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Ralph D. Winter



Dear Reader,

I would guess that a major reason you are holding this newsprint booklet in your hands is that it helps you in some ways to understand more clearly what God wants you to do.

In any case, nothing, *nothing* can be more important for any of us to know than what God wants us to do.

For us here at the Center it is crystal-clear that God's calling for all believers is for "Our Utmost for His Highest." The discernment of His Highest takes study. Much of what we do here in Pasadena is to keep our eye on every part of the world to see what God is doing and what obvious and strategic needs are there.

Dimensions, frontiers

Okay. Essentially that is the business the Center and the university here are in. It is also the major reason for the theme of this issue: What is God doing, what specifically is left to be done, and where can we help? Or, what is the best way we with our specific strengths and limitations might offer the most strategic help? That is, what are the dimensions of the unfinished task?

Here at the center and university we are "24/7" focused on what is most strategic and most needed. We call these "Frontiers."

We started out by zeroing in on groups by-passed by existing missionary work, called "Hidden Peoples" or "Unreached Peoples." They fall into the major categories



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reviewed in this issue.

But in order to reach out effectively to these groups, we need to try to understand which methods and approaches are not really working, and if we are being slow to adopt new approaches which might enable us to reach out more intelligibly to strange populations. This describes another kind of frontier, which typically requires rethinking, ingenuity, and in-depth knowledge.

Other frontiers?

One example of this other kind of frontier (especially among the increasingly educated leaders around the world) is what in my editorials I have been mentioning lately, namely, the horrifying divergence between those millions of intelligent people who trust in science and not religion and those millions who trust in religion and not science. Call this frontier "the Religion of Science." See excerpts from Professor Hammond's new book on pages 16-17.

A second frontier of this other type can be called "Fatalism about Evil." It is a common but debilitating "passivity" in the face of evil. In so far as we automatically attribute all misfortune, all disease, all sickness to the "mysterious" mind of God, that perspective cuts the nerve of any intense, intentional fighting back.

For example, Charles Colson is as brilliant and dedicated a Christian as they come. Yet, after his daughter had struggled for many years with an autistic son, call him Alex, Colson praised her when she came to the conclusion that "Alex is exactly the way God wants him to be."

First, the idea that God would want any child to be brain-damaged is inconceivable.

Even more important, this fatalistic perspective, no matter how brave and noble, cuts the nerve of anyone wanting to join the increasing number of parents who want to get to the bottom of why autism is skyrocketing. Colson's immense influence would be a great help to those parents, such as my oldest daughter and son-in-law, whose own son's autism has led them to do all they can to get to the roots of this mounting plague.

However, don't assume that very many others are concerned. The enormous Medical/Pharmaceutical industrial complex gets 99% of its funds from treating people who are already sick. It does not have a lot of extra money to find out why people get sick.

Furthermore, if hypercalvinistic theology leads nearly all Evangelicals to accept autism as "the mysterious hand of God", we must count Evangelicals out of the efforts to find out not how to deal with autism after it appears, but why it is happening with increasing frequency.

What has this to do with missions? It means that if we set out to "declare His glory among the nations," by revealing the true, penetrating love

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of Christ for sick and suffering people, as well as His hatred of evil, we must decide whether diseases are of God or not. The question is not merely about what Jesus actually did or said about disease, but what He would have said had those people back then known what we know about disease.

Should missions go on spending millions of scarce mission dollars on raising children up to the age where they can die of malaria (four die every sixty seconds) if they are not doing absolutely everything they can to ferret out the nature of the malarial parasite and how to eradicate it?

In other words, is it the whole gospel just to protect people from

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malaria and treat the sick? It would seem that our mission mandate includes portraying our God as One whose love extends beyond treating sick people to the actual eradication of the incredibly ingenious malarial parasite itself. With our increasing knowledge, do we not have proportionately broader responsibility?

Isn't this a frontier? Isn't it doubly difficult a frontier due to a twisted non-biblical theology that blames God for all illness?

Malaria is just about as bad a global plague as is the HIV virus. We see many Christians seeking to help the AIDS-orphaned children, and being kind to those writhing in the pains of malaria. But, do we see anywhere in the world any kind of a substantial Christian institution which in the Name of Christ is pursuing the total eradication of either

HIV or malaria?

Thus, it may be that we are telling people around the world that our God does not care, does not know what to do, or worse still, is Himself the author of these evils (for our good, of course). Fortunately, the God of the Bible is different!

Okay, some details:

1. The full chapter of Professor Hammond's article on pages 16-17 appears in the 2003, #4 issue of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*. That entire issue is on the theme of the extensive alienation of Evangelicals from science, young earth vs. old earth, etc. and its impact on missions. You can get that whole issue for \$4 or all four issues of 2003 for \$12. Mail your check or call in your credit-card number to Betty (Phone 626-296-7501,

1539 E. Howard St. Pasadena, CA 91104). For another \$10 you can receive the spectacular video *Unlocking the Mystery of Life*, now being shown on PBS.

2. The 450-page, full-sized reprinting of the first four years of *Mission Frontiers* (with all the cliff-hanging challenges, excitement and absolute miracles of our early days) is nearing completion. Send no money, only your mailing address (to Betty, see above) so we can mail it to you when it comes out (shortly). At that time we will both mail it and enclose a bill for (only) \$12 to cover both the massive book as well as the shipping and postage. This is a 25th-anniversary project. The issue of *Mission Frontiers* you hold in your hands is the first issue of our 26th year of publication! 🌐

New Members of the Frontier Mission Fellowship

INTRODUCING



← **Chris and Nicole Lindley** joined us after their recent marriage in August. Chris had previously been at Biola University as the Conference Services Manager, and Nicole had been studying at Fuller Theological Seminary. They are excited about being assigned to our affiliate university project, where Chris serves as the Curriculum Coordinator for the INSIGHT program and Nicole assists the Vice President.

Brian and Debbi Lowther → originally from Southern California, bring valuable skills to the U.S. Center for World Mission. Brian is the lead graphic designer behind many of the Center's printed materials. Debbi, originally an administrative assistant at our university, has transitioned recently to home assignment to care for their son Bailey.



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