flourish in every nation, tribe, people and language in our generation. 🌐

*More information about Tokyo 2010 follow-up and the Global Network of Mission Structures can be found at [www.gnms.net](http://www.gnms.net).*

## *Statement from the Hindu Peoples' Task Force, Tokyo 2010*

The challenges involved in engaging the Hindu world with the gospel of Christ are vast and complex. The small group focused on that challenge at Tokyo 2010 could not produce a great plan or strategy or network. Many triumphalistic claims and grandiose efforts in the past have failed to impress, in fact have offended and hardened, our Hindu friends. We hereby call the church of Jesus Christ to embrace deep humility in relationships with Hindus as the only foundation for engaging the Hindu world.

We wrestled at length with issues related to caste, a deep and intractable problem. We acknowledged the ongoing problems of caste in the churches of India, as well as the fact that for each of us caste is like a wound in a secret place that we ourselves cannot see and certainly would never show to anyone else.

We embrace the dynamism of 21st-century India and the transmutations of caste happening in the modern world. We regret that Christianity too often and too easily appears to Hindus as just another caste group or separate community.

As the gospel impacts caste networks, we affirm our willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to work out the complexity of caste matters through Hindus who surrender to Christ. We will resist the temptation to offer our "Christian" solutions to new followers of Christ who might wish to maintain with integrity their relationships in caste-based communities, if and as people movements to Christ develop among unreached peoples/castes among Hindus. Our one concern is the glory of Christ in the Hindu world. May the word of the Lord spread rapidly and be honored among Hindus (2 Thessalonians 3:1).



## Tokyo 2010 and the “Western/Non-Western” Distinction

DAVE DATEMA, GENERAL DIRECTOR, FRONTIER MISSION FELLOWSHIP

The Tokyo 2010 Consultation consisted of 967 delegates from 73 countries, not including the 927 Japanese observers. According to David Hupp, Tokyo 2010’s administrator, “Using a definition of ‘Non-Western’ as any place other than the USA, Canada, Western Europe, New Zealand and Australia, the Non-Western representation ranges from 66% to 75%.” This is quite a change from Edinburgh 1910 and was one of the strengths of the meeting. Hupp adds, “At the same time, I would propose that ‘Western’ and ‘Non-Western’ is an increasingly blurred distinction, for several factors, and may be worth more study.”

I heartily agree with David. The trouble begins with inconsistency in defining “the West” as distinct from the non-Western world. If considered historically and culturally, the Western world is that part of the world shaped to a great extent by Greek and Roman culture. Others see it more as an economic designation, where “Western” means “developed.” But this doesn’t clear anything up either. The 2009 rankings of gross domestic product (GDP) by the IMF include Japan at number two, China at number three, Brazil at number eight, India at number eleven and Mexico at number fourteen. What does your GDP need to be to be considered “Western?” Indeed, the relationship between geography and prosperity is no longer so easy to categorize.

Newer terms such as “Global South” are equally unhelpful. The North/South distinction is largely economic, where the North is supposedly where high-income and advanced economies reside, and the South is where “developing” countries reside. But again it doesn’t work unless

you erase Australia and New Zealand off the map and ignore the fact that the southern hemisphere contains considerably less land mass than the north (only 1/3 of Africa) and only 10% of the human population. Of course, most of us don’t get that technical. To us, the Global South is simply Asia, Africa and Latin America. But again, problems still remain due to the major variations within these regions.

Therefore, the concepts of “Western” and “Non-Western” as well as “Global South” are increasingly unhelpful categories for those of us within the mission enterprise. Such macro-terms only confuse the fact that all of us come from micro-contexts where the macro-terms are insufficient. With each passing day, globalization makes these categories less and less relevant. One thing we soon learn in mission is that context is nearly everything.

For example, there is now increasing critique of so-called “insider movements.” But some criticisms refer mistakenly to “the insider movement,” as if it is a monolithic reality, whereas the truth is that numerous types of insider movements are taking place in numerous contexts. The world consists of numerous cultural, religious and socio-linguistic contexts, with little making sense in mission thinking outside of those contexts. Deep missiological thinking requires the use of micro-terms to describe micro-contexts.

Here are two suggestions. First, let’s stop using “Western,” “Non-Western” and “Global South” altogether. We seem to have done away with the “Occident” and the “Orient,” so there is precedent for discontinuing these other terms.

Second, since macro-level designations are often needed to get conversations started, let’s use affinity blocs instead. These are (according to Joshua Project) Jew, Arab, Horn of Africa-Cushitic, Sub-Saharan African, Iranian-Median, Turkic, Tibetan-Himalayan, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Malay, East Asian, Pacific Islander, North American, Latin-Caribbean American, Eurasian and Unclassified. Wouldn’t this make more sense? Even so, we should use these designations sparingly and only as background for more meaningful discussion.

Let me conclude by suggesting an even better way. Categorization is part of the legacy of modernism; though it can be helpful, it can also divide. The best category for any believer on this earth is “disciple of Jesus,” and I hope for a day when we can interact more on that basis than on the basis of the cultural contexts into which we were born. Today people often understand themselves through dominant lenses such as “Western” or “Non-Western” or “African” or “Asian.” But I don’t think that is good enough for those within the Kingdom of God.

For example, my allegiance to the Kingdom is much greater than my allegiance to the USA. Therefore, I struggle when I am defined primarily as “Western” or “American,” for this is not my primary identity as a disciple of Jesus. Neither is the reader’s primary identity that of being “Non-Western” or “African” or “Asian.” We are children of God, called to live under the rule of God, in order to fulfill the purposes of God. Our first birth may divide us in many ways, but our second birth unites us in ways that are potentially much, much greater. 🌐



# Recent Developments in Perspectives



Spring 2010 marks the 36th year since the first *Perspectives* class took place on the campus of Wheaton College. Since then, *Perspectives* has continued to grow and develop, reaching approximately 100,000 believers in North America alone! Some new developments include:

## Agency Partnerships

*Perspectives* has recently placed a strong emphasis on partnering with agencies. The addition of Ryan Emis to the staff as the Director for Ministry Advancement has opened the doors for strategic partnerships with agencies that center around three goals of the Mobilization Division of the USCWM:

1. *Engaging*: helping agencies use *Perspectives* as a mobilization tool for their sending churches for both support and new recruits.
2. *Equipping*: more and more agencies are requiring *Perspectives* for all candidates, as a strong, foundational component to their training and orientation.
3. *Connecting*: introducing opportunities for involvement with agencies to *Perspectives* students and alumni.

## New Online Course

*Perspectives* has had an online course for about a decade, run by the fine folks at International Christian Ministries. This past May marks the release of a new online program that will add video and facilitated online discussion. This will be available for students, missionaries and leaders in remote locations anywhere in the Internet-connected world.

For more information, visit [www.perspectives.org/online](http://www.perspectives.org/online)



### From Wondering Widow to Prayer Warrior

"After my husband passed away, I entered a new stage of my life as a widow, and in pursuit of answers—

what would you have me do with the rest of my life, Lord? It was then that I took the *Perspectives* class, and little did I know how much of an impact it would make on my love for the world. The light seemed to burn a little brighter for me after every class, and my heart began thirsting for more information as I started seeing the word 'nations' written all throughout the Bible. My whole focus changed from earth to heaven, and the expanded insight into God's love began to fuel my sharing about it, exploring what

God had to say about it in His Word, and spending more time in prayer over it.

"I am now a prayer coordinator for *Perspectives*, and I continue to use the *Global Prayer Digest* in my prayer time. I first discovered the great resource in class, and it continues to keep me consistently praying for unreached people groups. I am currently working with Wycliffe Bible Translators on the prayer team. I rejoice when I get a notice from them that another people group now has the Scriptures in their own language! Another joy is doing short-term service at the Voice of the Martyrs headquarters in Bartlesville, OK. And to think it all started with getting God's 'perspective'."

## ruined for the Ordinary

### Training Volunteers & Short-Termers

Steve develops indigenous leadership in Central America and the Caribbean who work to accomplish the Worldwide Christian Schools' vision of expanding Christ-centered schools in the developing world through serving nationals with operating funds, teacher training and curriculum resources. Each year Steve has the privilege of mobilizing 40-50 teams of volunteers

to give their time, sweat and resources to reach children with the gospel through education. He promotes *Perspectives* as a way for short-term mission leadership to get ready to work in a cross-cultural environment. He says his job is one of building bridges between cultural groups so that ministry is effective. Steve says, "Thanks, *Perspectives*, for the wealth of information in your course. It is practical and easy to use in this setting." 🌐





# RE-ASSESSING THE FRONTIERS:

## Ethnicity, Globalization and the Kingdom of God

2010 NORTH AMERICAN MEETING, INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR FRONTIER MISSIOLOGY  
SEPTEMBER 21-23, COUNTRY INN & SUITES UNIVERSITY PLACE, CHARLOTTE  
(PRIOR TO THE NORTH AMERICAN MISSION LEADERS CONFERENCE)

In this centennial year of global mission gatherings from Cape Town to Tokyo, the mandate for mission is under review. Mission and church strategists will be studying all the indicators of change and envisioning directions for mission in the 21st century. The relevance of ethnic and cultural difference is often contested or ignored as new agendas emerge in a global sending Church.

After more than three decades of emphasis on “unreached peoples,” this year’s ISFM gathering will reassess frontier mission by examining the intersection of ethnicity, globalization and the Kingdom of God. Sessions will assess the emerging social, cultural and religious dynamics on these frontiers. Are they eroding or hardening under the impact of globalization? What new access is granted for Kingdom-mission in the turbulence of change? Plenary talks, formal responses and interaction from the floor will combine to unpack these frontier realities. Plenary speakers bringing their expertise to this theme will include the following:



**A Global Perspective: Dr. Todd Johnson** (co-editor of the *Atlas of Global Christianity* and director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity) will bring a sweeping macro-analysis of how globalization impacts religious, ethnic and social boundaries,

creating either firewalls or new thresholds between communities and civilizations.

**A “Glocal” Perspective: Dr. Gary Fujino** (Ph.D., Trinity) will offer an analysis of how globalization



has impacted Japanese identity and the Japanese church. From more than 15 years of church-planting in the “global city” of Tokyo, Gary will assess efforts in contextualization within the multiple, shifting identities of Japanese culture.



**A Religious Perspective: Dr. Kang San Tan** (Former OMF Research Desk, professor Redcliffe College, UK) will address the multi-religious experience in a globalized world, giving special focus to the Christian-Buddhist frontier. While Christian theology

has tended to treat non-Christian religions as tight and separate religious systems, global complexities make this increasingly problematic for converts who struggle to relate to their previous world of faith.



**An Anthropological Perspective: Dr. Robert Priest** (Professor of Mission and Intercultural Studies, and Director, PhD Program, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) will survey the development of our

anthropological lenses on “people groups” and refine our grasp of the contextual complexity of peoples under the impact of globalization.



**A Missiological Perspective:**  
**Steve Hawthorne** (co-editor, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*) will probe the missiological concept of “people group” by reviewing the historical use of “ethnicity” in recent mission strategy. With increasing

calls for multiculturalism and culturally-hybrid congregational life, Hawthorne will reexamine the biblical and theological foundations of ethnic and cultural difference in frontier mission.



**A Kingdom Perspective:**  
**Dr. Sam Kamaleson** (former Vice-President of World Vision International) will speak on the “gospel of the Kingdom” as it confronts the ethnic realities of India’s caste system. From his

years of experience with indigenous mission efforts, he calls for a gospel among peoples that is both incarnational and transformational.



**A Biblical Perspective: Bruce Graham** (Director, Training Division, Frontier Mission Fellowship) will address the subject of the Kingdom of God from his two decades of training indigenous mission workers in India. With voices from the

non-Western world and today’s student generation calling the Church to reconcile the injustices and inequities of globalized society, Graham will focus his response on the biblical narrative of Kingdom Mission as an integrating perspective for reaching creatively across resistant and turbulent frontiers.

### Registration

Registration will begin at 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 21, at the conference room at the Country Inn & Suites

University Place. The conference will conclude at noon, September 23.

To register, see <http://isfm2010.eventbrite.com/>

### Cost

- \$50 for the full, three-day conference (includes coffee breaks and materials)
- \$40 early-bird registration until September 1
- \$25 for full-time students and donor-supported foreign missionaries
- If you plan to only attend the Wednesday evening and/or the Thursday morning sessions, please contact [isfm@ijfm.org](mailto:isfm@ijfm.org)

### Meeting Location and Lodging

Country Inn & Suites University Place

131 E. McCullough Drive

Charlotte, NC 28262

Phone: (704) 549-8770

Fax: (704) 717-8728

E-mail: [countryinnfom@gmail.com](mailto:countryinnfom@gmail.com)

To obtain discounted lodging at the Country Inn & Suites (\$69 plus tax per room, per night, double occupancy), see <http://www.countryinns.com/isfm>

### Contact Information

For further information, e-mail [brad.gill@ijfm.org](mailto:brad.gill@ijfm.org), or call (734) 765-0368.

This ISFM meeting will precede the North American Mission Leaders Consultation, scheduled for September 23-25 at a nearby venue. Further information on the North American Mission Leaders Consultation is available at [http://www.crossgloballink.org/Mosaic\\_AC10](http://www.crossgloballink.org/Mosaic_AC10)

# When God's Kingdom Grows Like Yeast:

## Frequently-Asked Questions About Jesus Movements Within Muslim Communities



JOHN J. TRAVIS AND J. DUDLEY WOODBERRY

In Matthew 13:33 and Luke 13:20 Jesus likens the Kingdom of God to yeast, a substance that transforms from the inside out. In the days surrounding His death and resurrection, Jesus instructed His followers to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom to all peoples of the world. Today numbers of Muslims have accepted this good news, allowing the yeast of the Kingdom to transform their lives and their families, while remaining a part of their own Muslim communities. Since there is a variety of perspectives on this phenomenon, even among the Islamic Studies faculty where we teach, we here seek to address some frequently-asked questions about it.

### 1. What are some examples of this type of movement to Jesus within Muslim communities?<sup>1</sup>

In one such movement, a middle-aged Muslim woman read the New Testament with a Christian friend for a number of years. During that time, her son was dramatically healed of a serious disease after receiving prayer by her friend's husband. A year later she came to faith in Jesus as a Muslim. Soon thereafter she felt God calling her to take the message of Jesus to her Muslim family and friends. She was known as a devout woman with true

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*John J. Travis (pen name), Ph.D., has lived for more than 20 years in Muslim communities in Asia and has traced the development of a number of Jesus movements around the world. J. Dudley Woodberry, Ph.D., has served in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia and is currently Dean Emeritus and Senior Professor of Islamic Studies at the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. Woodberry gave oversight to a multi-year research investigation of a movement of Jesus followers among Muslims in South Asia.*

concern for her community. Due to the empowering of the Holy Spirit and her gifts as a communicator and community organizer, she led dozens to faith and began many small Jesus fellowships, primarily through her own extended family, neighborhood and work associates. The message of Jesus and the Kingdom continues to multiply like yeast, Muslim follower of Jesus to Muslim, through a number of social networks.



Another such movement began with a high-ranking Muslim leader who had a dream that involved Jesus. He sent some of his followers to a group of local Christians to see if someone could help him understand the dream. Over time this Muslim leader felt God was calling him to follow Jesus. He did not believe, however, that God was calling him to change his religious community. He shared the dream and his subsequent experiences with a number of people under his spiritual care. Many of them became followers of Jesus as well. The yeast of the Kingdom continues to permeate this large Muslim network.

In another Jesus movement, a young Muslim man boarded with a Christian family, and came to faith as he joined them in their daily reading of the Bible. He came from an influential family and, once saved, committed himself to sharing the gospel with family members in a way they would understand, Muslim follower of Jesus to Muslim. The entire family accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, and through them the gospel spread to in-laws and distant family members. These Jesus-following Muslims gather regularly in their homes to study the New Testament. Due to natural networks created through marriage and careers, this Jesus movement has spread to a number of nearby ethnic groups.

In yet another case, the scholars running a Qur'anic academy began studying the Bible, and God confirmed His Word to them through dreams, visions, and answers to prayer. They believed in Jesus as Lord and Savior and began offering Bible instruction in their academy, in addition to instruction in the Qur'an. They also encouraged the formation of home groups for study and prayer. This launched a movement that has grown quite rapidly.

A very different example is the movement that began when a Muslim Sufi master was praying earnestly to be shown the way of salvation. He was told in a vision to travel to a particular town, to a specific house, where he would meet a man of such-and-such ancestry, who would show him the way of salvation. In the end, the man's Sufi movement became a Jesus movement.<sup>2</sup>

Another movement was started by a convert from Islam who, after years of rejection by both the traditional church of a different ethnicity and by his community of birth, apologized to his father and began witnessing within his community of birth. A large movement has resulted.<sup>3</sup>

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## **2. If Muslims confess Jesus as Savior and Lord, why would they not simply want to join the Christian religion?**

In some cases, they do. Numbers of Muslims accepting Christ leave Islam and take on a Christian religious identity. For many, however, religious identity is strongly linked with all other aspects of life, so that a change of identity would make it nearly impossible to remain a part of their own family and community. Martin Goldsmith expresses this well:

Islam is within the whole warp and woof of society – in the family, in politics, in social relationships. To leave the Muslim faith is to break with one's whole society. Many a modern educated Muslim is

not all that religiously minded; but he must, nevertheless, remain a Muslim for social reasons. . . . This makes it almost unthinkable for most Muslims even to consider the possibility of becoming a follower of some other religion.<sup>4</sup>

It is because of this strong fusion of family, community and socio-religious identity that some Muslims who have received the gospel, in an effort to keep their family and social networks intact, choose to remain Muslim, so long as they can be true to Jesus, the Bible and the leading of the Spirit. The dynamics of witness then become Muslim follower of Jesus to fellow Muslim. Where Muslims find a way to do this, Jesus movements within their communities become viable.

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## **3. Why is the phenomenon of Jesus movements within Muslim communities only being observed in recent years?**

Essentially, the first 2,000 years of church history has been the story of reaching *peoples from animistic or pagan backgrounds*,<sup>5</sup> devotees of what are called minor religious traditions.<sup>6</sup> As for those in the major religious traditions such as Islam and Judaism, few have ever embraced the good news of Jesus.

Today, however, numbers of adherents of the world's major religions are turning to Jesus, some of them sensing no call of God to leave the religious community of their birth.<sup>7</sup> For example, some Jews have accepted Jesus as Messiah, while retaining their Jewish socio-religious identity.<sup>8</sup> A similar trend is happening among some Muslims who have become sincere followers of Jesus and the Bible, and have remained within their own religious community, without joining a branch of the traditional Christian community.

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## **4. It is an interesting idea that the Kingdom could move like yeast within a person's original religious community. However, are there not risks associated with Jesus movements remaining inside such communities?**

Yes, it would be naive to suggest there are no risks associated with Jesus movements remaining within original religious communities. At least five areas of particular concern exist for Jesus movements within Muslim communities.

The first is that folk or popular Islamic practices (the use of charms, amulets, divination, numerology or occult rituals to obtain spiritual power) are deeply

ingrained in many Muslim societies, though largely forbidden by formal Islam. These must be renounced by followers of Jesus in order to experience spiritual freedom. If still practiced, Jesus movements would become syncretistic. (Syncretism, as often understood in Christian circles, refers to the incorporation of values, beliefs and practices



contrary to the Scriptures, resulting in a sub-Biblical faith and a compromised message.) All movements, including those that take place in Christian denominations, have the potential to become sub-biblical or syncretistic if they do not adhere closely to God's Word and the leading of his Spirit.

The second concern is that although many Muslim beliefs are compatible with biblical revelation, some commonly-held Muslim teachings and interpretations of the Qur'an contradict the gospel. If these are retained, the gospel message would be compromised. (See question 5 below.)

The third is that the presence of strong family and community solidarity may interfere with ultimate allegiance to God through Christ. This solidarity is a strength for Jesus movements, when extended families embrace the good news together. On the other hand, community pressure can overwhelm new followers of Jesus, making discipleship difficult and witness tenuous. It follows that they must walk in both wisdom and boldness, with great sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

The fourth is that in some Islamic communities, violence may await any who deviate from locally established norms and teachings. In these situations, the lives of Jesus-followers are sometimes at risk.

The fifth concern is that the phenomenon of Jesus movements can, and often does, raise confusion among and opposition from traditional Christians in the same region and thus could lead to divisions within the Body of Christ.

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**5. How do movements remain faithful to Jesus and the Bible when Islam contains teachings that are not compatible with biblical revelation?**

Among groups of Muslims who follow Jesus, a three-fold pattern is observed: they reject certain traditional beliefs and practices that are contrary to the Bible; they reinterpret others in accordance with

the Bible; and they minimize others. To understand this, it may be helpful to look at a similar phenomenon within Judaism, another monotheistic Abrahamic faith. Judaism traditionally holds, for example, that Jesus is not the Messiah, that forgiveness of sins is not granted through his death on the cross, and that the New Testament is not

the Word of God. Jews who follow Jesus, however, affirm that Yeshua<sup>9</sup> is the Messiah and Savior of the world, and that the New Testament is the Word of God. They interpret the traditional 18 Jewish prayers in ways compatible with their belief that Jesus is the Messiah, and celebrate Hanukkah and other traditional Jewish holidays in light of New Testament understanding.

A similar process is happening among Jesus-following Muslims. Most Muslims interpret the Qur'an to say that Jesus did not die on the cross and that the biblical text has been corrupted. However, the meaning of certain qur'anic verses is unclear, and historically Muslim commentators have given interpretations of the Qur'an that affirm the accuracy of the Bible and allow for the death of Christ.<sup>10</sup> Born-again Muslims fully believe in the bodily death and resurrection of Jesus ('Isa)<sup>11</sup> and affirm the authority of the Bible<sup>12</sup> as the Word of God. They reject the pursuit of spiritual power through mystical or magic-oriented practices that are common in many Muslim contexts. Similar to Yeshua-following Jews who celebrate Hanukkah, many Jesus-following Muslims keep the Ramadan fast and daily prayers, yet interpret their meaning in a way compatible with their faith in Jesus. They do not view the fast and daily prayers as a means of salvation and forgiveness of sin, but as a means to draw near to God. Just as with all followers of Christ, as whole-hearted allegiance to Jesus is realized in obedient lives, the relative importance of some components of their background is minimized.

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**6. By not calling oneself a Christian, could not this be viewed as a form of denying Christ, the very thing Jesus warned of in Mark 8:38 and in Matthew 10:32-33?**

The answer depends on what is meant by the word "Christian." In most parts of the Muslim world, it does not mean what it does to Western evangelicals. For evangelicals, it has a spiritual meaning: one has experienced new birth in Christ and follows Him

as Lord. In most of the Muslim world, however, “Christian” has an almost exclusively cultural, ethnic or political meaning: Christians are either Westerners (often seen as immoral) or members of local non-Muslim ethnic minorities. They have their own calendar, rituals, holidays, clergy, terminology, diet and dress. Historic animosity over a thousand years (e.g., Christianity in light of the Crusades) taints the word “Christian.”

If asked whether they are Christians, Jesus-following Muslims rightly say no: they are Muslims, not Christians. If asked, however, whether they follow Jesus as Lord and Savior, they say yes, and give an appropriate explanation. Though they retain an official, social and/or cultural identity as Muslims and do not identify with “Christianity” as a socio-religious institution, they do identify with Jesus, and this is the very point of the Mark 8 and Matthew 10 passages. They are not ashamed of Christ.

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### **7. What does it mean to retain an official, social and/or cultural Muslim identity?**

Retaining official Muslim identity means that Jesus followers have not legally or publically taken steps to remove themselves from Islam. In some Muslim countries, one’s religious identity is determined by law, and often laws specify that people born of Muslim parents are legally Muslims and cannot change their religious identity. In other Muslim countries, religious identity is determined only at the community level.

Retaining a social and/or cultural Muslim identity means that followers of Jesus see themselves, and are seen by others in society, as Muslim.<sup>13</sup> However, like genuine disciples of Christ in all societies, they clearly hold some new values and beliefs not shared by all their neighbors.

There is already great variance throughout the Muslim world in beliefs and practices. Many Muslims lean toward belief systems technically incompatible with Islam, such as secularism, communism, occultism or even agnosticism. Yet they identify with the Muslim community and are considered full members of it. A well-known Muslim follower of Christ notes that Muslims do not have to perform all practices or believe all doctrines of Islam to be Muslims. But the day they choose to renounce their

identity as Muslims is the day they are no longer seen as part of the Muslim community.

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### **8. Are Jesus movements within Muslim communities the only type of movement among Muslims today?**

No. Jesus movements within Muslim communities are not the only thing God is doing, they may not happen everywhere, and they may not be what many Muslims choose for association when they receive the gospel. A variety of large and small movements to Christ are taking place. The C1-C6 spectrum was developed to help describe various expressions of faith in Jesus among Muslims.

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### **9. What is the C1-C6 spectrum?**

The spectrum, also referred to as the C-scale, describes six basic types of Christ-centered communities or fellowships that exist in the Muslim world, in terms of language, culture, religious forms and religious identity.<sup>14</sup> A particular fellowship may or may not be part of a movement. Movements are characterized by a multiplication of fellowships, where the gospel has a life of its own as it moves through existing communities and networks. Jesus movements of all types reflected on the C-scale are found in the Muslim world. Points on the scale are meant to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, and dynamic rather than static. A given Jesus fellowship or movement may take on different expressions over time.

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### **10. How do these movements start?**

Individuals become followers of Jesus in a variety of ways, with the most common factors being 1) reading or hearing about Jesus in the Gospel narratives; 2) hearing the experiences of fellow Muslims who are disciples of Jesus; 3) seeing the message of Jesus confirmed through answered prayer; and 4) dreams and visions given directly by God, often following the personal witness of friends. For example, a Muslim

hears the story of a friend at work who has just become a Jesus follower; he then has a dream about Jesus; he finds a Bible and reads it, and then takes the message directly to his family and friends. Of course, outsiders often have been instrumental in leading the first few Muslims to faith, and also have been involved in such endeavors



as Bible translation, translating the JESUS Film, or protracted intercessory prayer for a particular people group. What allows Jesus movements to launch, however, is that Muslims themselves become convinced that this good news of Jesus is for their family and friends and that they communicate the gospel, person to person, with God confirming the message in multiple ways.

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**11. Scripture teaches that in Christ we are “one body” (Ephesians 4:4-6). Even though Jesus-following Muslims do not join traditional Christian churches or denominations, do they see themselves as part of the Body of Christ?**

Based on comments from Muslim followers of Jesus as well as colleagues who know these believers well, we can affirm that the great majority of Jesus-following Muslims view all people who are truly submitted to God through Christ, whether Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, as fellow members of the Kingdom of God. The presence of the Spirit of God in both born-again Christians and born-again Muslims points to realities — the Body of Christ and the Kingdom of God — that go beyond socio-religious labels and categories. This reality was apparent in the Acts 10 account of Peter’s visit to Cornelius’ Gentile home, and it later prompted his magnificent declaration in Acts 15:11, “We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that we [Jews] are saved just as they [Gentiles] are.” Jesus-following Muslims are saved today by the same grace that saves those who identify themselves as Christians.

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**12. Fellowship and commitment in a local expression of the Body of Christ is central to life in Christ. Do Muslim followers of Jesus gather together, or are they simply individuals who have believed in Jesus?**

Normally they meet in their homes for prayer, fellowship and the study of God’s Word, and are highly committed to one another. They become an expression of the Body of Christ in that locale. Having said this, however, they must be discreet and wise in how and where they meet. In some cases they meet like the underground church of China; in other locations they are more open. In some contexts the interpersonal or social skills of Jesus-following Muslims significantly impact neighborhood reaction and freedom to meet.

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**13. Some have said that Jesus movements within Islam exist so that Muslims can avoid persecution and suffering for their faith in Christ. Is this true?**

By far the most common reason Jesus-following Muslims give for staying inside their original religious community is their burden and desire to see their loved ones experience the good news in Jesus. Their hope is that Jesus movements among Muslims would be like the earliest Jesus movement described in Acts 2:46-47.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

While we rejoice whenever the Lord is daily adding to the number of Jesus followers, and whenever Jesus movements are experiencing the favor of the Muslim community, we realize that movements are not static. As the biblical record of the first Jesus movement shows, seasons can change. Not hoping that any movement would move out of a season of favor, we pray earnestly for these believers to be prepared for any suffering that may come.<sup>15</sup>

While a certain stigma of “changing religious communities” is avoided in these movements, in many Muslim contexts pressure is still exerted (from either family or religious leaders) on members of the community who have different spiritual ideas. In some cases this pressure increases to full-blown persecution. A recent tragic case occurred in August 2009, when a leader in one Jesus movement died as a martyr, poisoned by his own family. Villagers said this leader was killed because he would not stop talking about Jesus, and this was an embarrassment to the family. Other Jesus movements have similar stories.

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**14. It has been said that some Christians have assumed a Muslim identity in order to relate to and have an audience with Muslims. Does the existence of Jesus movements within Muslim communities suggest that Christians should take on a Muslim identity in order to reach Muslims with the Gospel?**

No, not at all. These are two separate issues. The movements we are discussing here involve Muslims who were born inside those communities.

There have been rare instances where Christians

have assumed varying degrees of Muslim identity in an effort to “become all things to all men” to “win as many as possible” (I Cor. 9:19-23). Though the decision of a Christian to *change* socio-religious identity is entirely different from the decision of a Muslim to *retain* socio-religious identity, some critics of the type of Jesus movements discussed here have attempted to link the two.

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### **15. What about the traditional Christian sacraments of baptism and communion? Are these followed in Jesus movements within Muslim communities?**

In some movements it seems to be a common practice to remember the sacrifice of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins during a meal shared together.

Most Jesus-following Muslims practice some form of water baptism as well, not to indicate a change of religious affiliation, but as a sign of identifying with Jesus, who has opened the way for the cleansing of sin and for new life in Him. Some Muslim disciples of Jesus who do not yet practice outward water baptism consider themselves to have been baptized spiritually because of their relationship with Christ, who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

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### **16. Would Jesus-following Muslims still repeat the confession, “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is God’s Messenger”?**

The following explanations are given by some Jesus-following Muslims who continue to recite the confession: Muhammad called his people to turn from polytheism to the God of Abraham; he commended to them the Holy Books of the Jews and Christians, and he warned of an impending day of God’s judgment, for which all people must be prepared. For these reasons, he is honored. It is of interest to note that in one large movement some Jesus-followers explained that they do not repeat the second part of the Islamic confession, choosing instead to substitute something that is both biblically and Qur’anicly correct such as “Jesus is the Word of God.”<sup>17</sup>

The issue of repeating the confession looms large in the minds of some Christians (including Christians who have converted from Islam). However, it does not seem to arise as a matter of such importance in fellowships of Jesus-following Muslims. They do not share the antagonism that many Christians feel toward Muhammad and Islam. It should be noted,

however, that in these Jesus movements, Muhammad is not viewed as a mediator or intercessor.

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### **17. Do Jesus-following Muslims still refer to God as Allah?**

Yes. Not only do Jesus-following Muslims use the term Allah, but all *Arab Christians* use Allah as their term for God, as do millions of Christians in various parts of Africa, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the Middle East.<sup>18</sup> Even before the rise of Islam, Arabic-speaking Christians called God Allah, since the name Allah pre-dates Islam.<sup>19</sup> Jews used the term Allah in their Arabic translation of the Old Testament.<sup>20</sup> Following in the tradition of Arab and Christian use of the term Allah, the Qur’an uses Allah to refer to God, the creator of heaven and earth, the God who revealed himself to Abraham, the God of the Bible, indeed the God of the Jews, Christians and Muslims. A person’s accurate understanding of God is a separate issue from the term used for God.<sup>21</sup>

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### **18. How do Muslims who follow Jesus communicate with fellow Muslims about Jesus and the Bible?**

Jesus Muslims who share their experience of Jesus with other Muslims are convinced that Jesus is for them — He died for them and is on their side. They know that Jesus is not only the Savior of Christians, but that He is the Savior of every person who calls on His name. They believe that salvation truly is through the sacrifice of Jesus alone and is not dependent upon a particular religious affiliation. They are also convinced that salvation is only through Christ, and are therefore determined to find a way to explain this to family and friends. It is this Muslim-to-Muslim communication of the good news and personal testimony, with divine confirmation, that fuels the growth of Jesus movements.

Muslims know that the Qur’an affirms the holy books that came beforehand to the Jews and Christians,<sup>22</sup> and this is one of the six basic articles of Islamic faith. So when Jesus-following Muslims talk about their reading of the “neglected” holy books of Islam, some of their friends become interested in joining them. Once seekers begin to ingest the Word of God, especially the accounts of the life of Jesus, and see it confirmed in the lives of their friends, the power of God is released in their lives, often resulting in them coming to Christ in faith.

While miracles of healing and provision draw Muslims to the gospel, the greatest attraction is the

changed lives of Muslim followers of Jesus, who are growing in love and holiness, within the religious communities of their birth. 🌐

## Endnotes

- 1 The authors are acquainted with the following examples, along with others, but actual names and locations have been omitted.
- 2 See “Brother Jacob and Master Isaac: How One Insider Movement Began,” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 24/1 (2007): 41-42.
- 3 For another such case study, see J. Dudley Woodberry, “Contextualization Among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars,” in Dean Gilliland, ed., *The Word Among Us* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989), 303-306.
- 4 *Missiology: An International Review* 4 (1976): 317-323.
- 5 Peoples of animistic backgrounds who have turned to Christ during the last 2,000 years include peoples of Europe (e.g., Goths, Saxons, Celts, Vikings, etc.), peoples of Africa, peoples of Asia, indigenous peoples of North and South America, and others.
- 6 Typically these new believers linked with various branches of Christianity. This has meant moving from a minor to a major tradition – from a locally-known religion to the global religion of Christianity.
- 7 Various terms have been used to describe these types of Jesus movements, such as “insider movements,” “Messianic movements” or “Christ-centered movements.”
- 8 Some of these Jews are quite integrated into the traditional Jewish community and synagogue life; others maintain a more nominal Jewish identity.
- 9 Many Jews who follow Jesus refer to Him by His Hebrew name, Yeshua.
- 10 For major Muslim Qur’an commentators who allow for a real crucifixion, see Joseph Cumming, “Did Jesus Die on the Cross? Reflections in Muslim Commentaries” in J.D. Woodberry, O. Zumrut, and M. Koylu, eds., *Muslim and Christian Reflections on Peace: Divine and Human Dimensions* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 32-50.
- 11 Many Jesus-following Muslims refer to Jesus by His Qur’anic name, ‘Isa, which is commonly understood to be an Arabized form of the name Syriac-speaking Christians used (see A. Mingana, “Syriac Influence on the Style of the Koran,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 11 (1927): 84).
- 12 Many Jesus-following Muslims refer to the Bible using the terms *Taurat*, *Zabur* and *Injil*. The *Taurat* (which literally is the first five books of the Old Testament but is often interpreted as referring to the entire Old Testament), *Zabur* (Psalms) and *Injil* (Gospel, although it is often used for the Gospels or the entire New Testament) are understood to be the Word of God in the Qur’an. Muslim scholar Abdullah Saeed’s article “The Charge of Distortion of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures” shows how both the Qur’an and Islamic tradition support the view that the texts of the *Taurat*, *Zabur* and *Injil* have not been corrupted and are still to be regarded as holy books by Muslims (*Muslim World* 92 [2002]:419-436).
- 13 The particulars of retaining Muslim identity vary according to the given Muslim context.
- 14 Here is a brief summary of the C-scale (see John Travis, 1998, “Must All Muslims Leave Islam to Follow Jesus?” *EMQ* 34(4):411-415), showing various expressions of faith used by believers in Jesus of Muslim background:
  - C1 – Believers in traditional Christian fellowships where worship is not in the mother tongue
  - C2 – Same as C1, but worship is in the believers’ mother tongue
  - C3 – Believers in culturally indigenous Christian fellowships that avoid Islamic forms
  - C4 – Believers in culturally indigenous fellowships that retain biblically permissible Islamic forms, but not identifying as Muslims
  - C5 – Muslim followers of Jesus in fellowships within the Muslim community, continuing to identify culturally and/or officially as Muslims, though a special kind
  - C6 – Muslim followers of Jesus in limited, underground fellowship
- 15 The very movement described in Acts 2-4 moved into a season of persecution a number of years later, as recorded in Acts 5 onward, especially noted in Acts 8:1-3.
- 16 This is similar to the position on baptism and communion held by Quakers and the Salvation Army.
- 17 It is worth noting that Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Islam’s most celebrated theologian, on two occasions gave a confession that both Christians and Muslims can affirm: “Jesus is the Apostle of God” (Al-Qustas al-Mustaqim, ed. V. Chelhot, 68, in Chelhot, “La Balance Juste,” *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales*, 15 (1958); al-Munqidh min al-dalal (The Deliverer from Error), ed. Jamil Saliba and Kamal Ayyad (3rd ed., Damascus, 1358/1939), 101, trans. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1953), 39.
- 18 In Indonesia alone, the entire Christian population of over 30 million uses the term Allah for God.
- 19 See P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 6th ed. [London: Macmillan, 1956], 101.
- 20 Sa’adiah Gaon bin Joseph, a 9th- and 10th-century A.D. Jewish scholar, translated the Jewish Scriptures from Hebrew into Arabic, using Allah for God (Kenneth J. Thomas, “Allah in Translations of the Bible,” *The Bible Translator: Technical Papers Vol. 52:3*, July 2001, pp. 301-305).
- 21 See J.D. Woodberry, “Do Christians and Muslims Worship the Same God?” *Christian Century* (May 18, 2004): 36-37.
- 22 Over 40 times the Qur’an refers to the Bible (*Taurat*, *Zabur*, or *Injil* – the books that came beforehand) as holy books.



# RAISING LOCAL RESOURCES

## Avoiding the “Church Development” Syndrome

GLENN SCHWARTZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WORLD MISSION ASSOCIATES

The Church of Pentecost was begun in West Africa before the middle of the 20th century. It grew without the unhealthy dependency on outside resources that sometimes characterizes mission-established churches. This church went through growing pains in the early years but avoided getting bogged down in its own development. They reached beyond Ghana and have planted churches in 69 other countries with an estimated 1.5 million members in over 13,000 assemblies. In 2007 more than 200,000 came to Christ as a result of their outreach efforts. All of this is to show that churches do not need to be paralyzed by unhealthy dependency on outside funding.

In successful church-planting, there are three important stages: 1) initial church-planting; 2) church development; and 3) mobilization. Each phase has its own challenges and rewards when done appropriately.

The *initial church-planting* phase can be rapid or prolonged, joy-filled or difficult. The gospel seed is sown, and when the soil is fertile, it takes root in the hearts of those who become believers. I had the privilege of being part of several new church-planting efforts when I was a missionary in Central Africa. I know how rewarding it can be. But seeing the church come into being is only the first phase.

*Church development* is the next step after the church is planted. This phase has the potential to affect what the church will be like for many years to come. During this stage, hopefully, the church will learn how to develop its own resources, not just to meet their own needs, but for the purpose of multiplication. Unfortunately, sometimes newly-planted congregations fall into what

missiologists call the “syndrome of church development.” This happens when their resources are consumed on themselves with little or nothing left over for outreach and reproduction. This results in a “maintenance mentality” that leaves the church focused inward — perhaps for generations. The church development phase, however, does not need to be an end in itself; it can be an important stepping-stone to effective outreach. Among mission-established churches, too often, the church development phase is funded by outside resources. Church development in itself is *not* bad, but getting bogged down in it can paralyze a congregation or denomination.

*Mobilization* is the third step in the process of healthy church-planting. Nothing does more to advance the spread of the Christian movement than for a congregation to discover the reward of mobilizing its own people for ministry. This is a natural step for those filled with the Spirit of God and willing to share the Good News. One of the hindrances to mobilization is getting stuck in the syndrome of church development. This means that instead of mobilizing local resources, congregations become dependent on the resources of others — resources that may have been given for the spread of the gospel, not for maintaining congregations already planted.

When congregations become victims of the syndrome of church development, members become “dependents” rather than “soldiers” in God’s expanding army. As I have written elsewhere, they are unable to join the battle on the front lines and end having to be carried along. Every effort must be made to encourage the mobilization of people and resources

rather than have them consume those resources on themselves.

The first phase (church-planting) is characterized by a moving of the Holy Spirit among nonbelievers. The second phase (church development) is the time to build a solid base strong enough to support outreach. The third phase (mobilization) is characterized by believers energized by “going” and “growing.” Nothing does more for the health of the church (and the excitement of its members) than being part of an outreach ministry blessed and nurtured by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The growth of the Church of Pentecost in West Africa and around the world is an example for us all.

One can see how a church is doing by examining the congregational budget. Are resources primarily being used for church development or for mobilization? How would you rate your own congregation? How much time, energy and other resources are being used for church development and how much for mobilization? The need to *mobilize believers* should motivate all of us to do God’s work around the world. We cannot be satisfied just to help the church maintain itself. That can be expensive and often leads to long-term dependency. 🌐

To learn more on this topic, see chapter 9 of *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*, available through World Mission Associates ([www.wmausa.org](http://www.wmausa.org)) and through William Carey Library ([www.missionbooks.org](http://www.missionbooks.org)).

# FURTHER REFLECTIONS



## Locking People Out of the Kingdom

GREG H. PARSONS, GLOBAL DIRECTOR, U.S. CENTER FOR WORLD MISSION

A big “take away” from the Protestant Reformation is that salvation is by faith alone and that we do not need a mediator other than Christ. As the apostle Paul declared in Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you are saved through (or by) faith, it is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.”

Yet believers in Christian sub-cultures have such strong expectations of what all believers need to know and do that we often inadvertently *add* to biblical standards. While we may not recognize it, we sometimes act — or are perceived — as if we expect all believers to be like us in things spiritual, theological or behavioral.

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“BUDDHISTS, HINDUS AND MUSLIMS HAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE CONTACT WITH CHRISTIANS. IN EACH CASE, OVER 86% OF ALL THESE RELIGIONISTS DO NOT PERSONALLY KNOW A CHRISTIAN.”<sup>1</sup> PERHAPS WE NEED TO RETHINK OUR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ENSURE THAT WE ARE ACTUALLY MEETING BUDDHISTS, HINDUS AND MUSLIMS.

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It is a serious challenge to me that Jesus did not have any patience for those who knew a great deal about God and religion but who missed the main point (Him) and who did not live out what they taught. In Matthew 23 Jesus spoke difficult truths about one group of spiritual leaders. They knew their Bible, and they worked hard at “evangelism,” crossing “land and sea” to seek converts. But Jesus says, “You keep locking people out of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 23:13b, *NET Bible*). The *NET Bible* lists a literal rendering as, “because you are closing the kingdom of heaven before people.”

What a challenge to those today who call ourselves followers of Christ! What are *we* doing that might be locking people out of God’s kingdom?

I have a good friend who directs a large mission agency that works with Muslims. The workers in this agency are trying all kinds of things to encourage Muslims to enter God’s kingdom. One of the challenges in frontier work (and even in “local” evangelism) is to discern how much people need to know before they can be saved, and how to encourage people to examine the truth of the gospel more seriously.

A couple of days ago, my friend told me about his recent encounter with a prominent, globally-minded pastor, who was expressing concerns about

the agency’s strategies. In turn, my friend asked the pastor about reaching people at his church: “How wide is your church’s front door?”

“A mile wide,” the pastor replied.

“And how wide is the door to becoming an elder at the church?”

“About six inches.”

“Well, wouldn’t we want the door to be wide for Muslims to enter into Jesus’ kingdom to learn and grow into maturity?”

So why do we expect Muslims or Hindus or Buddhists to embrace all of our

understandings about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Do we expect them to be Republicans, too? As long as we are not countering Scripture, does it really matter how we encourage them to grow in understanding God and embracing His saving power? Do they have to believe particular truths or act particular ways first?

Many years ago, I was sitting in a church service in which a missionary was sharing during a mission emphasis event. This missionary had been working in a “Christianized” region where people often think they are automatically saved because they grew up in the institutional Church and do what they are culturally expected to do. I was shocked as this missionary, who was gifted in evangelism, described a discussion he had conducted with one man during which the missionary detailed the things the man had to give up *before* he could believe in Christ.

So let’s re-examine our ways of sharing our faith, wherever we are, and take care to not place artificial pre-conditions on faith. Yes, Ephesians 2:8-9 is followed by verse 10, in which the apostle Paul affirmed that good works should result from salvation. But those works may look different in different cultural situations.

Note, too, that Todd Johnson has observed, “Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims have relatively little contact with Christians. In each case, over 86% of all these religionists do not personally know a Christian.”<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we need to rethink our engagement strategies and ensure that we are actually meeting Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. When we do, perhaps our discussions will last a big longer than they have for many. 🌐

<sup>1</sup> *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 43:4, Oct. 2007, p. 495