



Letters to the Editor

David Greenlee

An open letter to Ralph D. Winter and Patrick Johnstone

(in response to “The Missing Piece in Global Mission Strategy?” and “The Case for a Global Inter-Missions Network”, May-June 2003)

I am hesitant to write as I have been, and continue to be, mentored and disciplined through the writings of you both. However, after reading the May-June 2003 edition of *Mission Frontiers*, I am very concerned at what is being proposed. As a “hinge-leader”, that is, one who can no longer class himself as a young leader, yet does not classify himself as a senior leader, I am concerned that your actions will firstly leave the evangelical missions movement divided and secondly will plunder the inheritance for [following] generations.

Fellow brothers and respected global leaders, the language and [tenor] sounded within the articles clearly will bring division from within the global missions community as we are subtly asked who we follow: the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Missions Commission or this new initiative....

...The WEA Missions Commission might not be all that we intend it to be, but the ethos and grace-filled desires of this group deserve to be built up and globally shaped by all of us who are concerned for world evangelization and the advancement of the cause of Christ. The WEA might not be ideal, but with the ending of AD2000 and demise of the LCWE, it is now emerging as a unifying factor not only globally but also between church and mission

agencies. Surely this is a good thing and needs our full committed and unfettered desire to see it succeed where previously we have failed to bring global and local, missiological and theological unity...

As we together look to the future, let us learn from the mistakes and failure of the past, but not repeat them. What God is doing among us today globally could be so easily diverted or destroyed by either clinging to the past model of missions as you appear to be suggesting, or by losing sight of the blessings of the Carey-styled missionary movement. We need balance and variety, both of which are only ever fully experienced in unity and diversity

Trev Gregory
International Director
TEMA-MISSION
The Netherlands

Ralph Winter's response:

Dear Trevor,

I keenly appreciate your concern that the WEA not be by-passed.... I also want you to know how very highly I regard the work of TEMA across the years....

The very last thing we would want to do is to bring division. Indeed, what we seek to do is the very opposite, namely, to bring into the same structure groups which do not now normally associate. Basically it is a case of promoting unity of different kinds at different levels without opposing any other kind of unity.

Let's take the case of the marvelous meetings of thousands of young people in Europe for which TEMA is justly famous. I don't sup

every young person attending to be linked to or sent by a WEA denomination. Or take the case of a possible world-level association of groups like TEMA and Urbana and Mission Korea, etc. which organize every few years these major mission meetings of young people. Would you want or expect each of those groups to register first with WEA?

Thus, the same is true for a global network of mission structures. In all its years of on-and-off-existence the WEA Missions Commission has done excellent and valiant work but has never expected nor attempted to relate to all the world's “frontier-active” mission structures.

Meanwhile, the WEA and its Missions Commission are bound to become better known in so far as agencies that are not now knowledgeable about the WEA meet with those that are, on some other grounds. It is not by isolation but by association that WEA can grow and move ahead.

Suppose you were to found a global association of Christian musical artists or copywriters, or painters, or computer users. If some of them were part of WEA, and the others were not, the very exposure of the existence of WEA would be helpful to WEA's future. This is not tearing down; it is potentially building up.

You speak of “the demise” of the LCWE. Is that what WEA wants to happen? Is there no useful function for such a thing as the LCWE? In actual fact I don't think it is collapsing. Neither has the AD2000 movement disappeared. As a functional mood and movement it may last a long time

With all good will,

Ralph D. Winter

