

IFMA Has Not Passed Away!

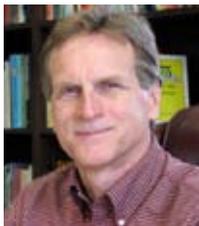
by Marv Newell

IFMA (Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America) has not ceased to exist! Though the name will no longer be found in mission circles, the association itself is still alive and doing well under its new identity as “CrossGlobal LinkSM.” Many have asked “why this change?”

Consideration of several present day realities brought about the decision. One consideration had to do with the changing context of missions. In 1917, when the association was formed, mission was done solely by the professional missionary movement, and almost exclusively through mission agencies. However today, mission is being done not only by the professional missionary in conjunction with agencies, but also by churches doing missions by themselves. Then add to that, business as mission and the ever expanding short-term mission movement. In short, the mission enterprise in North America is now derived from multiple sources. Our association needed to accommodate these realities if we were to remain relevant in this current mission environment.

Another consideration had to do with the former name itself. Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America, though an appropriate and descriptive name when the association was founded, included several words that have lost relevancy over time. For instance, “interdenominational” is a word that most church people find hard to comprehend. In today’s church environment it is no longer important to peg identity in relation to denominationalism. Therefore, it was deemed best to remove that concept from our identity; and in keeping with that, CrossGlobal Link has also opened its membership doors to denominations.

In an increasingly globalized world and multicultural North America, the word “foreign” also needed to be rethought. The nations are now found in most every



Marv Newell is Executive Director at CrossGlobal LinkSM



corner of our continent – many unreached people groups of the world are among us! Mission is no longer a matter of going geographically distant to find the lost, but rather going a distance

culturally. The phenomenon of an increasingly multicultural society is also spewing an increasingly poly-religious North America that dare not be ignored. Therefore, it was appropriate to substitute the word “foreign” with “Global.”

As the first word in our new name, “Cross” conveys two meanings that up-date the word “mission” in IFMA. The noun “cross” carries the concept of the cross of Christ – the means of mankind’s redemption. The verb “cross” means “to transverse, to go across.” Merging these two concepts describes clearly our mission: taking the message of the cross across cultures.

The final word “association” in our former name was up-dated with the word “Link.” Without minimizing the force of historically being a strong participatory association, the word “link” indicates our efforts to provide connections both within and without.

The connection “within” occurs in the networking among the nearly 90 CrossGlobal Link member mission agencies. A new link is that of associate membership available to North American churches; of interest especially to those that are doing mission directly. The link “without” is our intentional interacting with the greater global mission movement.

The three circles in our logo portray these links along with our new tag line: “Connecting in Mission.” We want the world of mission to know that CrossGlobal Link is passionate about linking together for world evangelization!

No, indeed! After 90 years, IFMA has not passed away nor has it been given a mere cosmetic dress-over with the new name of “CrossGlobal Link.” Instead we have re-tooled ourselves for the present and future in the face of current mission and world realities. For more information, visit our website: www.CrossGlobalLink.org. 

