



It is impossible to imagine a more violent society before the missionaries got there, or as amazing a transformation as a result of mission effort.

Ralph D. Winter



Dear Reader,

Undoubtedly, no movie portraying a Protestant mission effort has been as costly or as professionally done as Steve Saint's *End of the Spear*, released to theaters in late January. And I can't think of a more compelling book than his book of the same title.

Both highlight the amazing, virtually miraculous impact of mission efforts. It is impossible to imagine a more violent human society before the missionaries got there, or as amazing a transformation as a result of mission effort.

At the same time, the story of the Waodani (improperly called "Auca") is not over. That is my special interest. What is their future?

This story began when five missionaries (one of them Steve Saint's father) were speared by the Waodani on a lonely river sandbar in the Ecuadorian jungles. After living in the tribe as a boy, becoming part of the tribe, and gaining a true insider's understanding of these precious people, Steve was persuaded to take his wife and family back 39 years later to see how he could be of help in their complex interaction with various (friendly and unfriendly) outside forces.

Even if you were not interested in the theological implications of this story, or even the mission insights, the book is a true page-turner.

With incredible insight and equally phenomenal skill in writing, Steve amassed 600 pages of notes over many months in tropical rainforest conditions, generating a book full of carefully reconstructed conversations and events incorporating

stupefyingly unexpected things on every page. No fiction could be as surprising. What is the story? These muscular warriors – for whom killing other people (or being killed) was a way of life, equally threatened by invading commercial interests – have been transformed into intelligent, aggressive, still fiercely independent but totally friendly people who have readily learned everything from complex medical procedures to flying light planes.

What more could you ask for! Certainly no mission effort in modern times has become as widely known. The rest of the story, even into the distant future, will be watched by the entire world. A Billy Graham-sponsored conference in Amsterdam highlighted the testimony of the very Waodani warrior who speared Steve Saint's father. The 10,000 pastors and evangelists present at that conference were asked: "How many of you were in some way influenced into Christian leadership by the events of the five martyred missionaries in Ecuador?" Practically half of those present stood to their feet!

Thus it is not possible for the future of the Waodani believers *not* to be noticed by the whole world. But whether or not that were true, the future of these people is definitely clouded. The "impenetrable forest" in which they live is thousands of square miles of hundred-foot tall trees and potential oil fields. Both are of great interest to outsiders who care nothing for wild people who have only caused them trouble.

Deliberations with the Ecuadorian government have given the Waodani title to a vast section of that forest. But just as

happened in the United States with our native Americans, those arrangements, under pressures easily predictable, can be changed. This rainforest cloaks sharp ridges that make the land uninhabitable except by the kind of small, tribal groups which have somehow adapted themselves to it.

Question: Is this the place for humans to be? Right now they have discovered the benefits of "boots, aluminum pots, machetes and axes, blankets, clothes, soap, and salt" (page 127 of the book). Now that, free from fear of deadly reprisal, they don't need to keep moving the sites of their villages, other things now appear useful: "chain saws to cut boards for permanent houses, outboard motors for the back of dugout canoes, and tin sheeting for roofs."

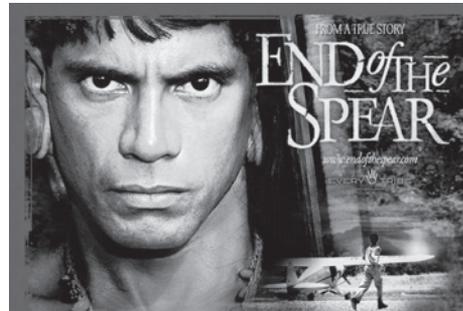
All of these things must come from the outside. All of these things require money or some other exchange. How can the Waodani generate what is needed for exchange?

If they lived in Guatemala they could smuggle themselves into the USA and get the kind of work to which illegals are confined. Even that is not a good solution. (See pages 10-13 of this issue.) They could make themselves into a tourist attraction (and are already tending in that direction).

They could perhaps become outsourced talent as in India, but that would require a huge amount of linguistic and other education. (Furthermore, if that kind of "distance" work were simple, Alturas, California, with its lowest-priced houses in the state, would not be so very sparsely settled.)

In any case, if by extraordinary creativity, grit and determination the Waodani were able to generate what it takes to buy the essentials mentioned above, flying everything out and in, is their way of life desirable to them and to their younger generation?

In other words, to what extent is their future "uncertain"? To what extent can mission agencies be of help at this stage?



Ralph D. Winter is the Editor of Mission Frontiers and the General Director of the Frontier Mission Fellowship.

To what extent is mission strategy supposed to deal with questions like this?

Throughout history missions have grappled with every human problem they encountered: universities in every province of China, public health efforts, nationwide educational reform, agricultural research centers, etc. – you name it. But since the Second World War, Evangelical missions have re-emphasized the all-important eternal dimensions and in some cases have tended to ignore “social” problems, or, for example, the problems of disease origins.

Steve Saint’s book is brimming with missiological insights, the kind that only a bicultural could conceive. He himself represents a rare “super-missionary” breed where someone growing up on the mission field is not so shielded from the culture or dissuaded by other factors that he or she cannot go back to assist the work further, but instead applies the insights that only that background can provide. Hooray for Steve and all MKs who are now back on the field! 🌐

Now I need to acknowledge the flood of letters which we have received since our November-December 2005 issue highlighted the possibility of some missions “misleading” donors.

First, we have received a lot of letters giving us examples of “direct giving” going wrong.

Second, we have received lots of letters from mission executives commending us for what we did.

Thirdly, we have maybe half a dozen letters from agencies which, like Christian Aid, specialize on sending funds rather than missionaries. I must apologize to this last group. We did not intend to



say that sending funds to indigenous entities was a bad thing, only that it can easily go wrong (as with standard missions). What we must have failed to make clear was that we were not mainly cautioning the practice of just sending funds.

Our specific purpose was to stoutly oppose one mission’s incessant criticism of all standard missions.

We have little basis for evaluating the work Christian Aid does. But we can easily see the unfairness of years of preaching that “generally, with a few notable exceptions those who go from one country to another as missionaries end up hindering rather than helping the cause of Christ”(an exact quote). 🌐

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In response to November-December 2005: "Do Some Agencies Mislead Donors?"

Dear Editor,

[Your] November-December 2005 issue had extensive coverage that gives the impression that there is still a huge gulf between agencies that send Western missionaries and Western agencies whose prime objective is assisting indigenous missions. However, I believe that the extent of partnership [among] these groups and indigenous ministries in developing nations is greater *and healthier* than what you have stated.

I have served for many years on the steering committee of the Coalition on the Support of Indigenous Ministries (COSIM), and have worked with Partners International for 19 years. More than 93 agencies have attended the COSIM annual conferences, including Western missionary sending agencies and American churches. Last year 50% were from sending agencies and churches. They're there because they feel welcome. Partnership these days includes everyone.

Sending agencies are very good at what they do – selecting and training Americans, getting them from here to there, helping them over there. Many churches are also good at sending people. These groups look to the COSIM type of agencies for something else – decades of experience in assisting indigenous missions. We're not the only ones who have something to say about this subject, but we have learned a lot. Our seminar at the last EFMA/IFMA triennial in 2004, "What the Non-West Wants the West to Know About Partnership," presented by an Indonesian, drew a packed house.

I also want to assure you that our partners are really missionaries. Even in *Mission Frontiers* it is sometimes said that those in this kind of ministry support local

evangelists and not those making breakthroughs into unreached groups. The reality is much different. At Partners International, I looked at our 40 biggest partnerships. Not one is just working in their own group. Non-western missions today are by far doing most of the cross-cultural mission work. Our partners in China are working among 22 minority groups in addition to the majority Han people. One partner in India has provided training that has resulted in people now working among over 200 unreached groups there. We assist Indonesians working among other unreached groups in Indonesia, but they are also sending their people to unreached groups in Malaysia. We help Latin Americans in North Africa. Maybe the word "indigenous" gives the wrong impression that they are solely working in their own language. The right term is hard to find to describe this movement. No term seems to be just the right one.

Nor do I think it's generally true that near-neighbor groups are less suited to reach others nearby due to historical animosities. Certainly those animosities are there, and are nearly insurmountable in some cases. But in the main, indigenous missions are moving ahead successfully among near neighbors. I've never met an indigenous mission that believed that people from a vast cultural distance were better suited to reach their neighbors than they are.

I also think it's time to be done with articles against groups who advocate "just sending money." Many agencies involved in this movement do much more than "just sending money." If you take our agency as an example, our USA partners feel a close relational connection with their overseas partners. I think they gain more themselves in the partnership – our overseas partners have a lot

to teach us. And each year we are adding more capacity to assist our partners in many different ways

Bob Savage
Partners International

Ralph Winter's response: We agree with Savage that sending funds and not missionaries is not always wrong, and apparently he would agree that Christian Aid Mission ought not to incessantly preach that sending missionaries is wrong.

Dear Dr. Winter,

Thank you for inviting dialogue regarding the issue of supporting "native" or "national missionaries." Some observations:

1. Things in common: On both sides of this debate, true stories are told to highlight the best practices of one side – while highlighting the worst of the other. I contend there are innumerable examples of both best and worst practices on both sides of this issue. I also see, reflected in the literature on both sides, compassion for the lost, and passion for God's glory among the unevangelized and unreached peoples.

Ralph Winter's response: I fully agree. We would not have addressed the issue if one of your member agencies was not positively slandering the "other side of the issue"....

2. The E-Scale helps: One criticism of supporting nationals is that they are not really "missionaries" doing pioneer cross-cultural missionary work. Using the "E-Scale" as a grid, I would classify many nationals supported by our ministry, and ministries similar to ours, at the E-1 level (same culture). But a large number of nationals serve at the E-2 level (similar but different culture). In a few

ministries, some nationals serve at the E-3 level (very different culture).

RDW: I can believe that. But cross-cultural work (E-2 and E-3) is so much more complex, whether done by nationals from a "mission field" country or the USA, that it is very misleading to give donors the impression that they are supporting cross-cultural workers when they may not be.

At Mission ONE, I strongly believe that our donors understand what they are supporting.

3. A contradiction?: You wrote, "You can't be both a native and a missionary. The phrase, 'native missionary' is a contradiction in terms." With regard to E-1 evangelism, this may be true. But in nations with multiple people groups, many Christians "native" to their country are also evangelizing across cultural boundaries at the E-2 level, or at the E-1 level where no church exists – which is why so many Christians in America readily accept the phrase "native missionary."

RDW: Yes, but whoever gets into true E-2 or E-3 work is no longer a "native" in that situation. That's why it is a contradiction in terms to speak of a "native missionary."

Perhaps to a missiologist there is a contradiction; to the average lay person in America, perhaps it just makes sense. By the way, at Mission ONE (and at many COSIM agencies) we use the term "national missionary" not "native missionary," because the word "native" has derogatory connotations and is limiting because it has more of an E-1 connotation.

4. What about barriers?: You wrote, "... If they try to reach out to a next-door neighbor group, they often face greater local prejudices and barriers ... than would a missionary from afar." But don't American missionaries also face major barriers? Isn't it true their American-ness may even raise barriers more so than for non-Western missionaries? Distance traveled by those sent is less important than having appropriate training, the character qualities of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit's empowerment.

RDW: I merely said they "often face." I did not say "always." Usually, however,

non-believers enmeshed in poverty are initially more willing to listen to someone who comes from a wealthy country than someone from an area with all the same problems from which they are eager to escape, especially if the latter are long-standing enemies. They simply assume people from afar may be more objective.

In the ministries we support in Africa and Asia, usually the national missionaries are, relatively speaking, wealthier, healthier, and have much more education and training. The "quality of life" contrast is clear and is often an important aspect of the communication.

5. "Chief problem"?: In your exchange with Bob Finley, he wrote: "We define a missionary as being equivalent to the biblical 'apostle,' one who bears witness for our Lord, including planting a church where there is no church or witness. He may or may not work cross-culturally ..." You replied, "Here is the chief problem. You have the right to define 'missionary' in any way you wish. But if your definition differs from your hearers' ... they will be seriously misled." You believe that Finley's definition of "missionary" differs from his hearers. I contend most Christians hold to a definition which may not be identical to Finley's, but overlaps with his. Advocated in many mission conferences is a paradigm of "both-and" – doing missions locally and globally, with emphasis on unreached peoples. Global Focus, a mobilization ministry serving denominations and mission agencies, promotes this paradigm; it's embraced in thousands of churches. Maybe the "chief problem" is no problem.

RDW: I think it is wonderful for Global Focus to attract support for both kinds of work. Notice, however, that your donors may think that your global work is cross-cultural and in some cases choose it thinking it is the harder, more complex cross-cultural type of work. If it is merely "overseas local", they may feel deceived in some cases.

At Mission ONE, in the semi-annual reports we request from our organizational partners, and in turn, from the national missionary, we ask for the names of the people group(s) to whom the national is ministering. The response may vary from several to just

one or two. In any case, we forward the report to the donor. I am confident that the donor understands fairly well by the report what kind of ministry is being conducted.

6. A more glorious way?: You imply that sending a Western missionary at the E-3 level to an unreached people group is superior to a "national missionary" going at the E-2 level – while some on the "side" of the national missionary movement say it is superior to send nationals, not Westerners. To these two viewpoints, I ask: Isn't it more reasonable, joyful, and glorious to believe that God is mightily using both? Many healthy partnerships operate in this "both-and" paradigm.

RDW: Imply? I would never say that E-3 work by a western missionary is generally "superior" to anyone going E-2. But E-3 is certainly much more difficult. No matter who is involved in E-3, it is a tough row to hoe.

In your articles, you gave no consideration to national missionaries going at the E-2 level, and pointed out possible weaknesses of supporting national missionaries in contrast to foreigners going cross-culturally. I interpreted that as an implication as stated. Thank you for clarifying your position.

7. COSIM, serving the "partnership with nationals" movement within a "both-and" paradigm: COSIM (Coalition on the Support of Indigenous Ministries) exists to promote healthy cross-cultural partnerships. The annual COSIM conference will be held June 12-14 at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois. The theme is "Partnerships that Transform: Here and There." Learn more at <http://cosimnet.org>.

RDW: I would hope someday that partnerships might exist consisting of both COSIM and IFMA-EFMA agencies.

I agree wholeheartedly and am hopeful

Werner Mischke
Steering Committee Chair,
COSIM
Vice President,
Mission ONE

Rebuilding

the Corporate Student Mission Movement

Ryan Shaw

The book of Nehemiah is a powerful blueprint for grasping the importance of rebuilding that which has been broken down. We find a people being unified around a common purpose and cooperating to see that purpose realized – the walls of Jerusalem being rebuilt! Similarly, the time

The time is ripe for effective rebuilding across the emerging generation.

is ripe around the world for rebuilding the corporate student mission movement on individual campuses and across national churches. There is an international cry for workers to arise from many organizations and denominations around this common purpose – calling and equipping the emerging generation with the single-minded vision of personal renewal and reaching all remaining people groups in our lifetime through long-term global ministry.

The book of Nehemiah communicates four primary concepts¹ that have a direct relationship to today's corporate student mission movement:

- 1) It highlights the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem.
- 2) It introduces a new kind of leader.
- 3) It emphasizes the critical nature of prayer to the rebuilding process.
- 4) It teaches the biblical order of dependence upon God before activity for Him.

1. Rebuilding the Walls

The walls of Jerusalem represented the Israelites' security as a people. When Nehemiah heard of the shambles of the city walls, his heart broke as he rec-

ognized the people's vulnerability to attacking armies. Aided with fasting and prayer, Nehemiah then embarked on one of the most remarkable testimonies in the entire Scripture to the power of unity and cooperation. He returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, motivated his fellow countrymen for the task, and

arose to see the walls rebuilt in a matter of 52 days! A miracle!

Currently we see in the student mission world some old walls that have been broken down, including the erosion of student mission movements of the past that produced great influence in cultivating revival among the emerging generation and for calling longer-term workers for global harvest. The number of longer-term global laborers coming out

of the student world is on the decline. Unity surrounding a common longer-term mission vision in the student arena is low, hindering widespread effectiveness. In addition, some are sceptical about the ability of the emerging generation to be activated following graduation toward global involvement for the Kingdom. The result? Broken-down walls.

Research shows, however, that the time is ripe for the effective rebuilding of the widespread student mission movement across the emerging generation.² The potential is strong for the movement to go to a new level of effectiveness. The student mission movements of the past were predominantly Western-based. Today,

Ryan Shaw is the Executive Director of Student Volunteer Movement 2 (SVM2) and lives in Dorchester, Ontario, Canada. He can be reached at Ryan@SVM2.net. To order resources to help rebuild the student mission movement in your sphere, visit SVM2.net.



the non-Western Church is leading the way and building towards an international student mission movement that may be used of God to complete the Great Commission in our lifetime.

2. A New Kind of Leader

In Nehemiah we find God using a lay leader to mobilize the people of God to a critical task. Nehemiah used his spiritual authority, not the positional authority of a priest, to influence his countrymen.

We have much to learn from this. God is calling emerging leaders and leadership teams to arise who will help rebuild the student mission movement by taking initiative to influence their campuses and churches through restoring the relevant priority of fulfilling the Great Commission in our lifetime through long-term ministry.

The precursor of this influence, however, is a vital and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, our foundation. Spiritual vitality and depth of life in Christ has been the critical centerpiece of every student mission movement of the past. It is only through vibrant and abandoned devotion to Jesus that we are opened up to the revelation of His urgent call to advance His kingdom among all peoples. This spiritual vitality and life is then contagious, as we influence those around us for global harvest. Peer-on-peer influence is vital today; others will listen and be motivated as passionate ones tell and live their stories before them.

3. The Centrality of Prayer

A third element we find in Nehemiah is that prayer was absolutely critical to the endeavor of rebuilding. Nehemiah found himself in many desperate situations where he and others had to implore God to intervene lest all be lost. The work of rebuilding the walls was sustained as a result of focused and fervent prayer.

Today, there are likewise many enemies to the rebuilding of the corporate student mission

movement. The kingdom of darkness wants nothing more than to keep an elevated focus of long-term global ministry from entering the hearts of the emerging generation. To accomplish this, the hordes of hell have unleashed an onslaught: low spirituality, self-centeredness, Christianity without the cross, sexual abuse, other abuses, materialism, compromise, lack of understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit, independence from God, immorality, self-consciousness leading to timidity, greed, forgiveness without repentance, complacency, and pride. These

enemies can and must be defeated in the emerging generation. The primary way to overcome is through ongoing, focused, and committed prayer in and for the student arena (Ephesians 6:12).

4. Dependence vs. Activity

Lastly, we find in Nehemiah the sequence of (1) of depending wholeheartedly upon God to move in power for the rebuilding and (2) the responsibility to step out and practically work with God. Apart from the Lord's building, unction, and initiative, we will accomplish nothing of lasting spiritual value. Simultaneously, however,

God has called us to partner with Him to bring to fruition His eternal purposes on the earth. He will move in power, but He uses broken and contrite vessels to do this. If we believe it is His will to rebuild the student mission movement, we will seek His face, listen and respond to Him, depend wholeheartedly on His making a way, and commence with intentional activity in our circles of influence that advances us toward this end. 🌐

End Notes

¹ Adapted from Clinton, Robert J., *Clinton's Nehemiah Leadership Commentary* (Pasadena, CA: Barnabas Publishers, 2002).

² "This Generation for the Forgotten" compilation of research findings by Ryan Shaw — available at www.SVM2.net.





The UNCERTAIN Future of Missions?

Comparing Notes Between Ecuador and Guatemala

Ralph D. Winter

Two days ago, as I write these comments, the January 20 premiere of a \$33-million movie and book rolled out with great fanfare. Both movie and book are titled *End of the Spear*. Both graphically reveal Steve Saint's discoveries after 39 years of separation from a tribal group in the jungles of Ecuador where he grew up. Both vividly portray the amazing moral and spiritual transformation of an incredibly violent tribe. But now: what is the future of these dear people and their children? The book takes you far in that direction. (See more details in my editorial on pages 4-5.)

Last Week

Last week I, too, after 39 years, went back to a tribal group (the Mam, one of some 30 Mayan groups in Guatemala), in whose midst my family and I lived for ten years from 1956 to 1966. Only last night, quite late, did I return from that visit.

During the experience-filled days of my visit I also read *End of the Spear*, which carries far more

detail and inspired insight than could possibly be conveyed in the movie. It was electrifying to compare what Steve Saint describes with what I just saw in Guatemala. I am

I am impressed by the stirring contrasts and unanswered questions exploding from Steve Saint's book and my trip.

adding these comments on the parallels and discontinuities to his situation (mentioned in my editorial) because I am so impressed by the stirring contrasts and unanswered questions exploding from both his book and my trip.

Forty-nine years ago (in 1956) I took my family, including two small blond-haired daughters, to work among a tribal group in the mountains of Guatemala. Within ten years (at the end of which I then had four daughters) other

missionaries and I had developed a radically different approach to pastoral selection and training. That became the basis on which Fuller Seminary asked me in 1966 to join the faculty of its new School of World Mission.

Then, by 1976, after ten years in that exciting school, I had learned volumes from over 1,000 missionaries who had passed through my classes. There the novel new emphasis on Unreached Peoples was developed. That, in turn, took me into founding the Frontier Mission Fellowship (now with 95 families as members), which, with the help of tens of thousands of enthusiastic donors, produced two large projects, the U.S. Center for World Mission and the William Carey International University. All three entities are located on a former college campus in northwest Pasadena, California.

Why No Previous Visits Since 1976?

During 1970 and 1975 I returned to Guatemala for brief visits. But my visits stopped after 1976, for two reasons. One: I was prevented by the very intensity of the cliff-hanging events in the founding and building of the entities in Pasadena. Two: I was cautioned by the fact that in the grim civil-war conditions in Guatemala during much of these years, Indians with known connections with the outside world were marked men. The son of my closest Mam associate lost his life in that struggle. Even sending a letter was inadvisable.

Now, however, the internal conflict is mainly over, and I can go back without jeopardizing our friends there. Murders continue daily, but the source of that violence now is Los Angeles-trained gangs who do not yet bother the mountain Mam peoples with whom we dealt, living as they do quite a distance from the capital city where these gangs do their deadly work.

Finally, and What Changes!

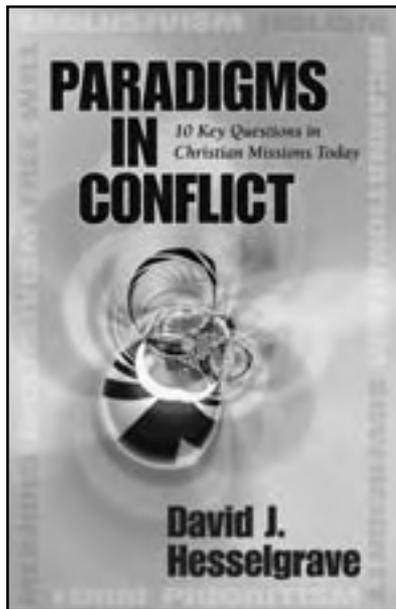
Thus, last night I returned from my first extended visit into the highlands of western Guatemala in 39 years. This time, my four daughters, eight of their 14 children, my new wife, one son-in-law, plus the wife of one grandson and I – 16 of us in all – spent ten days in that colorful country, mainly visiting friends.

Wow! Many changes can happen in 39 years! Co-workers then are now in their seventies or late eighties. Little children then are now pastors and even mayors, and their children may be university students. A sleepy agricultural valley then is now a bustling, vehicle-ridden, house-clobbered wasteland with a huge population increase. Three churches then are 35 or 40 now, etc.

Is this good? Is it prosperity? Is this mission success?

Yes — Success

There have been no missionaries in the picture for many years. That is a type of success. The durability of the ecclesiastical structure (church/presbytery, i.e. local/regional) has proven very helpful, despite the fact that it probably would not have been invented by the local people themselves. (Their experience has been in subsistence farming, where every family is an autonomous economic unit.) There are now 13 presbyteries of indigenous peoples, one of them containing 35 churches. All of this tremendous growth in the last few years has been the initiative of local people themselves.



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—Ralph D. Winter
Frontier Mission Fellowship

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No — Not Success

You may have heard of the case where "the operation was (surgically) successful but the patient died." In this case we could say, "The mission effort was quite successful, but the people are losing out." That is, despite the reality and strength of the church, despite the apparent prosperity of the people, two extremely dire circumstances have emerged:

1. Today the vast proportion of all income in this region consists of U.S. dollars sent back by over 200,000 Mam illegals in the USA.
2. This means that those still in Guatemala (about a million) can now more easily buy imported grain than produce it by hand from their own rapidly-diminishing land (ever reduced by the proliferation of their houses).

Why are these circumstances so dire? (See the February 6 cover story of *TIME*.) The lack of local income in many towns is the result of *half or more* of the men and older youth risking their lives to get themselves smuggled into the USA. One town of 30,000 has another 18,000 in the USA. In such towns adult women out-number men four to one.

To make it into the USA years ago they could pay \$5,000 to a "coyote" (smuggler) who would try to get them in (not promise, much less guarantee their lives). Today that price is as high as \$20,000.

The mission effort was quite successful, but the people are losing out.

Worse Still!

But there is a much higher price the Mam pay. The family breakdown is severe. When young people have no father present, they go wrong – get into drugs, sex, violence, gangs.

Both the men in the USA and the women left behind in Guatemala are tempted to informal liaisons. And illegal workers don't have a bright future even if they are in the fabled USA.

The Uncertain Future

In this case, it would seem, the missionaries left before they could adequately analyze the problems inherent in an expanding population which has no income-generating potential in the place they live.

This is not something an individual family, or even an individual congregation, can think through and resolve on its own.

The Mam numbered about 250,000 during my decade of service among them. Now they num-



ber four times that many. They are intelligent, patient workers. There are enough truly transformed Evangelicals among them to provide an all-important backbone of honesty as well. What a labor market!

Note in comparison: the Japanese can't live off their limited, hilly land either. Yet they don't send workers one-by-one to foreign countries; they bring the work to the workers in Japan. Unlike the Mam, those Japanese workers band together. As management expert Peter Drucker said, "In Japan the company is the family."

Wal-Mart to the Rescue?

The Waltons of Wal-Mart fame (Presbyterians) gave \$1 million to the seminary in Guatemala, which did not need more buildings, being a distance-education operation. It could possibly have been more helpful if they

Pursuing "Church Cultivation"

Commentary by Steve Saint

We have largely treated the Great Commission as a spectator sport – where the highly-trained and lavishly-equipped players from afar take the field, while local believers sit in the stands to watch. It was supposed to be more like a military engagement, where everyone must join the fight.

The single most common failing I see in fledgling churches in frontier areas is the lack of an economy which will allow fathers to stay with their families, mothers to stay in the home to nurture their children to be God-followers, and the community of believers to support their own efforts to reach out to the community of "not coming after ones" (non-Christians) around them.

My son Jesse and his family are down in Shell Mera, Ecuador, where my parents were living when my father was killed 50 years ago. Jesse is working with a young man from Shell in starting a business to build modern airplanes for the North American market. (The first apprentices are two Waodani young men, one of whom is the grandson of Mincaye, our dear friend and one of those who killed my father.) We don't even dare call this a ministry, much less ask people to contribute to it. Why? Because it doesn't fall under the category of "church planting." No, it is "church cultivation" – the natural follow-on to church planting. 🌐

Steve Saint is the founder of I-TEC (Indigenous People's Technology & Education Center). Learn more at www.itecusa.org.

had invested in a major factory that would provide ongoing income and would slow further damage to the social structure.

The one million Mam may not be sufficiently numerous to attract such factories easily, not when South China has 100 million workers to offer. However, Guatemala has a number of other peoples – Quiché, Cachiuel, Kekchi – among whom there are thousands of earnest, honest, unemployed believers fighting a losing battle utilizing their home - and family-based activities to make all kinds of things, notably beautiful woven textiles. But most of what they produce by hand is increasingly produced in large factories around the world by more efficient and less costly methods.

Money from the USA?

A huge amount of money is sent down to Guatemala from illegals in the USA. Almost all of it goes into vehicles and especially earthquake-proof cement-block houses – good things in themselves, but not things which increase local income. You can't eat cars or houses. Some families send their kids each day to the regional site of the government's Universidad de San Carlos – but you can't eat a university degree, and most university graduates need to go elsewhere to find work, since such education, like the skills of illegals in the USA, does not provide income *in the place these people live*.

In American history self-sufficient farmers relocated to the cities and to other jobs, giving up their former way of life and *taking their families with them*. Americans left on the farm dropped from, say, 80% of the population to less than 5%. (Western Kansas today is almost entirely depopulated as a result; you can buy an abandoned, fairly new five-bedroom house



there for next to nothing.) The great virtues of the farm-family life, which so enriched us historically, have been traded for the “shattered family” structure in which the kids spend most of their time in age-stratified schools (and churches) and the parents go off to work in different directions, contributing to some of the world's highest divorce and imprisonment rates.

What is the future of the Mam and comparable peoples in other regions of the world?

This all happened gradually, with no “coyotes” in the picture. So what is the future of the Mam? How can the existence of a strong church tradition contribute to that future? Is that now (or

should that have been) a concern of the mission agencies? What about comparable peoples in the Americas and other regions of the world? 🌐

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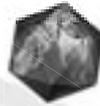
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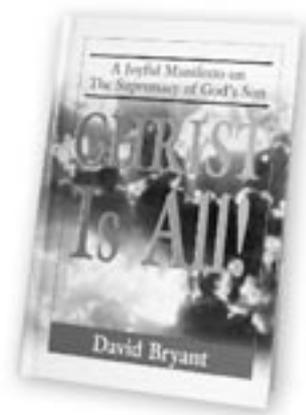
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Confronting the Crisis of Christ's Supremacy



David Bryant

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According to Jesus, the End cannot and will not occur apart from the completion of this missionary task. The End is contingent upon our obedience to finish that task (Matt. 24). The ends of the earth and the end of the age march together toward the consummation of all things.

No wonder virtually every traditional interpretation of the series of events related to the Last Days (no matter how much scholars may differ from one another on specific details) has had positive impact on the Church's motivation for global outreach.

All prophetic traditions agree that the goal of history will be achieved preeminently by the summoning of peoples from every tongue and culture into a clear, decisive encounter with the Lord of History. The One who waits to come back wants

"Finish the task, in order to bring back the King!"

to be *expected* among all peoples when He returns. Therefore, He must be proclaimed throughout all the

earth as the supreme hope for all peoples. Only then will the Climax come.

What I'm suggesting is that the mission of the Church is more than a *consequence* of Christ's dominion over the nations. It is equally a *manifestation* of it. World evangelization opens the way for fuller executions of His victorious reign. At this moment our Lord is bringing about unconditional surrender among all earth's peoples. He's doing so redemptively in a way characteristic of the fuller surrender of all creation to Him when He reappears in His glory. Thus, the Church's global mission should seek to influence *all* of life with the blessings of Jesus' lordship. We should do so in a manner commensurate with how we expect this to be experienced in the Kingdom-to-Come.

More and more Christians are replacing the idea of one's "work place" with the term "*life place*." The shift

is significant. It reminds us that all believers have been called and are sent by God to specific places and people as our assigned focus for outreach for Christ – in home, school, business, media, health care, factory, neighborhood, government. There in our "life places" we become the primary channels through whom Christ displays His saving power and transforming reign. Approximations of Christ's consummate triumph can happen right where we work or study or serve, simply because we are *there* in His name.

On the other hand, world evangelization must always give *primacy* to the planting of churches among the thousands of unreached people groups worldwide. Mission leaders today talk about "a church for every people and the Gospel for every person". What a statement this is on Christ's rights as Redeemer King. For His sake we must be about the business of setting up bases of operation around the globe so that His hope-filled message can impact every culture. Through evangelism and missions the Church creates *possibilities* for a significant measure of Christ's consummate reign to break into the present among the lost. Every newly established congregation can serve as a dynamic *entry point* for His advancing Kingdom to have its impact.

Missiologists (those who research and plan for missionary advances) suggest that six million new churches are currently needed among over two billion non-Christians for the nations to be effectively reached for Christ and their cultures (and cities) transformed by His power. It is estimated, however, that this can only happen if an additional

David Bryant has served as president of Concerts of Prayer International and chairman of America's National Prayer Committee. Since January 2003 David has concentrated on a mission outreach called PROCLAIM HOPE! To learn more, see www.DavidBryantDirect.com.

six hundred thousand intercultural workers are raised up to finish the task and are sent forth by the Holy Spirit from existing congregations on every continent. How do we motivate people to face such needs and tackle such a mission?

The answer is clear: First we must confront and cure the crisis of supremacy that paralyzes so much of the Church and its mission right now. Christians must re-embrace the consummate vision of our Lord's glory. Anything less will prove incapable of sustaining world outreach at the level at which it is required today. Anything less will fail to recruit the hosts of missionary personnel we so urgently need, as well as the army of supporters to send them.

How can hope in Christ re-ignite zeal for world outreach?

A forward-looking obedience to Christ will always produce sacrificial service for advancing the Great Commission. Christians understand the missionary task impinges on fuller demonstrations of Christ's lordship among the nations by the spread of the Gospel. We acknowledge, as well, that the task must be completed to usher in the fullest revelation of His consummate glory at His triumphant return (Matthew 24:14, 30-31). Since we endorse the chorus sung by the Church Universal in Heaven (Rev. 5), should not the highest priority of the Church Militant be the planting of congregations among every

people group on Planet Earth? Shouldn't we resolve to bring the Gospel especially to those currently beyond its reach?

For generations missionary statesmen have urged the Church consistently to pursue their goal by this appeal: *"Finish the task, in order to bring back the King!"* This motto has challenged thousands to become Vanguard of Hope by embracing the missionary enterprise as the straightest road to travel in order to reach the Day when our Supreme Commander returns to put everything under His feet (Ps. 110).

I wonder how many local churches in America today have set priorities on the basis of how congregational life will ultimately connect with unreached peoples – and, how the church's efforts will further the spreading of Christ and His reign among the poor – and, how their activities may help bring our generation closer to the Grand Finale among the nations? Should not hope about the culmination of Christ's global cause shape how a church defines success? Would not effectiveness be measured best by how many people a congregation *sends* rather than by how many people it seats? 🌐

How many local churches have set priorities on the basis of how congregational life will connect with unreached peoples?

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Who's Unreached in Asia?

Steve Spaulding

In many Asian countries, very large majority groups have very small churches while smaller or medium-sized minorities have a large Christian presence.

Who should be prioritized?

There is a lot of fun in exploding a set of “myths” about any one particular issue. I’ve enjoyed doing this with the whole gamut of “Asia.” Though not specifically Asian by race, I was born here and have lived in Asia for almost 20 years – the first 10 and the last 10 years – of my life.

One particular “myth” about Asia is something I’ve perceived about the whole “unreached people group” movement. I’ve been an enthusiastic party to the unreached people group movement, realizing it was akin to other attempts to move the vast majority of the resources of the mission-body of Christ away from the obvious and “taken care of” to the fringes and segments (which were and often still are completely away from the standard forms of communication) to the people who need to hear this transforming and saving message for the very first time.

In many segments of these societies, the least-reached population is the dominant people group.

However, even though I support the movement, there are a couple of “myths” or “common misperceptions” about unreached peoples that I would like to explode:

1. Often the “least reached” are not simply those without the gospel in their language, but a “majority people” who have a very small church among them and whose “reaching” has been left largely in their own hands to continue onward, as those concerned with the unreached continue to work among ever smaller groups of like qualifications.
2. The discipling of “the nations” is not a matter of simply “giving them a hearing for the gospel” or even of mass planting the church among them so “all who respond have a fair chance of growing in Christ” but rather every ebb and flow of their ethnic and national life is to be permeated with the life, the will and influence of Christ throughout.

To stick for the moment with argument #1, I’ve resided in Asia for the last 10 years and have realized, repeatedly, that in many segments of these societies, the least-reached population is the dominant people group. Now this may depend entirely upon how one looks at the idea of “unreached.”

For example, take the Japanese culture. This group of people is the dominant (virtually the only) cultural group in the Japanese islands, and has been “reached” almost every way you look at it. I was born there and know the difficulty my parents found in seeking to be successful at church planting among the Japanese after the Second World War. This was a land of special opportunity after such a massive defeat and a magnanimous victor in the U.S. But examine Japan today and realize that as mono-ethnic as the islands are, the “church” in Japan still constitutes less than one-half of one-percent of the population. So while the church has reached out to them with the Gospel, are they “reached”?

Almost the exact same story can be told of the Thai church in Thailand. There is a long history of much investment by missionaries from Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., British Isles and more recently Korea, the Philippines, etc. Still, today well under one percent of the population is part of the Church.

In many Asian societies there is a dominant people (dominating religion, politics, economy, education, and the overall demographic flow of the land). Examples include the Viet Kinh of Vietnam, the Japanese of Japan, the Bama/Bamar of Myanmar, the Thai (central and northeast) of Thailand, the Malays of Malaysia, the Bengali of Bangladesh, and the Khmer of Cambodia. Each of these cultures seems to be dominated by one majority

Steve Spaulding was born and raised in Japan and is currently Southeast Asia regional coordinator for Dawn Ministries and facilitator for SEANET (South, East and Southeast Asia Network). He is also co-editor of the three-volume “Sharing Jesus in the Buddhist World” series (William Carey Library).

In a country in Southeast Asia...

	% of national population	% of group in a church	Christian #s from a Tribal Standard	Missing Believers
Majority People Group	86.2%	35%	7,071,750	6,500,000
1st Large Minority	1%	0%	114,774	112,000
2nd Large Minority	1%	4%	86,237	36,371
Tribal Minorities (63 groups)	11%	61%	787,750	0

people, while most also have a significant minority “tribal” population which at some point in their past had a large turning to Christ. When numbers are compared, almost inadvertently, the minority church far outnumbers the majority one, certainly at least by percentages.

I remember going into Burma years ago and asking questions about a fairly carefully enumerated Baptist church (which goes all the way back to Judson’s work). They had well over 6,000 churches at the time, although much of the church was suffering from nominality. But the “Bamar” church, coming ethnically from the majority Bamar people, was under 100 congregations nationwide. Thus the dominant population, which represented almost 60% of the country, had church-wise well under 2% of the Baptist churches in the country. The other 98% were smaller minority peoples.

This is not an isolated case. I recently looked at the figures coming out of one Asian country. There, the majority population is about 86% of the entire country’s numbers. The table (above) gives the breakdown (in percentages) of the overall country situation: population and church sizes of four major groupings. The “Tribal Minorities” include about 63 individual “tribes” which have varying sizes of churches, from zero to well over 50% per group. Overall, though, their total numbers, as a group of about 63 tribes, is still a little over 11% of the entire nation.

Now, looking again at this list, I did some playing with the numbers at the end and decided, what if the percentages of “response to the gospel” were the

same among all four groups? I’m taking the tribal as the standard, as their numbers appear by far the highest. With no change among them, how would the others look? In real numbers, there would be an additional 112,000 among the one large minority, 36,000 among the other and 6.5 million among the majority population group.

That is a bit of a revelation in terms of who is, broadly speaking, “unreached.” Of course there are several dozen groups of “peoples” in the “tribes” of this country, carefully tracked by groups focused there, which have apparently no turning to Christ at this point. Eighteen groups have something of a “none here yet” category among the 60 plus groups. Their aggregate population, of the 18 groups, is 486,142, or about one-half of one percent of the nation’s total.

So here is my question: If a majority people has a church – albeit a small one – should we bypass it in our mission strategy as we seek to reach the one-half million who have had “no chance to hear anything in their heart language” of the Gospel? What kind of prioritization ought we really to put on a small group – most of them less than 10,000 in number, some under 1,000 – when a majority people (with a church of almost half a million believers) is still about half the percent Christian that tribal groups are (35% vs. 61%) and millions upon millions fewer by virtue of their real numbers?

I’ve done similar studies in many other Asian countries, and there are the same stories unfolding in these other places as well. Are others thinking in a similar vein? 🌐



This article by Steve Spaulding has been reprinted, by permission, from the November-December 2005 issue of *Momentum* magazine (www.momentum-mag.org), a new online publication edited by Justin Long and intended to “help believers passionately, quickly, and effectively obey the Great Commission and reach the Unreached Peoples of our world.” *Momentum* seeks to build six things in readers: *drive* (passion to go to the least-reached); *energy* (capacity to cross distances); *effort* (to evangelize, disciple, transform); *inspiration* (motivating the unmotivated); *power* (discipline, accountability, focus); and *strength* (to not sway from frontier mission). Take a look!



What is the Church? (Part 2)

Greg H. Parsons



Note: Part 1 on this topic appeared in the January-February 2006 Mission Frontiers.

What do *we* mean by church? What are the key elements of this organism that Jesus said (in Matthew 16:18) he would build?

First, people are involved

We could say “believing people” – and certainly there must be some of these – but it also seems that there will always be some in the church who are not believers yet are part of the church. Jesus hints at this reality in the parable of the weeds (Matthew 13:23-30).

Second, regular gathering seems inherent

But *how* regular and what *kinds* of gatherings? The original idea of the Greek word Matthew uses – referring to an open, public assembly – makes us wonder if there *should* be non-believers present to witness how the church demonstrates the life of Christ. Jesus was, of course, talking about *His* church, hinting that some things would be different (from either the synagogue or the open, town-hall meeting) in this new thing called “church.”

I find it interesting that between Jesus’ parables in Matthew 18 about the lost son and the unforgiving servant, He talks about how to deal with sin and how to cultivate right relationships in the church. Key ideas are raised in this section, including (1) the pursuit of the lost sheep (vs. 10-14), (2) the importance of dealing with sin (vs. 15-20), and (3) the significance of forgiveness in relationships (vs. 21-35). A fellowship that does those things will be recognized as people who are not merely church-goers, but who are part of Christ’s Body and who reflect Him.

Third, gifts are exercised

Beyond *people* and *gathering*, other intended elements of “church” are less clear. From Acts 2:42 we learn that the new believers were committed to (1) the Apostles’ teaching, (2) fellowship, (3) breaking of bread, and (4) prayer. When Paul describes, in Ephesians 4 and Romans 12, the equipping of believers for ministry, he lists gifts that operate within the Body – some when they are gathered, some when they are not.

Of course, back then there was no written New Testament. Some of what the Apostles taught became Scripture. Now that we have the Word, what do we need to be and do in this area? The early Church provided teaching, exhortation, and encouragement, but it is not clear *how* these operated. Probably it is good that we don’t know. Perhaps Paul was not explicit on this point because he knew these functions would be performed differently in different settings, even as his approaches varied throughout the book of Acts.

An illustration, from the Murle people of Sudan, might help. In the 1970s and 1980s missionaries with various skills worked on a team to see the gospel planted among the Murle. As this began to happen, the nomadic Murle began to meet every night around the fire. This was a normal, accepted activity, but now it took on new meaning. No one man was designated as pastor and mandated to teach every night. (Talk about burn-out!) Instead, the older men shared in a rotation of teaching – each night a different man would share what he was learning from the Scriptures (which were being translated) and how those insights applied to Murle life. If you’d like to hear more of this story, e-mail me (Greg.Parsons@uscwm.org) with your request, and I’ll give you further details.

The Murle chose a pattern different than we might – neither right or wrong in itself, but a pattern that worked in their situation. Nothing is inherently wrong with most of the patterns we’ve developed, but we should be careful to examine them regularly and not assume that our patterns must be reproduced in new fellowships.

I hope and pray that we will see all kinds of fellowships – from new church-plants that look like “church” to us, to existing social gatherings in homes or under a tree, all becoming vibrant gatherings of believers in Jesus. Do you have stories of creative, alternative expressions of church? Tell me at Greg.Parsons@uscwm.org. 🌐



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.