



Are Your Dreams Strategic?

Greg H. Parsons



All of us have felt the repercussions of the Asian tsunami on December 26. We have wondered why. We have prayed that God will bring good out of the suffering. We have contributed to relief efforts. We have grieved for those who lost loved ones.

When you think and pray about the long-term impact of an event like the tsunami, what do you “dream” that God might want to do? Once things are stabilized and systems are restored, what might be most strategic?

The secular media have reported on various activities in the recovery efforts. One story portrayed the various approaches of different Christian groups – how they went about their work and shared their faith. While organizations must focus on relief at first, some have the big picture in mind and plan for longer-term efforts. Short-term efforts have their place, but they can’t replace relationships, language learning and – most of all – Christ’s love through someone in long-term proximity.

I’ve been wondering: are Christians willing to fund the long-term efforts, too? Historically, which make a more lasting impact?

I’m reminded of an illustration. Since the USCWM is in the Los Angeles area, over the years we’ve hosted a variety of guests who have wanted to “make an impact” on Hollywood. Perhaps, they’ve hoped, they could make a high-quality film to share the gospel in some way. Often, they’ve wanted to win an Academy Award – not for themselves, of course, but so they could share the gospel on global television.

Yesterday the Academy Award nominations for 2004 were announced, and I saw an interview with the former

director of the Academy Awards about Mel Gibson’s *Passion of the Christ* and why it received only three minor nominations – none in major categories. The man interviewed has worked in the industry for more than 40 years. Then it hit me: if someone really wanted to impact Hollywood for the gospel, why wouldn’t they work hard for 20 years for someone like that man? Why would we think that saying a gospel speech on TV is the best approach simply because a lot of people would hear it?

I’m for taking every opportunity to share our faith, but if Jesus thought that people needed to hear certain words in a certain order, you would think He would have been a lot clearer in what He said. Beyond “repent” and “believe” there are no simple formulas – certainly none that produce automatic results. Perhaps our culture is so bent on efficiency that we’ve honed the message to “steps to get right” rather than “a relationship worth seeking” – like the pearl of great price. Then we go overseas to areas where the gospel has rarely been clearly proclaimed, and we want quick results there, too. But that is clearly not enough!

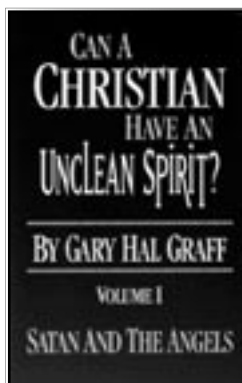
We need people – like a growing number of Indonesian believers – who will go and spend 20 years if necessary, learning the best way to relate to peoples like the three million Aceh. Without understanding the language and culture, we may not know which doors are really open – we may walk through the wrong ones.

We can also “dream” in our prayers. We can dream and pray that the armed conflicts in Aceh and the north of Sri Lanka will end. We can pray for an end to persecution of believers in these places. There aren’t many (if any) fellowships of Aceh believers, and in much of Sri Lanka – among some 92% of its population – it is the same. Millions of people in thousands of people groups in Asia don’t yet have followers of Christ in their cultures.

Let’s dream together and pray that will change. 🌐



Rev. Greg Parsons is General Director of the U.S. Center for World Mission. He’s been on staff at the USCWM for 22 years.



Twelve years of research and writing has resulted in this exhaustive work in three volumes. This is not a “how to” book, but a “how could it be?” book.

Full details on Amazon.com or call toll free 1-866-484-6184.