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NETWORKS

Are Changing the Shape of World Missions

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VENTURES

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COMING TOGETHER AROUND A COMMON BIBLICAL VISION



BY **RICK WOOD**
EDITOR OF *MF*

EDITORIAL

IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE for God's people to work together in unity for the sake of God's glory in all the earth and the spread of His kingdom to all peoples? If you look at Christian history over the last 2,000 years, you would fairly conclude that it is not. But things are changing in our day and the unity that we need that seems so impossible to achieve is more and more becoming the reality on the mission field.

In his "High Priestly Prayer" of John 17, Jesus prayed for his disciples and for us, those who would believe as a result of his first disciples, that we would be one so that the world would know that Jesus was sent from God and that we are loved by God. In verses 22 and 23 Jesus prayed to the Father for us, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you

sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

I believe that this prayer is in the process of being answered in our day. As this issue of *MF* describes in detail, the global mission community is increasingly coming together in networks and partnerships. There is the growing realization that the task is too big for any one organization to tackle and so much more can be accomplished by working together than can be done separately.

So what would the "complete unity" Jesus prayed for look like anyway? It will not be characterized by a large organization with a hierarchical command and control structure. The clear trend in both church and mission is towards a decentralization of power and control and a move towards the kinds of voluntary networks and partnerships described in this issue. First of all, we have the unity of partaking of the same Holy Spirit. As followers of Jesus each of us is united in the Spirit. Beyond this, the unity Jesus prayed for will be a unity of vision and purpose where God's people live on mission with Him in obedience to His word to do

His will in His ways in the power of the Holy Spirit. We have been given our marching orders in Matt. 28:18-20 to go and make disciples who make more disciples and to do so in all peoples. The closer we get as the global church to abiding in Jesus and obeying what He has called us to do, the more unified we will be as His body—no matter how many moving parts that body may have. Disunity comes from a lack of submission to the authority of Jesus and a failure to obey what He has commanded us to do. It comes from a desire to do things our way rather than His way. The more we rely on the flesh instead of obey the word, the more disunity there will be.

Over the last 27 years, I have experienced first hand the kind of unity Jesus prayed for as I have lived on mission with God. I have worked with Jesus followers from many different backgrounds. I did not have complete unity with these fine servants of God on every aspect of doctrine, mission strategy, politics and a host of other topics but there were always certain things that we were unified around. We loved Jesus and we wanted everyone else within all peoples to love him too, and we

were willing to give our lives to help make that a reality.

So What Is This Biblical Vision That Can Unite Us?

It really is not that complicated. As mentioned above, it is centered on simple obedience to what Jesus has asked all of us to do. Here are some suggestions based on what Scripture teaches.

1. We must provide access to the gospel and the knowledge of Christ to every person on earth. This sounds impossible but is actually doable if we focus on reaching every people group and fostering movements of discipleship in each one. If we employ the multiplication methods that Jesus modeled and Paul used until he could declare that there was “no place left” for him to work, (Rom. 15:23) then it is possible for every person to have access to the gospel. It is the power of exponential multiplication of disciples making disciples. It says in 2 Peter 3:9 that God is “not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Obviously, not all will believe, but all people everywhere deserve to have access.


2. Every willing follower of Jesus must be equipped (discipled) to live on mission with God to make more disciples who likewise equip and make more disciples. The “Great Commission” passage of Matt. 28:18-20 makes it clear that everyone who claims to be a Jesus follower is called to go and make disciples, “teaching them to obey all that I have commanded.” One of those commands is to make disciples so multigenerational discipleship is inherent in Jesus’

last words to us in this passage. Paul reinforces this multigenerational discipleship mandate in 2 Tim. 2:2 when he says to Timothy, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach other.” In this passage we can see four generations of disciples. Whatever method we decide to use to make disciples, we must ask ourselves whether it is successful in producing multiple generations of disciples.

3. The “Great Commission,” Matt. 28:18-20 must become our identity as followers of Jesus. Very few churches regularly teach Matt. 28:18-20 as representing the call of Jesus upon all of our lives. This foundation stone of who we are as Jesus followers is often mistakenly taught as something that applies to a few special called out ones rather than something all of us are obliged to obey. This idea that a few are called and most are not brings great disunity to the body of Christ. The regular and proper teaching of this passage would help greatly in bringing unity to the body of Christ as we work together on mission with God to make disciples and bring the gospel to every people. How can we say that Jesus is our King and we are part of His kingdom if we refuse to obey, not to mention teach, what our King has asked us to do?

4. We Must Love God and Love Our Neighbor In Matt. 22:37-40 Jesus said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The

second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” How do we most effectively fulfill this commandment from Jesus? How do we love God with our whole being? Jesus has given us some clues. In John 14:21, “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me.” In 1 John 2:5 it says, “But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him.” Love for God and obedience to what He has commanded are inseparable from each other. Our obedience is also key to loving our neighbor. The most loving thing we can ever do for someone is to share the gospel with them. In 1 Peter 1:22, it says, “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”

We can move ever closer to the complete unity that Jesus prayed for the more we are willing to obey what Jesus has asked us to do and to live on mission together with Him. 

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How Networks Shaping the of World

FEATURE ARTICLE

BY KÄRIN BUTLER PRIMUTH

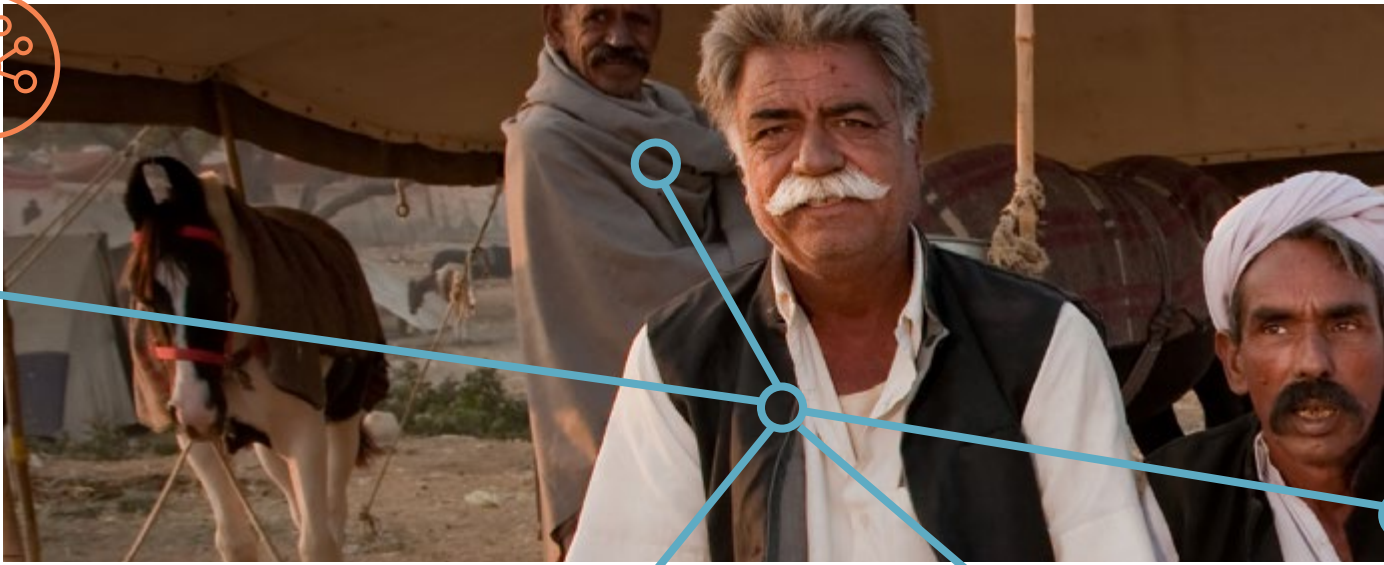
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VISIONSYNERGY.NET

In 2011, Kärin Primuth became CEO of visionSynergy, succeeding her father (and visionSynergy's founder), Phill Butler. Kärin's vision for collaboration has grown out of a wealth of international ministry experience, having worked in South Africa, India and China, and traveled to more than 25 countries. As the coordinator of a cross-cultural mentoring program for eight years, Kärin has developed a passion for equipping mission leaders with effective ministry skills. Prior to that, Kärin spent eight years working in the inner city of Los Angeles. Kärin has an M.A. in Urban Planning from the University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA), and a B.S. in Human Development and Social Policy from Northwestern University. She is married with three young adult children and lives in South Pasadena, CA.

Networks Are the Future Mission

A network diagram with orange lines and nodes is overlaid on a satellite image of Earth at night. The diagram consists of a central node connected to five other nodes, which are further connected to each other, forming a complex web. The background is a satellite image of Earth at night, showing city lights and the curvature of the planet.



IN THE LATE 1980's, David Barrett and James Reapsome published a book titled *Seven Hundred Plans to Evangelize the World*. In their book, they identified lack of cooperation and collaboration between Christian organizations as a major hindrance to world evangelization. Of all the hundreds of plans for global outreach they reviewed, 66% were completely stand-alone plans - each viewing itself as the sole center of world evangelization. The authors estimated that 96% of all plans for world evangelization ignored or disregarded other Christian traditions, leaving only 4% which sought to network or connect in any meaningful way with other Christian groups.¹

That was the state of world mission 30 years ago. The good news is that much has changed since then. God is now uniting the worldwide Church like never before to reach the unreached.

Over the past several decades, an increasingly interconnected and globalized world has given rise to hundreds of networks in every field of mission. Through these networks, ministries around the world are meeting, sharing information and resources, and collectively working together to respond to some of the greatest challenges and opportunities of our day. These mission networks are now playing a vital role in shaping Great Commission strategies and the future of the world mission movement.

Networks in Every Field of Mission

The landscape of mission networks today is staggering.

There are hundreds of networks around the world covering a wide variety of mission fields at global, regional, national, and local levels. Each network draws together dozens if not hundreds of individuals and organizations around common areas of interest - whether that is a focus on particular geographic areas, people groups, mission strategies, or other issues.

The resource website Linking Global Voices [linkingglobalvoices.com] currently tracks more than 500 different networks around the world. And many of these networks have sub-networks within them!

The Lausanne Movement [lausanne.org], as one example, is organized around 12 geographic networks and an array of 37 separate global issue networks - from the Buddhist World to Business As Mission, from Diasporas to Disability Concerns, from Leadership Development to Least Evangelized Peoples.

Some mission networks function primarily for information sharing, while others are highly participatory, with members contributing resources toward collaborative projects and commonly-defined goals. With such a tremendous range of opportunities for engagement, it should be no surprise that participation in networks is becoming a high priority for many mission leaders and organizations.

A growing number of churches, ministries, and mission organizations see their participation in networks as essential to making informed decisions and fulfilling their own calling.



Three Benefits of Participation

While there are many benefits of participation in networks, there are at least three key benefits that are driving the growth of mission networks around the world.

1. Networks provide access to vital information, resources, and best practices to inform mission strategy.

Participants in mission networks gain exposure to people who think differently from those inside their own ministries. Many networks draw from a breadth of different cultures, theological perspectives, and ministry methods. This leads to a broader and richer perspective for all participants.

Networks offer the most current and comprehensive view of how God is at work and who is involved in a particular ministry field. By bringing together people with a wide range of expertise, networks provide access to information not available within a single organization, even a large global mission agency. Networks provide a platform to aggregate best practices from across organizations, and to showcase what is working and learn from what is not working.

Connecting to these networks enables participants to more effectively shape their mission strategies in light of rapidly changing realities. Access to this kind of information can significantly increase ministry effectiveness by eliminating duplication and increasing cooperation. In addition, networks help reduce costs as


participants glean from what others are learning and utilize shared resources, rather than having to start from scratch to develop their own.

Network Spotlight

The “Muslim Internet Evangelism Network” (name changed for security reasons) is one example of a highly influential network focused on using the Internet and digital media for evangelism in the Muslim world. The network now has over 700 members from 35+ different countries and 70+ different organizations. At a recent network gathering, more than 30 participants were Arab, including many believers from Muslim backgrounds. This provides an excellent opportunity for the voice of national leaders from the region to be heard as attendees gather to explore new technology and assess Internet evangelism strategies focused on the Muslim world. The network has provided training for participants on cutting-edge social media and Internet evangelism approaches. Hundreds of resource-sharing partnerships and joint projects have been generated by the network over the years.

2. Networks provide opportunities to partner with the rapidly growing Church and expanding mission force of the Majority World.

Hans Rosling - famed Swedish doctor, professor of global health, and frequent TED Talks presenter - has



At the heart of every effective mission network is a vision to address a critical or strategic challenge that is beyond the scope of any single individual or organization.

said that if we want to update our mind-set, we must first update our data-set. Too many mission leaders are operating under false assumptions and outdated models. This is especially true when it comes to the current realities of mission sending.

The face of the mission sending world is changing dramatically as the center of gravity is shifting from the Western World to the Majority World. Those who were previously receivers of missionaries have now become some of the most vital mission-sending churches in the world. While North America and Europe still send many missionaries, mobilization efforts from the Majority World have experienced exponential growth in recent decades.

For example, Brazil, Korea, and India are among the top ten mission-sending countries. China has hopes of equipping 20,000 missionaries in the next twenty years. Nigeria has the fourth largest number of evangelical Christians in the world, and is one of the fastest-growing mission-sending countries. Over 20,000 Africans currently serve as missionaries outside their own countries.

In fact, this is a cause for great rejoicing! At the same time, these changing dynamics have left many mission organizations in the West struggling to understand their future role. One of the great benefits of global mission networks is the level playing field they provide. By participating in these networks, Western mission organizations now have the opportunity to genuinely

listen and learn from partners in the Majority World and to work together to clarify their unique contributions in the world mission movement.

Network Spotlight

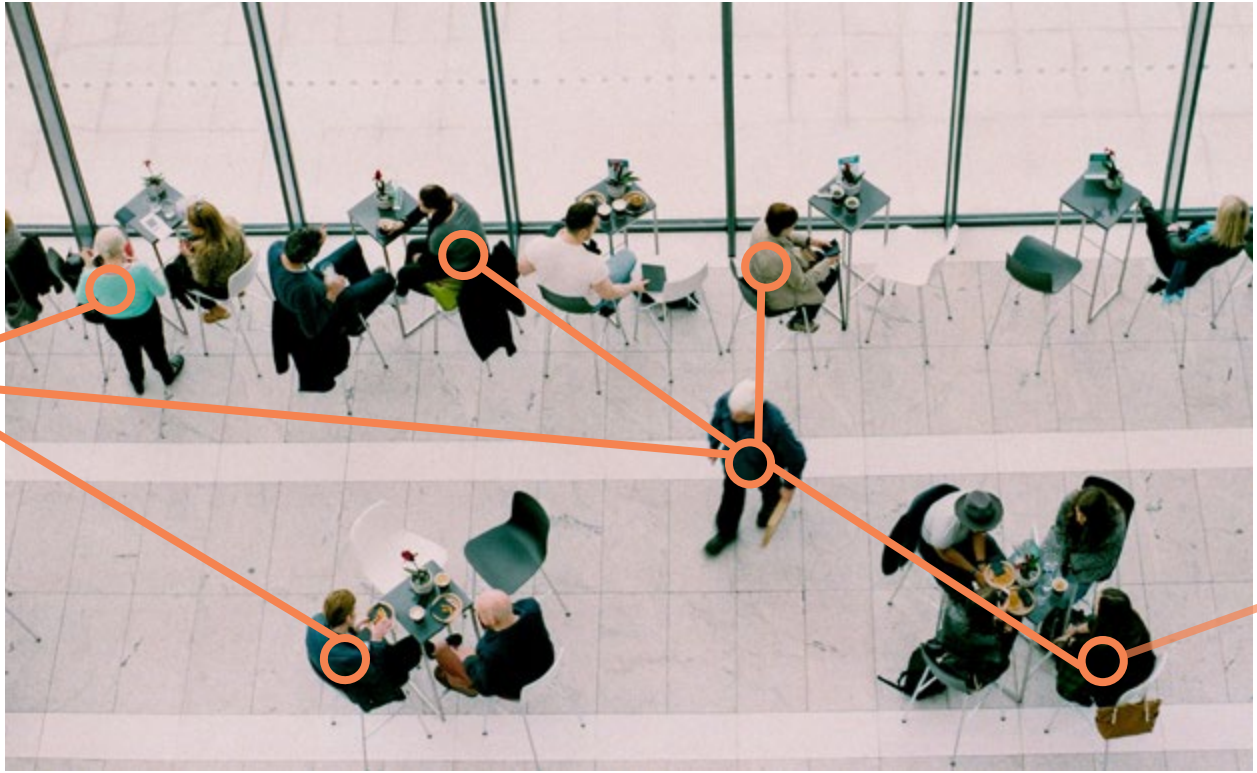
Many networks that were originally started by Western leaders now have significant participation and leadership by nationals. The “Central Asia Consultation”, for example, was originally started by Western individuals praying for that region. At a recent network gathering, they experienced a great moment of celebration when they realized that of the almost 400 attendees at the consultation more than 60% were nationals from the region. The leadership council of that network is now 90% nationals.

3. Networks enable participants to leverage their mutual strengths to accomplish more together than is possible by any individual or organization alone.

At the heart of every effective mission network is a vision to address a critical or strategic challenge that is beyond the scope of any single individual or organization. Networks create shared value through the intersection of ideas and expertise than can foster innovation, collaboration, and ultimately, Great Commission breakthroughs.

At a deeper level, these multicultural networks are one of the most visible and functional demonstrations of unity





in the Body of Christ. In a world that is increasingly divided by race, culture, and religious identity, networks create a means for the global Church to demonstrate a powerful witness through unity, love, and partnership.

Network Spotlight

Not long ago, the “Maghreb Network” (named changed for security reasons) was formed with a focus on an unreached North African country. This network has grown from 13 initial partners to now over 70 partners that are coordinating efforts to see a thriving indigenous Church in the country. Their early dream of placing just a handful of workers on the ground has now grown to an active facilitation team coordinating multiple working groups focused on business as mission, English as a Second Language, church planting, relief and development, and prayer. They share information on a secure website open only to network members, and coordinate in-country visits, projects, and employment opportunities.

This network provides a rich source of information and collaboration for workers on the ground, ministry leaders, donors, prayer supporters, and partnering churches. Recently, some national believers who are members of the network launched the very first online church for the handful of scattered believers in the country.

Four Positive Trends

There may still be thousands of mission groups and hundreds of thousands of local churches around the world who continue to go it alone in their ministry fields. Nevertheless, the good news is that collaboration is gradually becoming the default approach to ministry – from international mission agencies working together among the unreached to local churches working together in their communities.

There are four positive trends that point to a tectonic shift toward collaborative networks in the global mission community.



There is a growing awareness of and openness to networks and partnerships among churches, ministries, and mission organizations around the world.

1. Increasing awareness of networks

There is a growing awareness of and openness to networks and partnerships among churches, ministries, and mission organizations around the world.

2. Donors investing directly in partnerships

The mission funding community is shifting more of their kingdom investments toward projects initiated by networks and partnerships. Many major donors now explicitly ask grantees how they are working in partnership with others to accomplish the goals of their project proposals.

3. Inter-network cooperation

Many networks share common operational challenges. Increasingly, representatives of multiple networks are coming together to share knowledge and address issues particular to multilateral mission networks such as information security and regionalization.

4. Collaboration-friendly organizations

There are thousands of churches and mission organizations which participate in networks around the world. The same individuals or organizations are often involved in multiple networks. The growing number of these collaboration-friendly organizations is a tremendous sign that the mission community is shifting to a new future.

Three Steps to Involvement

As God continues to unite the Church to fulfill the

Great Commission, networks will have an increasingly vital role to play. If you are a church or ministry leader and are not yet involved in a mission network, take time to explore where you could both benefit and contribute.

Here are three practical steps to intentional involvement in high-impact mission networks.

Step 1. Take a look through a “microscope” - Internally assess which of your mission priorities would most benefit from network participation.

Are you considering expansion into new fields and need a better sense of what’s really happening in the region? Who is there, and what resources are needed? Do you have emerging issues in which you don’t have expertise and you need to find others who do? Identify areas where you do have expertise and consider who else you can connect with to potentially collaborate.

Step 2. Take a look through a “telescope” - Externally assess what high-impact networks already exist and who would be the best representative for participation.

Not all networks are truly effective. Not all have strong leadership structures or are effectively working toward shared goals. Talk to people you know who are involved in networks and find out the value they have gained or not. Visit network consultations and find out what’s happening.

Be intentional to provide your best and brightest for the greatest kingdom contributions but don’t appoint

someone to get involved in a network without making their participation part of their job description so they have the capacity to really contribute.

Step 3. Take a look through a “kaleidoscope” - Develop a collaboration-friendly culture that actively engages in mission networks.

High-impact networks need dedicated leaders who have the time to commit to the network. That can only happen if their various organizations are willing to give some portion of personnel time to the network because they can see how the goals of the network would also advance the goals of their organization.

High-impact networks also need sustainable resources. If more mission organizations really understood the power of networks to leverage kingdom resources, they would be allocating more funding and other non-monetary resources to networks to help them accomplish their shared goals.

Moving to the Center

If you're already involved in a network, then consider what steps you can take to move closer to the center, where you will find greater value and also make a greater contribution toward helping the network achieve its vision.

So how do you move to the center of a network and gain access to that value? First, you have to know clearly why you are there so you can set your priorities.

It begins with asking two key questions:


First, what is it that you or your organization need that this network might provide? Is it information, resources, or specific skills? By having a clear understanding of what you need, you will have a better chance of finding people in the network who can help you. If those people don't have what you need, they will likely know someone who does. Networks are valuable not only because of the people who are in them, but because of the people those people know and can connect you with.

Second, what can you contribute? Can you give time, leadership, expertise, organizational resources, information, or personnel? The more willing you are to contribute, the more quickly you will connect with others who also need what you have to offer. And all of

that moves you more quickly to the center, where you will have the greatest opportunities for connections and access to important resources. By understanding what you need, you can prioritize finding people who can help you.

As you explore and engage more deeply in mission networks, I am sure you will become convinced as I am that Christians are called to work together and that partnership is the single best strategy for addressing the most pressing needs in the world today. Collaboration is the key that reduces the duplication of our efforts, maximizes the impact of our ministries, and strengthens the credibility of our witness for Christ.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - I in them and you in me - so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

John 17:20-23 

Resources

Information about network advisory services and resources: visionsynergy.net

Free handbook on mission partnerships available in multiple languages: bit.do/wellconnected

Online learning community for network leaders: synergycommons.net

Information about global, regional, country, and issue networks: linkingglobalvoices.com

¹ Robb, J. (1999). The Field Based Network. Retrieved 31 July 2015 from <http://www.webcitation.org/6aQBVq5Fk>



A Survey of Kingdom Collaboration

FEATURE ARTICLE

“There is no other way society will achieve large-scale progress against urgent and complex problems, unless a collective approach becomes the accepted way of doing business.”

-Stanford Institute of Social Innovation Journal, Spring 2012

BY **PHILL BUTLER**

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Author and internationally acknowledged expert in partnerships and strategic alliances, Phill has led the way in developing missional partnerships among Christian organizations in more than 70 countries for nearly three decades. Phill is the founder and current Senior Strategic Advisor of visionSynergy, and was the previous founder and director of Interdev and Intercristo. In his earlier years, Phill was an international radio and news correspondent with ABC News.

What's the Challenge?

All cultures have both idealized and realized values. These values represent the way things ought to be and the way they really are. Near the top of the list of Christian idealized values is the vision Jesus gives His followers in John 17:21-23—"That they may all be one as you and I are one, so that the world may know that you have sent me."¹ The distance between what we hope for in Kingdom collaboration and the way things really are often create tension, disappointment, and even disillusionment. But there is real cause for hope!

Historical Context and Previous Models

Over the decades a number of ingredients at the field level have opened hearts and minds to cooperation as an alternative to Western paradigms of individualism: Distance from home constituencies (read: difficulty for sponsors to look over your shoulder); an awareness of limited resources in the face of overwhelming need; a sense of a lack of effectiveness, if not failure; intense isolation; and an acute awareness of Satanic opposition.

In North America, mission agencies originally came together in the IFMA (Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association, and the EFMA (Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies), finally merging into Missio Nexus—now with 261 mission agencies, over 70 churches, and 200+ individuals as members.

The World Evangelical Alliance Missions Commission (WEAMC, <https://mc.worldea.org/>) with an international leadership team spread across nine regions has nearly dozens of associated national mission alliances. Reflecting the vitality and scale of non-Western initiative, the India Missions Association has over 254 members!

Change In The Wind

Following its launch at the historic 1974 meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, the Lausanne Movement has linked individuals rather than organizations. In face of a World Council of Churches in decline, Lausanne's power was the core call of evangelical theology and evangelism expressed in a twin commitment to holism (the Lausanne Covenant) and the awareness of unreached peoples (Ralph Winter's singular contribution to the 1974 Lausanne Congress). The Lausanne Movement

provided a safe haven for many individuals who shared these commitments but found little, if any, resonance in their own denominational or organizational structures. Today, the Lausanne Movement (www.lausanne.org) is home to a range of evangelism-related consultations, links global leaders across twelve regions, and is home to 36 "Issue Networks" involving hundreds of leaders across dozens of countries.

Revolutionary forces—the ease and lowering of costs of communications, the advent of the internet and, more recently, social media—combined with the growing ease and lowering costs of transportation—accelerated a powerful trend identified in the 1970s and 80s: the shift of power of social structures from the center to the edges.

In the evangelical missions community this was expressed in a range of non-traditional initiatives, outside of formal church-related structures including:

- Intersociety's "Urbana" missions events with thousands of college students connecting, typically, with up to 150 cooperating mission agencies, finding their way into significant international service.
- The revolutionary Interchristo initiative that collaboratively brought over 2,000 mission and Christian service agencies together across the U.S., the UK, France, and Germany to more effectively connect individuals who wanted to serve with specific global opportunities. Initially criticized for its groundbreaking use of computers, Interchristo linked tens of thousands of individuals to naturally-related field work over its 40-year life.
- And the 1986 birth of the intentional, multi-agency, partnership approach to unreached people pioneered by Interdev. From an initial meeting of a dozen ministries in Malaga, Spain over the following 16 years the movement spawned strategic evangelism partnerships in over 90 languages where previously that had not been a single nationally-led church.
- Possibly more important, the 1980s partnership movement provided a model for replicable collaborative work by evangelicals across challenging, diverse theological, linguistic, and cultural lines. Rooted in the replicability of the vision, partnership



From an initial meeting of a dozen ministries in Malaga, Spain over the following 16 years the movement spawned strategic evangelism partnerships in over 90 languages

development training, from the early 90s through 2003, helped hundreds gain the understanding and skills to facilitate durable collaboration.

While all of this was happening, the 'modern missionary movement' dating back 100+ years was producing extraordinary fruit. The church of Asia, Africa, and Latin America was looking at the world and their responsibility in new ways. In time, hundreds of non-western missionaries began arriving in the field so that Western and Non-Western missionaries were meeting around a common vision. To realize the vision, partnership or other forms of collaboration were the natural way forward.

Also, regionally, like-minded non-Western church and mission leaders were forming new collaborative structures to advance the cause of missions – sharing information, best practices, and encouragement.

MANI (Movement For African National Initiatives) links those across both Anglophone and Francophone Africa. COMIBAM links the Spanish and Portuguese language missions community in the Americas and Europe. And these were barely the tip of the iceberg.

Variations On The Theme – The Collaborative Vision Grows

As the number of language-specific or people group-specific partnerships grew, annual regional consultations sprang up to link partnership leaders. As the next level of collaboration, these regional consultations provided opportunity for people from within the region to meet, share experiences and resources. They were also a natural forum for those from outside the region who had interests inside the region. More than a dozen of these annual consultations emerged, from French-speaking West Africa across to Southeast Asia.

In the greater Middle East and Central Asia alone, four of these annual regional evangelism consultations currently attract over 1,000 participants annually!

But the explosion of collaborative initiatives in recent years is probably best seen in the remarkable recent compilation of mission networks and partnerships consistently updated at the web site, www.linkingglobalvoices.com. Assembled and maintained by Eldon Porter, consultant with the WEA's Missions Commission, the site has over 500 missions-focused networks, partnerships and other specific collaborative entities.

From 180+ member networks focused on Muslim ministry to global networks dealing with church planting and digital media-based evangelism strategies, without exception, even the most specialized of these Kingdom-focused networks represent the strategic meeting point for what is now the global church mission force.

Collaboration Increasingly Defined By Specific Focus

The trends of collaboration today have naturally coalesced around major challenges: linguistic (specific language groups), geographic (countries or regions), and functional (specialized issues that cut across linguistic and geographical boundaries such as media/communications, orality, individuals at risk, Scripture translation and distribution, relief and development, refugees, etc.).

But the revolution in communications technology has facilitated a further innovation in collaboration: In the West, a growing number of local churches connect around their common interests in language groups or countries and then link directly with partnerships or networks in the field. Face to face relationships of understanding and trust are still vital for effective, durable collaboration. Yet, for many elements of collaboration distance is now almost meaningless.


What Of The Future?

- The hundreds of 'ad hoc' digital and other media-based evangelism initiatives must find ways to more effectively listen to and collaborate with national and international workers on the ground – at the

grass roots where the real action must always occur.

- Over 600,000 college students study in a foreign country. While a range of initiatives seek to reach these future influentials before they return to their home country, total impact could be greatly increased by more intentional collaboration among international student ministries.
- Faced with both voluntary and forced migration on an unprecedented scale the church must find ways to more effectively collaborate to serve and reach these groups. In 2015 over a million refugees arrived in Europe. In 2016 over 135,000 more arrived – almost all from highly-contested, high-priority areas like Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. It's estimated 50+ million Chinese live outside of China; more Mongolians live outside the country than inside.
- The global Church's relief and development agencies' impact would be greatly strengthened by functional networks that facilitate comprehensive coordination by the global church in times of national or international disaster. Tragic events of the last three decades demonstrate the potential such coordination could have in increasing effectiveness and credibility for the gospel by being in place before disaster strikes.

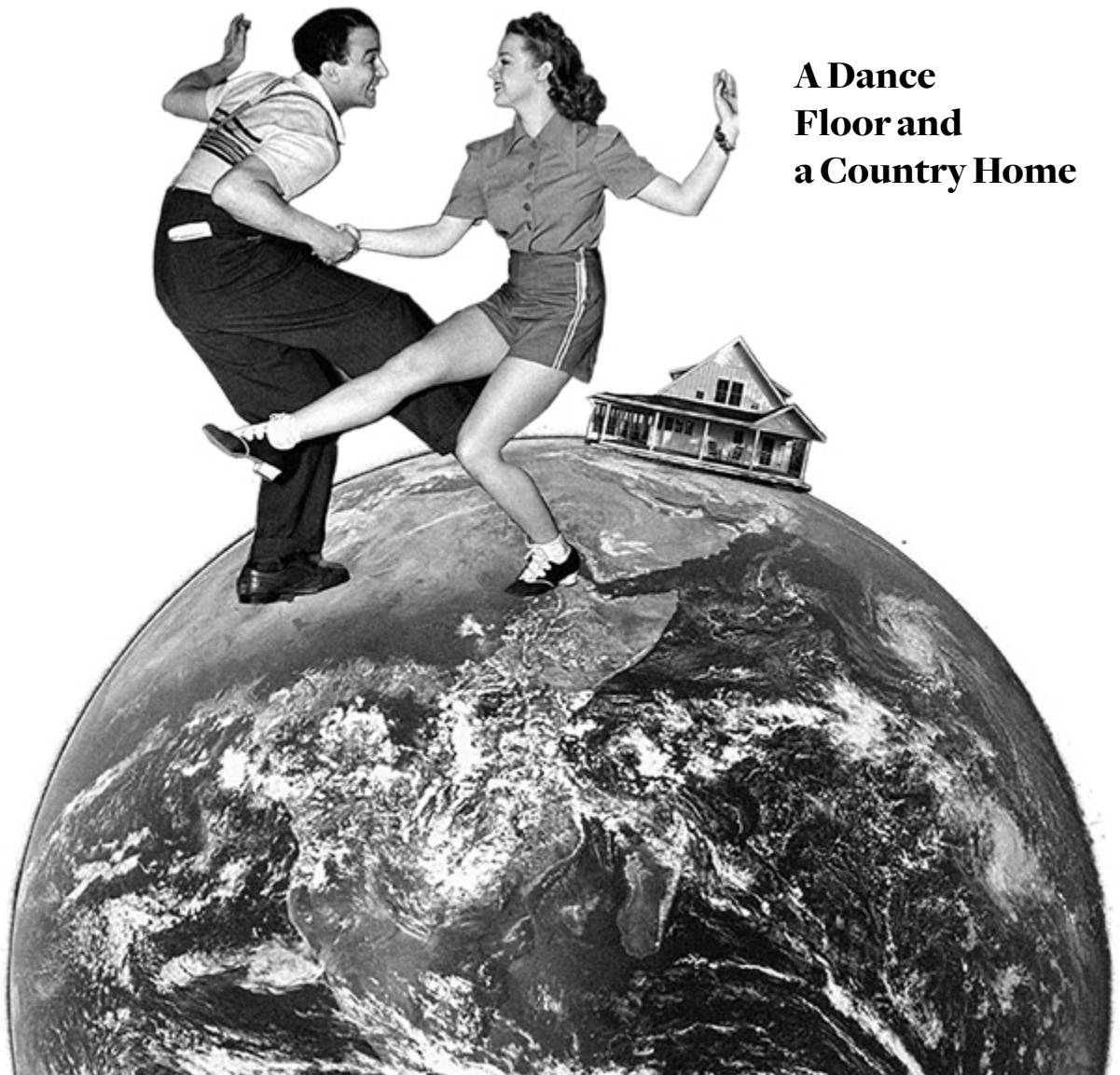
Is Collaboration the “New Normal?”

Across international development, agriculture, higher education, pharmaceutical research, and business, collaboration is considered the 'new normal'.² The global missions community is no different. It is now radically more connected than it was 50 years ago. Sociological trends, globalization, the rapidly growing global Church, prayer, and the sovereign work of the Lord of the Harvest have all played a part. While enormous challenge and opportunity is yet ahead, no matter what your role in the frontier mission movement, these remarkable trends can only be good news. 

¹ Extensive articles on the theological/Biblical basis for collaboration can be found on the resource web site www.synergycommons.net

² See as an example “Collaboration As The New Normal” <http://thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/collaboration-is-the-new-normal/>

NETWORKS & GLOBAL MISSIONS



A Dance Floor and a Country Home

FEATURE ARTICLE

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Eldon was raised in Africa and served in Latin America for 25 years. He researches the unique role that networks play in addressing the challenges of partnering in the “from anywhere to everywhere” mission paradigm. He serves as a consultant for global engagement to network and mission agency leaders.

Networks are organic by nature, often times started over a cup of coffee, and they are constantly changing.

WE LIVE IN AN UNPRECEDENTED period of mission history. The new paradigm of “from anywhere to everywhere” is by nature complex, resulting in an increasing need to partner with others for effective ministry. Networks are becoming a strategic tool for ministry leaders navigating the complexities of the globalized world of missions. To appreciate the significance of networks and how one should engage them, one must first understand the driving forces behind the paradigm shift as well as the challenges traditional western agencies are facing as they seek to adjust to this new reality.

The Challenge for Traditional Agencies

Traditional western agencies have a unique challenge in adjusting to the new reality, to become “partnership friendly.” Their structures and policies were developed primarily during the old “from the West to the rest” paradigm, when partnering with a non-western missions movement was not an option. While each agency is unique, there are some general trends as these agencies move toward greater relevance. Each of these trends positions the agency to better function in a partnership rich environment.

The first trend is a new focus on pulling rather than just pushing or sending out missionaries. Most western agencies were called “sending agencies” because of the focus on sending out missionaries, whereas today the greater value is the agency’s ability to receive or pull those sent by others into a ministry context. The second trend is the movement away from working as a self-contained entity to working in partnerships with others, both parties achieving something neither could do

alone. The third trend is with the systems and policies of an agency. With the diversity of the global Church comes the need to move from uniformity towards flexibility. And lastly, perhaps the most significant trend of all, is that western agencies are redefining themselves not so much as a club that others can join but rather as a network of individuals and ministries focused on accomplishing a cause, always welcoming new partners. While this move from club to cause has profound implications on the agency’s economic engine and its understanding of membership, it is essential to becoming partnership friendly.

The Role of Networks

Understanding the global dynamics and the challenge that traditional agencies face, we turn our attention now to networks and their strategic role. Networks are organic by nature, often times started over a cup of coffee, and they are constantly changing. The website www.LinkingGlobalVoices.com serves as a resource for those working with networks, tracking over five hundred networks globally.

Networks take different forms but are essentially an intentional coming together of independent entities around something they share in common. A partnership, on the other hand, is when two or more parties that know each other agree to cooperate to reach a mutually agreed upon objective. Healthy networks are continually birthing productive partnerships.

There are two basic categories of networks. The first is those that are geographically defined and the second is those defined by a specific issue. Geographically defined networks are made up of the evangelical

alliances of a particular country or region as well as the mission networks tied to those same particular areas. Most alliances are nested under the World Evangelical Alliance. The mission networks represent either a mission movement originating from a particular country or region or a mission force focused on unreached areas. Linking Global Voices provides a listing of these networks as they fall under the tabs for Global/Regional and Country Networks.

The second category of networks is for those defined by a particular issue such as reaching Buddhists, working with nomadic peoples, or using media in restricted countries. Note that there are different kinds of issue networks. Networks such as the International Orality Network and Honor/Shame focus on a particular concept and help ministry practitioners understand and apply it. On the other hand, a network like the Refugee Highway Partnership brings together those around the world who focus on the task of serving refugees. Linking Global Voices provides a listing of the different kinds of issue networks.

Issue networks, in particular, are being recognized as the best platform for providing leadership in a globalized world and the best space for global engagement. Individuals from around the world who work with media gather together at the EMDC. Sports ministry specialists meet up at

the International Sports Coalition. World Without Orphans pulls together those leading ministries to orphans. Note that expertise on an issue is now associated with the networking of practitioners more so than with individuals who claim to be experts.

Network Involvement - Two Analogies

There are two things to consider as you engage with the dynamic and constantly evolving world of networks. The first is to discern the health of a network and the second is to know how to build and implement a strategy for network engagement. There are two helpful analogies that illustrate these points.

A Healthy Network: A network owns little more than its platform. People are free to come and go as they wish. A healthy network empowers and equips its clients for effective ministry. An unhealthy network, more often than not, is led by someone who wants to use the network to promote himself or to control others. When considering the health of a network, think of it as a “dance floor” and consider how the dance floor owners manage their business.

Take for example a network of ministries focused on a particular issue. Those ministries associated with the issue are the network’s primary clients. A healthy network will understand who these clients are and their challenges and

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prepare their dance floor in such a way so as to attract them to the dance. In addition to inviting their primary clients, they will also draw in their secondary clients. These are networks focused on issues related in some way to the world of the primary client. For a network of ministries serving those who have been trafficked, the network leaders will build intentional connections with those networks representing trauma counseling, BAM opportunities, and church alliances that can pull local bodies of believers into relationships with this needy population. The network strengthens its platform by ensuring that the right people are on the dance floor so the primary clients are equipped and empowered for more effective ministry.

Network/dance floor leaders have three other tools at their disposal. First, they control the music that is played. The music represents values such as mutual respect, striving for excellence and building trust in order to foster collaboration. The leaders also have a spotlight to highlight those that dance well, who serve as examples for others. And finally, the leaders have a microphone that they offer to key individuals who have expertise to share.

Developing a Network Engagement Strategy: One of the most important tasks of a mission leader today is to develop their agency's network engagement strategy. Those that do not have a clear strategy end up attending events but never really benefiting as they could.


Every agency is unique and a healthy understanding of one's identity is the foundation for developing an engagement strategy. It is an agency's vision, doctrinal statement, core values, ministry priorities, strengths, and even weaknesses that serve as the point of reference for developing a network engagement strategy.

Imagine hundreds of country homes scattered across an open field. Each home represents a network. Some are evangelical alliances, others mission networks, and still others are issue-specific networks. Each house has a large porch stretching across the front of the house with several rocking chairs where one can relax. In addition to the porch, each house has a living room, a dining room, and a kitchen. Moving from the outside towards the center of the house represents degrees of engagement with a particular network. Each agency must decide which houses to approach and to what

degree they will engage. Sometimes it will require that an executive leader is the engagement agent, but often it will be the ministry practitioners.

Having carefully selected the houses/networks with which to engage, the individual settles into the rocking chair on the porch to listen to the discussions in the living room through the open windows. This is the first degree of engagement and would include reading about the network from a website or subscribing to the network's communications. It is at this point that one can assess the health of the network. If it is decided wise to engage at a deeper level, then it is time to walk into the house through the front door and sit in the living room. This is where you visit with others attracted to the network, perhaps attending an event. Some consider this level of engagement to be sufficient and simply participate in event activities with the goal of networking with fellow participants.

But the real value of networks takes place at the next two degrees of involvement. Serious dialogue and reflection on critical issues happens around the dining room table. At this level, the participants cooperate on research and evaluation of issues critical to the core identity of the network. Those sitting around these tables become recognized as the authorities on the particular issue and in many cases have greater impact on ministry practitioners than do agency leaders. And if the network is of strategic value, the agency might decide to move to level four and offer that one of their missionaries move into the kitchen to work as one of the cooks or network leaders. The cooks prepare the food, know when to serve it, and seek to nourish and empower network members. Investing in the leadership of a network multiplies the impact an agency can achieve.

Networks are assuming a critical role in the new "from anywhere to everywhere" global paradigm of missions. It is imperative that agency leaders understand the value of networks and develop and implement an effective network engagement strategy. 



BY **JOHN BECKER**

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John Becker is the International Coordinator of the Vision 5:9 Network and the Director of Ministries for AIM International. He has been serving unreached peoples in Africa, Europe, and North America for the past 22 years and is passionate about launching collaborative missional efforts. John takes great joy in sharing the love of Jesus with people of other faiths, especially those displaced by war or violence. He currently lives in California with his wife and four children.



The Big Question

“What will it take to see effective church-planting efforts among all Muslim peoples?” That was the burning question that led to the birth of the Vision 5:9 network in 2002. The year before a handful of organizations began to discuss the need for collaboration regarding the remaining Muslim unreached people groups (MUPGs).

At the time, we had a very incomplete picture of the extent of the Muslim world – where the Church was and wasn’t. It was the conference called Singapore 2002, Advancing Strategies of Closure among All Unreached Peoples, which provided a perfect opportunity to take the conversation further. During the “Muslim World” focus track, two key objectives came out: 1) discover the state of the gospel in the Muslim world, and 2) learn what church planting strategies are bearing fruit.

What’s in a Name?

Vision 5:9 gets its name from Revelation 5:9, the prophetic end time declaration proclaiming, “You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood purchased for God members of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (TNIV). Our name came from this vision of Heaven that included every Muslim people group, and a need to mask the identity of the network: Vision 5:9.

We understood the challenge of bringing leaders together to divulge sensitive information. I’ll never forget the second meeting with 17 leaders from ten

organizations sitting around a table and asked to share where their teams were serving. It was like pulling teeth. People kept their cards close to their chest, not knowing how safe it was to share these organizational secrets.

Forging Friendship

God set us on the right course to achieve what we believed was our calling, and that was friendship. At the outset, the leadership modeled this by intentionally doing life together. We found ourselves in each other’s homes and doing trips together. We ensured that every meeting included time to pray, walk, talk and laugh. This remains one of the strengths of our network, which has enabled us to keep ‘at it’ together as we continue to grow and evolve.

Setting Vision and Objectives

While most organizations were asking the question “What can our agency do to reach Muslims?” Vision 5:9 enabled us to ask the macro strategic question: “What must be done to reach all Muslim peoples?” This question pushed our individual agencies beyond the boundaries of their own organization, resources, and capabilities to a global, kingdom perspective. The whole church must be mobilized to reach the whole Muslim world. After much discussion, our clear vision statement emerged: Vision 5:9 exists to see effective church planting efforts among all Muslim peoples. This vision was accompanied by four objectives:

1. Facilitating effective church planting among

Between 2007 and the present, our membership grew from 18 organizations to 175, and these represent over 12,000 church planters, 17 denominations, 32 networks, from around 40 sending nations.

all Muslim peoples through inter-agency and international sharing of resources, cross-pollination of fruitful approaches, and joint church planting efforts

2. Encouraging and helping to catalyze mobilization and equipping of the global church to disciple all Muslim peoples in our generation
3. Researching the state of the gospel in the Muslim world and verifying what actually is happening or not happening
4. Monitoring and evaluating our progress

Global Reach

It was strikingly obvious as we began to push into this strategic question that we were hardly representing the breadth of church planting. We set goals to increase participation from the Global South. We also determined that, to achieve our objectives, we needed to gather as many leaders and practitioners as possible to learn what God was doing. We divided ourselves into work groups and set a date two years out to host a global gathering. Two of these groups became core to the movement: Global Trends which compiled the database of MUPGs and engagement progress and relevant trends impacting ministry; and Fruitful Practices which facilitated research on how churches were growing

among Muslim background believers.¹

Making History

Vision 5:9 sponsored a historic consultation in South East Asia in March 2007 which gathered 500 men and women from around the world. The consultation focused on developments in church planting among MUPGs and which people groups were still beyond the reach of any church planting effort. There were participants from 46 nationalities with experience living among 149 Muslim peoples. A total of 78 organizations and affiliations were represented. During the five-day consultation, we collected 100 interviews and notes from 25 discussion groups that met. (For more, read: *From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues Among Muslims*.)²

Growing Pains

In the year following the consultation, visionSynergy helped us wrestle through questions about the appropriate structure to facilitate increased global representation and the birthing of regional networks and partnerships.

Between 2007 and the present, our membership grew from 18 organizations to 175, and these represent over 12,000 church planters, 17 denominations, 32 networks, from around 40 sending nations.

The network is led by a steering team of highly committed leaders. This diverse team of 18 men and women from multiple organizations and nationalities works on behalf of the entire network in overseeing the vision, regional expressions, and task forces. Each of these leaders has a significant leadership role within their own organizations.

Having a committed leadership enabled us to clarify the network vision and priorities. As we progressed, we chose to restate our vision as: Reproducing churches of reproducing disciples growing in faith and truth among all Muslim peoples. Our mission is to expedite and accelerate engagement of all Muslim peoples through effective disciple-making and church-planting efforts. By the grace of God, we strive to see this become a reality by the year 2025.

How are we doing?

We are encouraged with over 300 new engagements of previously unengaged MUPGs started since 2008. We rejoice that Jesus is being proclaimed in more groups, but we continue to be troubled that as much as 48% of the 2,084 MUPGs continue to be unengaged. Our immediate priority is to provide church planting teams for the 163 unengaged MUPGs that are at least 100,000 in size and comprise 80% of the total population of all the unengaged.

The reality that God is doing something new in our day among Muslims has heightened the need for even greater collaboration, especially in the following areas:³

- Global prayer movements need to be mobilized.
- Muslim women and children continue to have the least access to the gospel and so we initiated a family task force to catalyze family to family ministry.
- The proximate church among the Muslim majority has both the greatest challenge and opportunity and so we are working to catalyze prayer, vision casting, and regional-specific equipping in fruitful practices.
- Movements exist in every region; however, there are still areas significantly under-reached and so we are bolstering collaboration for focused engagement in places like South Asia and the Sahel.

- The ever-increasing Muslim diaspora is a huge opportunity and so we have created networks in Europe (DPE) and North America (Medina) to catalyzing collaborative disciple-making.⁴


Outcomes

Not all outcomes are easily measured. However, they tell stories of impact that go deep. A few years ago, one African leader of a movement of 500+ Muslim background fellowships said Vision 5:9 gave him a place at the table with international leaders. He found his voice there, and he is forever grateful.

After the horrific martyrdom of Korean missionaries in Afghanistan, the Korean mission movement was stifled and timid to engage in the Muslim world. Vision 5:9 seeded the creation of the Islam Partnership of Korea to help provide a forum for dialogue, best practice, and encouragement towards ongoing engagement of the Muslim world.

Abide and Bear Fruit

We believe the time has come again to gather as a global church around ministry to Muslims. As a result, in October 2017 we will host Abide and Bear Fruit: Global Consultation on Ministry to Muslims. We are expecting 1,200 practitioners with about 25% Muslim Background Believers who will lead the conversations and shape the outcomes. (For more information, write registration@abidebearfruit.org.)

We believe in kingdom breakthroughs in the Muslim World, but for this to happen we need collaboration because the work is too great for any one church, agency, or denomination. For this, we need a healthy and effective network of people. And now we're seeing the growth of such a network: Vision 5:9. 

¹ The Fruitful Practice Research project has conducted interviews with over 250 workers on 100 teams, 650 surveys, spanning 70 countries, among 50+ MUPGs over a span of 8 years.

² From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues Among Muslims, edited by J. Dudley Woodberry, William Carey: 2008.

³ For more information about Vision 5:9's 7in4 Strategic Plan, write to info@vision59.com.

⁴ Diaspora Peoples in Europe (DPE) and Muslim Diaspora in North America (MeDINA).



COLLABORATION *ACCELERATES* CHURCH PLANTING

| FEATURE ARTICLE



BY **MURRAY MOERMAN**

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Murray Moerman has served as church planter, pastor, mission strategist and partnership developer. He is a founding member of GCPN and currently lives in Canada with his wife Carol, their 5 married children and 6 grandchildren. He is a staff member of Outreach Canada which is part of the OC Global Alliance.



THE GLOBAL CHURCH PLANTING NETWORK (GCPN) took its first public step in 2009 when two leaders from each continent gathered in the UK to wrestle with the question: “What is the ‘cork in the bottle’ hindering church planting in your continent and what could we do together to accelerate church planting?” A vision and strategy was birthed which continues to grow, sharpen and be refined.

The following year 100 leaders met in Delhi, including: Dinah, a church planter working in the rain forests of Madagascar; Karl, an expat team leader serving the southern cone of Africa; and Aychi, a dynamic CPM trainer living in Ethiopia. The three represented separate organizations without formal connection.

In their initial casual conversation, Dinah shared the great potential, but slow progress, among the 6,000 animist villages he had surveyed along the east coast of Madagascar. Five churches had been planted in the traditional mode with which he was familiar. Karl proposed they invite Aychi to come to train new disciples in Madagascar in a new way of planting. Aychi agreed and 45 potential planters were trained in the CPM/DMM principles of prayerfully seeking out persons of peace with whom to initiate Discovery Bible Groups.

By the end of 2011 the recently trained church planters, fresh out of the harvest, had planted 1550 small disciple-making groups with 2 and 3 spiritual

“generations” of churches. By the end of 2015 this number had grown to 5,000 disciple-making groups with 6 spiritual “generations.” In this process additional villages were discovered and CPM/DMM ventures were initiated into three additional tribes who had previously been unfriendly to each other.

New challenges being faced by planters out of the harvest were personal and economic. They began to travel further and to be away from their families and garden plots for longer and longer periods of time. This in turn led to family morale issues and less productive gardens required for growing food. Dinah and Karl collaborated with South African businessmen to bring training and resources for micro-businesses in the rainforest. These small businesses in turn provided economic diversification and resources to support local planters in their travels to engage adjoining tribes.

Today the jungle continues to be transformed by the gospel. Fear of demons is being overcome by confidence in the authority of Christ over unclean spirits. Cruel tribal rituals are being abandoned and tribal warfare is nearly eliminated. Villages are experiencing an improving standard of living. The shalom of the gospel is bringing peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The work isn’t finished. There are 7 million people

There are 7 million people in this section of mountainous rainforest, now a staggering 270,000 followers of Christ. Their new objective is planting 10,000 more churches.

in this section of mountainous rainforest, now a staggering 270,000 followers of Christ. Their new objective is planting 10,000 more churches.

GCPN Profile

Let's "zoom out" a bit. GCPN is a relational network of gifted and motivated leaders who have key roles at a national level or are organizational / network leaders. The shared commitment is to initiating, broadening or accelerating disciple-making and church planting. This is taking place in the context of 15 primary geographic regions and additional sub-regions.

Regional teams pursue goals in prayer mobilization, team development, training, strategic information gathering and mobilization of church planters. The regional teams are also involved in a broad range of issues from supporting persecuted nationals, partnership development, national church planting processes and networking those committed to the vision of a church within walking distance of every person in the world. We are also involved in resourcing global communication, coaching & mentoring with very limited finances and a small facilitation team for coordination.

GCPN meets globally generally every second year for encouragement, networking, sharing new ideas for crosspollenization and training. Following Delhi, GCPN met in Istanbul (2011), Chiang Mai (2012), Budapest (2014) and Batam, Indonesia (2016).

Participants are invited, not simply to a working conference focusing on their region, but to a long term active commitment to a team with shared goals and accountability. Progress on team objectives is updated twice a year for prayer and encouragement.

In addition, teams, ministry objectives, spiritual opposition, practical challenges and personal needs are shared and lifted to the Lord in quarterly days of prayer and fasting for a greater harvest.

GCPN Regional Team Initiatives

Some regional teams have been collaborating on shared objectives for several years and it has been a joy to see the diversity and boldness expressed in the initiatives taken.

In South East Asia an international team led by Judah Cantoria gathers national teams from 10 nations annually for peer-learning among national church planting leaders. Nation-to-nation resourcing is ongoing towards a broad regional 'TORCH' goal of 520,000 churches in the region by 2020. The next gathering of national process teams is planned for January 2018.

A similar expanding process is underway in Europe led by team leader Oivind Augland, currently involving leaders from 12 nations in a highly relational process. When national teams gather in Berlin in February 2018, Oivind is anticipating 20-25 nations will be engaged.




In South Asia team leader Ronald Gier is overseeing a challenging process which involves viewing India as five countries, placing DMM master trainers in each to ensure a proportionate saturation level of trainers and planters in every state. A similar vision for Bangladesh is, at this point, in an earlier stage with three regions engaged in the formation of coordinating teams and training planned for the remaining two regions very soon.

Smaller teams in the Middle East and Turkic world train, encourage and work to build trust in difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances. There are very encouraging church planting activities in Algeria & Morocco and new underground movement in Afghanistan & Pakistan.

A facilitation team of members from every continent normally meets every six weeks by internet to pray, hear reports, address challenges and plan forward. The facilitation team is coached by seasoned leaders through www.visionsynergy.net.

GCPN is also in the process of strengthening bonds and practical strategies with the Global Alliance for Church

Multiplication (GACX).

First steps in this process between two global networks include collaboration with GCPN in its Batam, Indonesia (2016) global gathering bringing together 175 leaders from 45 nations and 75 organizations for strategic planning, and a limited number of regional initiatives currently underway. 

Connections for Collaboration

Additional information is available at www.gcpn.info.

If you wish to receive GCPN updates please send your email address to info@gcpn.info, or to receive prayer requests, to prayer@gcpn.info.

A brief video overview is available at [www.gcpn.info/purpose/GCPN Overview.mp4](http://www.gcpn.info/purpose/GCPN%20Overview.mp4)



GETTING PAST THE MYTHS OF PARTNERING

| FEATURE ARTICLE

BY **BRIAN O'CONNELL**

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Brian O'Connell is the CEO of REACT Services which catalyzes, facilitates, and coaches global networks and partnerships in partnering strategies as they work among the most vulnerable and least reached peoples of the world. Current issue-based global networks with which they are engaged address refugees, orphan care, vulnerable children, persecuted Christians, sports, disaster response, and unreached peoples.

The reality is that employees have collaborated daily at the water cooler, at lunch, in the office, and by email. It just wasn't named.

Just a few key things can make the difference between a distinctive, excellent organization and an average, ordinary one. These might be specific core values or a particular focus. But in 21st century ministry, it has to include the commitment and ability to partner well with others. Not surprisingly, partnership and collaboration are now major buzz words in the mission enterprise.

Organizations and businesses are using collaboration tools to solve internal challenges of redundancy and external problems of risk and resource scarcity. Recent polls and trends show that inner organizational collaboration tops the list of organizational priorities. Everyone is seeking to decrease costs and increase income. In addition, external partnering with other agencies can help elicit innovation and achieve even greater outcomes.

Why is partnering even more important in missions today? “For us, the main reason is that the fresh challenges we are facing – whether developing organizational strategy or responding to the accelerated change in our world – are more complex than they have ever been,” one senior missions CEO told me. “They seem to require a variety of new skill sets, perspectives, and approaches and need a lot of pieces to come together smoothly for meaningful success.”

Most leaders apparently want to be involved in partnership (or at least they say they do). The frustration many feel is that they just do not know how to move it forward. Your organization may be considering a new partnership or seeking to expand and deepen an existing partnership. In either case, your next steps derive from your operating assumptions.

So, before you jump off the partnering cliff (or even if you already have), keep in mind these four myths of partnering in order to make sure you don't end up in dangerous waters.

Myth #1: Collaboration and Partnering is New

Collaboration has existed since early man learned to hunt in groups. Partnering is not new yet a lot of hype suggests it is just now being introduced (especially internally with web-based tools). The reality is that employees have collaborated daily at the water cooler, at lunch, in the office, and by email. It just wasn't named.

Though internal collaboration is not new, what is new are the means and tools that employees can use to collaborate with one another. Now, an employee can easily pull together a private group or online community to work together on a project, as opposed to sending

emails back and forth. That same approach, of course, is working externally, too, as web-based document sharing has assisted in joint planning, the execution of events, and follow up strategies.

In field-based efforts, American leaders are beginning to mature in partnering as they increasingly learn to listen. Instead of merely viewing partnering as “here’s our project, come partner with us to achieve it,” they learn what collectively can be done to address situations that individual organizations cannot solve. The additional humility required for shared leadership, reduced control, and openness to discovering past and current mistakes is challenging. As one of my close non-western colleagues told me, there is a reason that even in a partnership like NATO, Americans refuse to let any other nation lead their troops. Are we open to participation without having direct leadership?

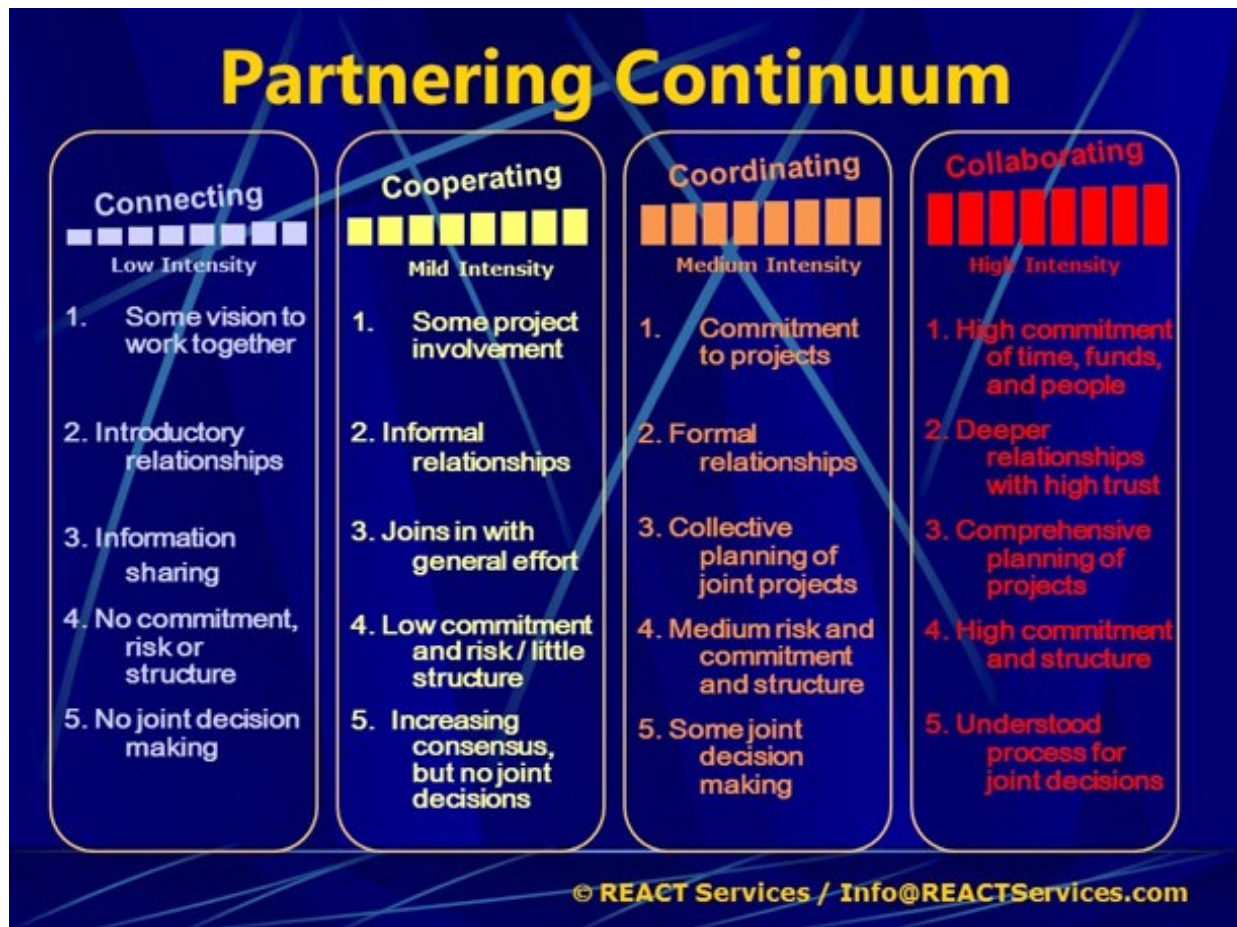
Myth #2: Everyone Knows What Partnering Means

One of the big challenges in 21st Century partnering

is that we tend to use the term to mean a variety of different things. Partnering and collaboration needs to mean more than merely finding indigenous and local leaders (partners) to help expand your program. It is also more than identifying and growing your list of financial donors (partners). It is exploring and undertaking with like-minded groups what you can do together that you cannot do alone. Partnering can be represented by a continuum (see graphic) that includes everything from simply connecting to intense project cooperation. For example, if some groups find it difficult to collaborate on church planting, they can work together on less involved projects. Understanding where you are on the continuum can widely expand the possibilities for partnership – a key component in seeing real results.

Myth #3: Discover the Right Model and It Will Work

There is no magic formula or one particular model that works for partnering. No turn by turn GPS to look at for instructions. Every partnership and every collaborative






effort is different because the people and the context are different. Performance and results are more directly related to long-term values and strategies like taking substantial time to build relationships and earn trust. Western leaders tend to think trust comes naturally, when in reality, there are few short cuts, particularly when working in multi-cultural settings. Trust allows us to learn the sophistication needed to embrace inevitable conflicts, and to appropriately deal with holding partners accountable to their commitments. In addition, partnering always requires ownership and designated leadership from each organization. Indeed, in multi-organizational efforts it usually takes an appointed catalyst who can follow up on next steps and keep things moving in the right direction.

Myth #4: Partnering is the Strategic Driver

Long ago, Phill Butler, founder of Interdev and later visionSynergy, would coach leaders saying “partnership for partnership sake just doesn’t work.” The whole point of collaboration is not collaboration itself, but solving larger problems by bringing to bear multiple resources, improving efficiency, and promoting increased ministry innovation. A useful partnership is results-focused. It is driven by a common vision for a preferable future. Among other things, that means understanding when it makes sense to partner (and when it does not), what

the specific outcomes will be, what the added value will be to each partner, and what metrics need to be in place to measure success.

Partnering in 21st century organizational life is an essential component in moving from ordinary to excellent. However, we must not get stuck in the myths. We must be realistic about what partnering is, when it is necessary, and what is required to make it succeed. This means we must take the time and make the effort to explore the essentials of partnering, providing our people with the training and the space to work on it. In addition, we must work through the hard parts of listening in order to build stronger relationships and earn trust with potential partners; agree and commit to common strategic objectives; and follow through on the commitments made. It is a not an easy journey, but the results are worth it! 

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE OF

High Caste Peoples



FEATURE ARTICLE

BY **PREM JAMES**

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Prem James serves as the Area Director for South Asia at Partners International. He is based in Bangalore, India. He is also actively engaged in developing Networks and Partnerships in South Asia. His wife, Rita, runs a nationally recognized school for special needs children in Bangalore.

IN 1986 THERE WAS A CONSULTATION which highlighted the need for reaching high caste Hindus. Traditionally the missions community had worked mostly among the tribal and the low caste people. As a result of this consultation, eleven different agencies came together with a common goal to reach a high caste people group. They had periodic meetings and prayer. After two years of research, the L people group living in Karnataka was chosen as a pilot program.

As far as I know, there was no such attempt before this, and the agencies that came together were already working in India with different foci, but they came together because they believed that the task was huge, no one had much experience in working with this unique people group, and they were interested to do an experiment together.

When our partnership journey to reach the L people group began, the population was around 10 million. There were less than 100 believers among them.

One of the challenges that the partnership faced was a lack of resources. For example, during the research we found out that most of the tracts or printed materials were not suitable for this people group. As soon as they received a tract, they would throw it away because it was “Christian” material. We wanted to produce some material to address their felt needs and also help them to understand the Christian vocabulary in their own cultural context. For example, we contrasted the fact that our guru washed disciples’ feet and, in contrast with their culture where it is the devotee who touches the feet of the guru. The L people are mostly vegetarian and their concept of Christianity is that they are meat eaters. We had to teach that you can be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and remain a vegetarian.

We overcame this challenge partially because one of the partners was a large publisher, and they came forward to print 100,000 tracts. Another partner came forward to

give free airtime for one year to produce a radio program specifically to this audience.

In looking back, several principles allowed our partnership to succeed:

- Greater awareness was initially created among mission agencies and churches to reach the L people.
- The partnership model built confidence in the existing partners, and also new ones, that with little contribution from each, much could be achieved.
- We spent time and energy to help people to realize that, while we are limited as individual agencies, there is greater synergy when we come together.
- We made sure more prayer was mobilized for this joint project.

The results are thrilling! It is estimated there are more than 7,000 believers now in the state. Just a few weeks ago we had a the facilitation team meeting to discuss plans for 2017. The team included 15 people, several of whom are L believers. One of the areas of focus this coming year is going to be discipleship of the new believers. Specifically, we hope to gather 30 new believers, each in four different locations, and disciple them so that they in turn will go and reach their own community. New believers continue to face many challenges. Christianity is still seen as a low caste religion and there is social boycott when a person says that he or she has become a follower of Jesus Christ, it’s very difficult for girls to get married outside their own community, and often there is persecution of new believers. However, we’re confident that our partnership will walk with the L church through these challenges!





PARTNERSHIP: THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN OUR MINISTRY

FEATURE ARTICLE

BY **WAYNE MARLON**

taihaole@mail.com

A graduate of the US Air Force Academy, Wayne Marlon* taught ESL in Asia for a year, received a Masters from Biola University, and then spent nine years mobilizing students through Caleb Project traveling teams and serving as an instructor and coordinator with the Perspectives course. Wayne, along with his wife and two children, have served among the Tairell for the last 17 years.

*name changed for security reasons

If you would have asked me before we left for the field, I'm sure it wouldn't have made my list of ministry keys. But now, 17 years later, I'm convinced that the formation of the Tairell* Partnership Alliance 16 years ago advanced God's work among the Tairell people of East Asia more than any other factor. Our partnership started when a YWAM field worker, my IMB supervisor, and I were discussing the potential benefits of a partnership. Later that day, we scheduled a date for our first partnership meeting for six months in the future. In February 2001, eighteen people gathered for about eight hours in an apartment, and our numbers steadily grew. Recently, the meeting two-day meeting had over 80 people from more than 8 different countries and more than 20 different agencies and churches!

In 2004, after only four annual meetings, the first North American Tairell Advocates Consultation (NATAC) was organized by several field workers from different agencies who were on home assignment in the United States. The first was in Minnesota, and five more of these advocate consultations were held in Minnesota, Oklahoma City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. These consultations generated interest in the Tairell and helped us mobilize, train, and connect many churches and individuals interested in short and long-term work among the Tairell. These North American consultations led to a steady increase of field workers and an increased need for the type of relationship-building and sharing of resources the partnership was so effective at generating.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Before the first partnership meeting, there was considerable skepticism that a partnership might not be possible because several field workers felt that the two most influential Bible translators, who had been on the field much longer than anyone else, were strongly against any kind of consultation. This was due to security concerns.

Fortunately, we had a mentor from Interdev, an organization that specialized in helping start partnerships around the world, and he encouraged the three organizers of the consultation to set up a face-to-face meeting with this couple to listen to their concerns. When we got together, we were shocked by how supportive they were of the idea of starting a partnership. In fact, over the years, they have mobilized many to get involved and were one of the most devoted

supporters of the partnership! But without that first face-to-face meeting to clear up misunderstandings, it may have never gotten off the ground.

The importance of flexibility came to the forefront at our third annual partnership meeting. There was discussion about the meeting becoming too big of a security risk. After listening carefully to these concerns, a decision was made by the participants to limit the in-country meetings to one day. Also, in four of the next five years, longer meetings were held in a neighboring country. These meetings were attended by 30-45 personnel and, because the meetings lasted about four days, they turned out to be pivotal in bonding many of the workers and their families.

Another challenge was leadership. For the first six or seven years, this partnership was led by a team of three people from three different organizations. Then, for two or three years, I became the primary leader and planner by default. At the end of this time I could sense that we were starting to plateau and lose momentum. Just at that moment, a couple who were fairly new to the field volunteered to take over the leadership. They were very gifted, and the next year they brought in a team to help with all the childcare, including an evening when workers could take a "date night." These changes instantly increased the number of wives that attended, enabled us to extend the conference length by a day, and breathed new life and excitement into our partnership. It also served as an indelible reminder for all of us of the importance of continually bringing in and empowering new leaders in the partnership.

RESULTS

Space doesn't permit the listing of all the results of the Tairell Partnership Alliance! One of our initial goals was to help field workers to not just be co-workers, but rather friends and family. Despite the countless other magnificent results that emerged from the partnership over the years, seeing this actually come to fruition has probably been the most rewarding result. Because of these close relationships over the years, there was an immense amount of sharing of resources, trainings, and synergistic cooperation on many projects.

Early on, development by numerous partnership field workers of a "dialect map" and two 30-day prayer guides enabled everyone to see and communicate to our constituents the great spiritual needs and distinct

I can't tell you how many times people's eyes lit up when I spoke about our multi-agency, multi-national partnership.

church planting efforts needed among the Tairell. Then, as field workers prayed over these dialects, the Partnership emphasized the benefits of sending out teams made up of both church planters and translators. As agency leaders began meeting each year to discuss where the greatest church planting and translation needs were, we were amazed that over the course of the next decade, joint church planting/translation teams were sent out to more than eight unengaged unreached dialect areas!


Next, as the first storying audio resources and the first contextualized evangelistic videos were made in one dialect, information and expertise was shared so they could quickly be reproduced in many of the other dialects. Soon there were so many resources being developed and shared that a secure wiki site was created to enable people to securely access them. In parallel, a secure email group kept people advised of recent developments and special prayer needs.

Through prayer and networking, the partnership soon welcomed our

first missionaries from Thailand and Brazil, and their prayer supporters as well. It was a huge blessing. When the Brazilian economy declined, leaving the Brazilian workers nearly completely without funds for ministry projects, the Partnership quickly responded by raising the full cost of translating our existing mobilization video into Portuguese.

Another impressive example of cooperation happened just a few years ago when we had a sudden influx of Korean workers into our partnership. The closing of a school for expatriates was going to cause most of them to relocate. Leaders in the partnership quickly gathered to pray and discuss alternatives. To the utter surprise of the Korean field workers, they decided to petition their agencies for funds and successfully bought and took over the school that was closing. This enabled the Korean workers to stay.

The last result—which is difficult to quantify but clearly significant—was the sense of the Lord's pleasure and blessing we've experienced as we worked hard to love and maintain unity among the workers, agencies,

and churches from around the world. What a joy! This unity and sense of the Lord's pleasure was also a huge boon to our efforts to mobilize more workers for the Tairell, a large people group with many dialects and a population in the tens of millions. I can't tell you how many times people's eyes lit up when I spoke about our multi-agency, multi-national partnership. Listeners routinely exclaimed, "That is exactly the type of situation that I have always dreamed of. Field workers are unified instead of competing or keeping to themselves!" The words of the Psalmist are true, "How good and pleasing it is for brothers and sisters to dwell together in unity!" 

The Perspective of an Aging Apostolic Worker

BY **STEVE SMITH**

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Blog: kingdomkernels.com

Steve Smith (Th.D.) was part of a church planting movement in Asia. He currently works globally to catalyze biblical church planting movements to finish the Matt. 24:14 quest. He is the author of *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* with Ying Kai (WigTake Resources, 2011) and *Hastening and Rebirth* in the “No Place Left” saga (2414 Ventures, 2015 & 2016).

KINGDOM KERNELS

As success in ministry rises, it is so easy for our own self-estimation to rise with it—especially in the world of church planting movements. If a movement breaks out, then surely we were a key in that process. How easy for us to trot out our achievements in conversation and to become at least a bit more self-assured of our unique gifts and abilities.

What is the proper attitude for a movement catalyst as we become more fruitful in ministry?

Without a doubt, Paul the Apostle is the example most apostolic workers¹ in the world look to as a benchmark. To be able to declare that there is no place left for our foundation-laying ministry is an amazing aspiration (Rom 15:23)

If we emulate Paul’s **ministry**, should we not also emulate his **attitude**? As Paul progressed from one degree of success to the next, how did his heart progress? In our endeavors, we must constantly balance the twin areas of attitude and aptitude. David is an example of this:

So he shepherded them according to the **integrity** of his heart, And guided them with his **skillful** hands. (Psa. 78:72, NASB, emphasis added)

To see how Paul’s attitude progressed as his aptitude and impact increased, let’s look at the three times Paul describes himself in superlatives—greatest or least. I invite you to open your Bible and reference it at every point in this journey.

Ephesus circa 54 A.D.: “Least of the Apostles” [1 Cor. 15:1-10]

The context is the greatest of the movements Paul helped catalyze: the Asian Province outreach from Ephesus. Paul has just finished two very successful missionary journeys. He has had further-ranging impact than any of the twelve Apostles. It appears from the Scripture that kingdom movements have emerged in six provinces (Cyprus, Phrygia, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and now Asia).

In the midst of this success, Paul is being attacked by religious leaders who are denigrating Paul’s apostleship and elevating others as “super-apostles” (2 Cor. 12:12).

In the face of such success, what would our response be to these attacks? Would we justify ourselves and rank our ministry results against others? What did Paul do?

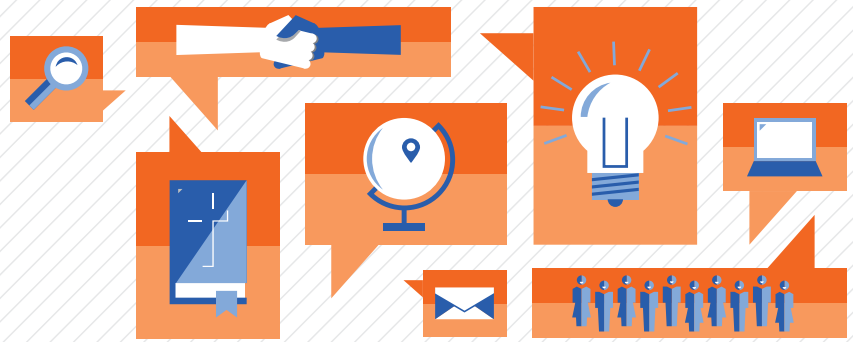
Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am **the least of the apostles**, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (1 Cor. 15:8-9, ESV, emphasis added)

Where does Paul rank himself? It is not just that he is fulfilling an apostolic (missionary foundation-laying) work, he is actually an Apostle of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor. 1:1) just as Peter is an Apostle of Christ (1 Pet. 1:1). He is in that special never-to-be-repeated category of Apostles designated by Christ with special authority and a Scripture-giving role.

Where does Paul rank himself among that august company? Last. The attitude of the least.

Paul displays growing humility throughout his ministry, which genuinely demonstrates his heart attitude. 1 Corinthians 15 is just our first of three stops through the progression of his life. Each stop will

¹ In this article, I normally refer to an apostolic worker as someone who enters an unchurched area and lays the foundation for a kingdom movement by bringing the gospel and establishing churches where they had not been before. Context will indicate if I am describing the unique role of the original Apostles.



show increasing humility rather than increasing self-importance. **Increasing humility throughout life is the foundation for God to do a great work.**

The secret to such an attitude is a progression of understanding demonstrated in each of our three texts. The refrains of this progression grow louder through the chronology of Paul's life. At the apex of ministry effectiveness (see Acts 19:10 for the impact of two years in Ephesus), Paul displays amazing humility.

Amazement at the Gospel

In 1 Cor. 15:1-7, Paul describes as of "first importance" the good news of Christ's atoning work—His death, His burial and His resurrection for our salvation. Paul has been preaching this gospel for years, yet each year he is more amazed that Christ would die for

sinners. Look at Romans, written just after this:

For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:7-8, ESV)

Paul is amazed at the gospel he preaches—the totally unmerited and unearned salvation initiated by God. How often as years tick by do our hearts become less amazed by the gospel? We have become so familiar with the story that it loses its power to humble us once again.

Understanding of personal sinfulness and unworthiness

Into the context of the gospel, our personal inability and unworthiness to merit any of that salvation should only be magnified. Instead, the merits

of our ministry lure us to ignore our inherent unworthiness. Instead, status goes to our heads. "I'm pretty special after all." Effectiveness in ministry can lead us down a path of increasing Pharisaical pride rather than apostolic humility.

Paul felt the weight of his unworthiness to be an apostle, for he was a persecutor of the church (1 Cor. 15:9). Paul genuinely ranked himself the lowest of the Apostles of Christ, for he knew his past and knew his sinful heart.

Reliance upon grace alone

Knowing his past and his inherent inadequacies, Paul acknowledged that his personal godliness and his ministry effectiveness were solely by God's grace—the favor and anointing of God on his life (1 Cor. 15:10). His success came not from effective ministry models, personality type, spiritual gift-set or work ethic. These were contributors. Paul says that he "worked harder" than the rest of the apostles but in the next breath says, "not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (v.10).

Grace does not mean that we do not work hard. It just means that our hard work is reliant upon the proper source of power—the Spirit of God.

Effective ministry as a grateful by-product

Paul calls himself the hardest working of the apostles (1 Cor. 15:10) not because he needed to earn his salvation

As God deepens Paul's perspective of the magnificence of the gospel, Paul's relative sinfulness grows in comparison, as does his need to absolutely rely upon God alone for any fruit.

or do penance. Rather, Paul was so grateful for his salvation that he worked diligently to express his love to God. He could do this through fulfilling the stewardship he had received (1 Cor. 4:2).

Paul ardently desired great results so that he could offer these to his Lord as a gift one day (Rom. 15:16). Paul aspired to the salvation of multitudes from the nations. But all of this was a by-product of his salvation and his reliance upon the grace of God rather than his inherent gifting and personality, much less techniques and methodologies.

We labor diligently to equip Church-Planting Movement catalysts to be effective in their biblical methodologies. But it is all for naught without an attitude of humility fully reliant upon the grace of God. Until these workers see that God alone provides the increase, just as Paul did twelve chapters earlier (1 Cor. 3:7), no lasting results emerge.

At the height of Paul's ministry, the pattern of humility is set. As his life goes on from here, the pattern only deepens. The perspective of an aging apostle is one of increasing humility.

In prison circa 60 A.D.: "Least of All Believers (saints)" [Eph. 3:1-12]

As Paul's ministry and influence increases, we would expect to see his sense of his unworthiness decrease and his evaluation of himself become less harsh.

Fast forward six years: what is Paul's personal assessment?

To me, though I am *the very least of all the saints*, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Eph. 3:8, ESV, emphasis added)

Paul has taken himself down a notch. Previously, at least we could say he was a great apostle, even if he claims to be the least of that small band. But six years later, Paul demotes the title he gives himself. Now he is no longer the least of the apostles but the least of all Christians ("saints" is the term for believers).

How can Paul take this next step? Relative perspective. As God deepens Paul's perspective of the magnificence of the gospel, Paul's relative sinfulness grows in comparison as does his need to absolutely rely upon God alone for any fruit.

The progression of 1 Corinthians 15 holds true here as well because it is the perspective of his life.

Paul is **amazed at the gospel** and the mystery it had long held that all nations

would be blessed through it (vv. 4-6). Now, Paul magnifies this gospel as "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (v.8).

In relation to that, Paul is astounded that God would choose him of all people to receive this new life. Now he calls himself "less than the least of all saints" (v. 8), and is even more amazed that God would choose him as an instrument of His work (vv. 7-8).

So, he must labor by grace alone. In fact, he qualifies this grace as a gift from God; he (Paul) did nothing to merit this grace for his ministry. As a result, ministry is a by-product of his gratitude. He feels immense privilege to have been entrusted it as a stewardship by God (v. 2). Paul's relative importance in the grace equation is lessening.

In prison circa 63 A.D.: "Foremost of all sinners" [1 Tim. 1:8-16]

Fast forward three more years. Paul is near the end of his life and in prison again. Finally, Paul stops calling himself the least. Now he is finally the greatest... sinner! In our current age of fanning the flames of self-worth, Paul appears to nosedive toward a self-destructive self-image. In actuality, Paul has finally arrived at the truest image of himself.



At the end of his life, Paul's amazement has grown beyond bounds. It is almost as if words cannot express his praise . . . "the gospel of the **glory** of the **blessed** God" (v.10). The good news is filled with glories we can only partly understand because they come from the blessed God of heaven.

Are you more amazed at the gospel than you were last year?

Why is Paul so amazed? Because he understands how despicable he was (inserting himself right after a chain of sinful people [vv. 9-10 e.g. enslavers, murderers, etc.]). In that company, he calls himself a former blasphemer, persecutor and opponent and still the chief of sinners ("I am foremost" v.15).

Paul recognizes at the end of his life how deep the sin is from which he was plucked and made a child of God. Paul recognizes that his heart is still being sanctified and is still prone to evil. One misstep could lead him down a path of sinfulness like Demas.

Think about this for a moment. You do not know anyone else's heart, but

you know your own. You know how easy it is to give in to temptation, to be hypocritical in thinking, to judge others in your heart, etc.


The older I get, the more I know that my heart is prone to evil, that I am not as good as others think I am, that I am not living for God's glory to my full potential, that my mind still entertains temptations. I cannot speak for anyone else, only myself. Like Paul, when I see the dark places of my heart and the weaknesses still there, I must say, "I am the foremost of sinners. I am utterly amazed God saved me by grace!" It could be done either way, but here the comma and quotation marks seem cleaner.

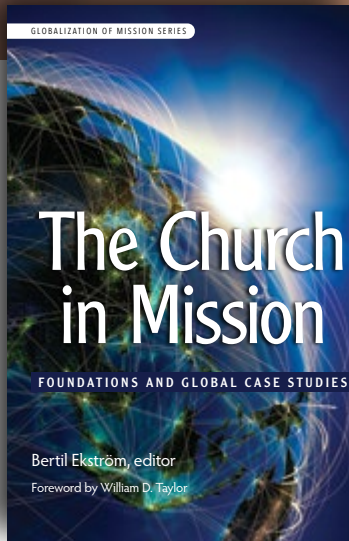
As self-worth decreases we can allow God-worth to be our identity. We see our relative importance in the grace equation. We can increasingly rest in our identity in Christ and live with greater faith that this glorious God is able to do, even through us, exceedingly more than all we ask or think. In this attitudinal equation, our ministry, like Paul's, can become extremely fruitful because it is God who is appointing us to service (v.12).

Which direction is your perspective moving?

I've seen the perspectives of workers in God's kingdom move both directions as they age. Some scorn the idea that we come to this grace equation depraved and helpless. As they progress in proficiency in ministry, their self-worth increases but their God-gratitude decreases. More and more, they credit their effectiveness to their personal gifts and methodologies. This moves them very close to two forms of idolatry: method-olatry and gift-olatry. This is the opposite of "take heed lest you fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). I say with tears that colleagues who have scorned Paul's perspective have since crashed morally.

It is not that Paul was less confident as he grew older. Just the opposite. But for Paul it was a perspective of his relative importance in the grace equation. Paul's relevant importance was one of surrender. All the increase was from God.

Oh, may we, like Paul, grow in amazement at the glory of the gospel, that God would save someone like us, equip us by his grace and call us to bear fruit with grateful hearts! 



NEW

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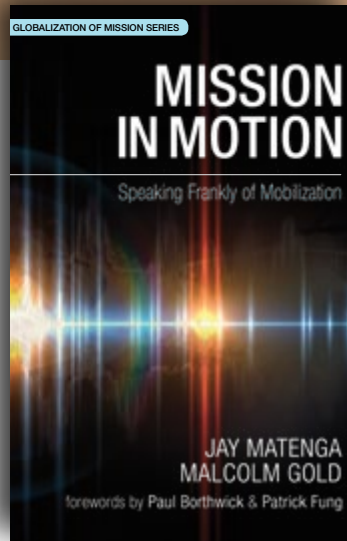
Bertil Ekström (Editor)

What does it mean today to be a church totally committed to the gospel and fully engaged in God's mission? What major religious and sociological trends in our world are affecting the role of the global church and local churches? How must we understand and be prepared to face these trends? How do we define "church" in the twenty-first century, being faithful to the Scriptures and at the same time relevant to a generation that does not believe in the institutional church anymore? What are some good models of missional churches in different regions of the world that will encourage and inspire those who long to see a church making a difference in society and in the world?

These are some of the issues that the book you are holding in your hands addresses. There are certainly no final answers and magical forms; rather, we present a broad and deep discussion on how the gospel should be lived out by Jesus' followers in our time and through our communities.

List Price ~~\$19.95~~ • **Our Price \$15.96**

ISBN 9780878080533
Bertil Ekström (Editor)
WCL | Pages 276 | Paperback 2016



NEW

Mission in Motion (WEA)

Speaking Frankly of Mobilization

Jay Matenga, Malcolm Gold (Authors)

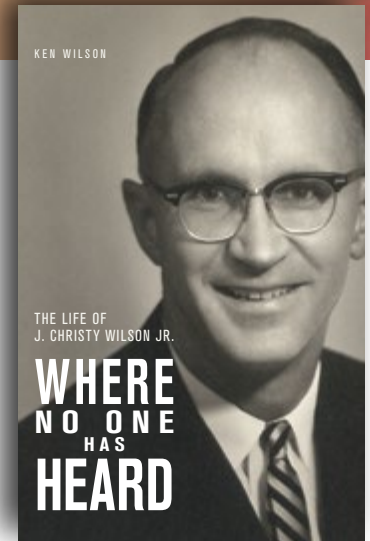
Never before has the phenomenon of mission mobilization been so broadly researched.

In a vein similar to *Too Valuable To Lose* and *Worth Keeping*, the World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission commissioned a research team to investigate what motivates people from around the globe to go into mission service. Mobilization practitioners recorded, translated and transcribed hundreds of hours of interview dialogue that explored reasons for mission involvement from Eastern Europe, Western Europe, North and South America, Oceania, East Asia, South Asia and East Africa. The data was subsequently analyzed to draw out common themes, and *Mission In Motion* presents the results of this research.

This book is the first definitive exploration of the recent history, ministries and methods of mission mobilization.

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ISBN 9780878080557
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NEW

Where No One Has Heard

The Life of J. Christy Wilson

Ken Wilson (Author)

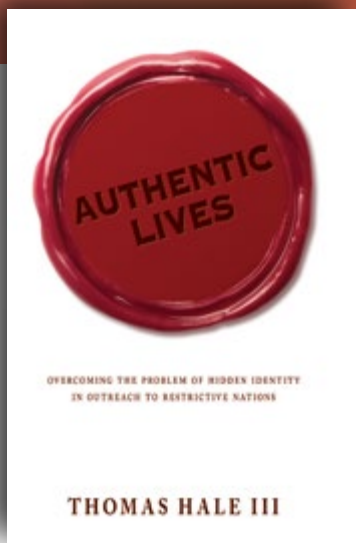
"J. Christy Wilson will go down in history as one of the great and courageous missionaries for the gospel in the twentieth century."

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Who was J. Christy Wilson Jr.? Many have never heard his name, but Christy Wilson's life had a ripple effect in modern missions. Read the first full biography of the humble, adventurous man of prayer who helped launch the Urbana missions conference, pioneered ministry in Afghanistan when others thought it impossible, mobilized hundreds of students toward world evangelization, and reintroduced the biblical idea of leveraging one's profession for the kingdom with the term "tentmaking." Riveting, uplifting, and frequently amusing, this book will challenge you to reconsider what is possible when we dare to yield to Christ and his purposes in the world.

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Ken Wilson (Author)
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NEW

Authentic Lives

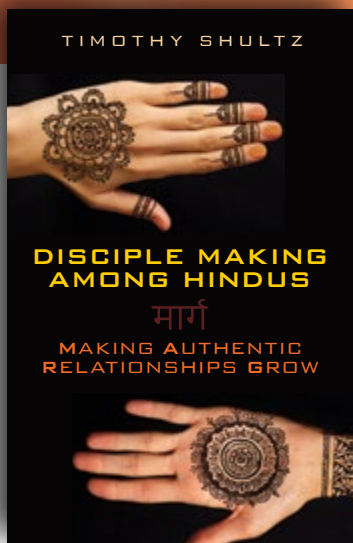
Overcoming the Problem of Hidden Identity in Outreach to Restrictive Nations

Thomas Hale III (Author)

Are you concerned about unreached or unengaged peoples? You probably know that their countries do not welcome missionaries, and that followers of Jesus who serve there via traditional sending organizations do not publicize these organizational ties or their churchbased funding sources. But have you thought through the consequences of keeping that information hidden? *Authentic Lives* will help you do that—and more. And if those consequences trouble you, *Authentic Lives* suggests ways to minimize them in traditional organizations and also suggests other options for service altogether. The challenges these other options present are also discussed—going without a sending agency is not easy but is sometimes best nonetheless.

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Thomas Hale III (Author)
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NEW

Disciple Making among Hindus

Making Authentic Relationships Grow

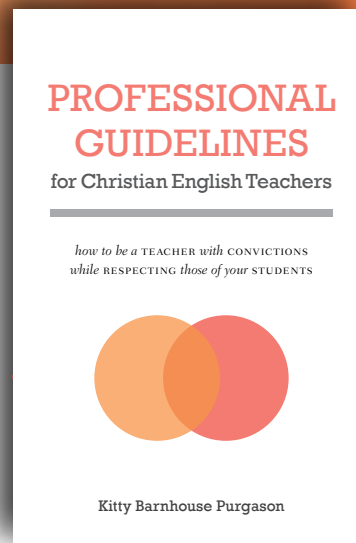
Timothy Shultz (Author)

Drawing on thirty years' experience among Hindus, Timothy Shultz writes this book as a testimony of the kingdom of God growing in a non-Christian environment. *Disciple Making among Hindus: Making Authentic Relationships Grow* describes how Hindu people experience and respond to Jesus Christ. What are the core values and rhythms of their cultural world? What are the patterns of community and discipleship that help them draw closer to Jesus? Through moving personal stories, biblical reflection, and practical wisdom, Shultz introduces us to the centrality of family, the covenantal relationships that make up Hindu social life, and the yearning for authentic spiritual experience.

While this book will benefit anyone wanting to make disciples among Hindus, it is far more than a strategy of contextualization or a blueprint for successful evangelism. Read it to discover the beauty of Hindus as Jesus sees them—and the beauty of Jesus through Hindu eyes.

List Price ~~\$14.99~~ • **Our Price \$11.99**

ISBN 9780878081387
Timothy Shultz (Author)
WCL | Pages 154 | Paperback 2016



NEW

Professional Guidelines for Christian English Teachers

How to Be a Teacher with Convictions While Respecting Those of Your Students

Kitty Purgason (Author)

This handbook is for people in the field of English language teaching who are looking for practical ways to be both committed followers of Jesus and ethical TESOL professionals. What do such teachers actually do in the classroom? What materials do they use? How do they relate to their students and colleagues inside and outside the classroom? How can they treat students as whole people, with spiritual and religious identities? How can they set a high bar for ethical teaching?

Professional Guidelines for Christian English Teachers has grown out of Kitty Purgason's experience as a Christian seeking to follow the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, as a practitioner with a deep concern for excellence and integrity, and as a teacher trainer with experience in many parts of the world.

List Price ~~\$13.95~~ • **Our Price \$11.19**

ISBN 9780878084975
Kitty Purgason (Author)
Piquant | Pages 234 | Paperback 2016

Blocking Truth: Unchangeable “Christian” Church Ways

by Greg Parsons

Director of Global Connections
Frontier Ventures

I wondered how often how we “do” church or live out faith before the world gives reason for people to reject Christ?¹ We’ve all seen it: people blame the church or Christians—the way they act contrary to the Bible, lack love, backbite, can be petty—as excuses for their not wanting to associate with the church or Jesus.

In order to move beyond that kind of behavior (as well as history of Christianity, with its positive and negative impact) believers have increasingly sought to describe their faith in different terms. We speak of things like being a “follower of Jesus” instead of a “Christian.” We talk about fellowships rather than churches. Some strongly believe in house churches, which keep the fellowship smaller and avoid the problems that buildings can cause.² In missions, we promote such attempts. Assuming it doesn’t avoid the clear teaching of Scripture, we are all for this kind of contextualization.

Recently, a good friend of mine (who is mobilizing for the Unreached in another country) conducted an informal survey. He was preparing to share with a youth group, and his quick, informal, non-scientific survey of 100 of his mission-connected friends had just one question. We could only give one answer of four words or less. The question was (in short³):

Why haven’t we finished the task Jesus gave to us to get the gospel to every people?

- The top response with **28%** was **“Sin/disobedience.”**
- Second: **“Wrong Priorities” 25%.**
- Third: **“Understanding the Task” 22%.**
- Fourth: **“Lack of Vision” 13%.**
- Fifth: **“Church Division” 3%** and finally: **“Other (Individual Responses)” 9%.**


My response, which fit under the “Other” category was: **Unchangeable “Christian” church ways.**

The first five replies are potential factors. We mobilizers need to do a better job of sharing with those who are not involved yet. And there are people, churches, individuals who should be much more serious (or repentant?!) about the spread of the church where the gospel has made little or no impact.

When I replied “Unchangeable ‘Christian’ church ways,” I was considering the on-the-ground realities among the unreached. Yes, we need more workers, more global partners engaged and more believers aware and praying for that vast majority of the remaining Unreached that do not know that Jesus visited the earth. But we must grapple with what those workers actually do when they get onsite. We do not just need more workers—we need workers that are doing different things in different ways.

We must think more deeply about how we share our faith and gather together. That is a basic idea, yet how often do we see churches doing things the exact same way they do in their Western home culture. Examples include: worship music (perhaps translated) and literate teaching (instead of using oral methods). We must contextualize and de-Westernize or replace unhelpful patterns.

Just last night, a brother from the Middle East was sharing at an event in the U.S. Recently, a Muslim woman asked why Jesus would come to her in a dream (she had this happen twice in the previous month). He turned to Revelation 3:20, like many of us have. But, unlike many Americans, he was sure to finish the verse “...I will come into him and eat with him, and he with me.” To anyone from the Middle East, eating together is a profound statement of family acceptance—in feeling at home with someone. She turned to Christ right then!

What examples came into your mind as you read this? Why not post your thoughts on missionfrontier.org under this issue and article? I’d love to interact with you on this and other topics we have there. 

¹ I realize that God’s timing and sovereignty is ultimately the determining factor.

² In many places among the Unreached, meeting in homes is all they can do.

³ In asking the question, he also noted God’s timing and the work of the Holy Spirit, so respondents would not give that answer.

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For more information email the Winter Launch Lab:

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