

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Rethinking Our Approaches to Muslim Peoples

RICK WOOD, EDITOR, *MISSION FRONTIERS*



Dear Reader,

When I say the words “Islam” or “Muslim,” what thoughts or images come to your mind? Do you think of bloody pictures of terrorist attacks from Israel or New York? Do you think of masked gunmen with AK-47s raised in the air and explosives strapped to their chests? Perhaps fear or anger rises in your heart. If so, you are not alone. I think all of us, to a greater or lesser degree, have had these images pressed into our minds by television images from around the world. When I have spoken with people in churches about reaching Muslims with the gospel, the one thing that I have encountered most often is fear. Believers are often afraid for their personal safety

IT MIGHT BE NATURAL FOR US TO BE FEARFUL, BUT
WE ARE CALLED TO SUPERNATURAL LIVING. AND
FEAR IS NOT PART OF SUPERNATURAL LIVING.

when thinking of making contact with Muslims, even those in the USA. But how does God want us to respond? It might be natural for us to be fearful, but we are called to supernatural living. And fear is not part of supernatural living. We are called to faith as we proclaim God’s glory in every tribe and tongue, including among Muslims.

Carl Medearis, Ted Dekker and former South Carolina governor David Beasley got together recently for a global webcast on January 28 to talk about why we fear Muslims and what we can do to reach out to them. We have a report on this webcast on page 10. If you would like to watch this webcast, you can access it by going to <http://www.whyyoudoyoufearme.com/live/archive/012810/>.

Carl and Ted traveled throughout the Middle East with the goal of determining whether Jesus’ command to love our enemies is a realistic proposition in our age. Ted, a popular author of many Christian novels, admits that he had the same fears that many of us might have at the thought of entering “enemy territory” and meeting with the second in command of Hezbollah. They went with the goal of loving the Muslims they met. Carl explores this idea of loving our enemies in his article, “Loving Bin Laden,” starting on page 6.

Carl and Ted have just released an exciting new book, *Tea with Hezbollah*, which we have excerpted on pages 11-13. It is the incredible, heart-pounding account of their journeys in the Middle East

to meet with a number of Muslim leaders whom many would likely call terrorists. Is it possible to

love these kind of people with the love of Christ? It is a great read, but it also provides some of the keys to reaching the Muslim world with the love of Christ.

But what can we take away from all this? Are Carl and Ted the only ones who can love their “enemies” and love Muslims with the love of Christ? Or is it possible for the rest of us to put our fears aside and to reach out to Muslims, especially to Muslims in our midst? God has brought the world to our doorstep. Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists live and work in our neighborhoods—perhaps even next door. Do we care enough about these people to move outside of our comfort zones, conquer our fears and bring the love of Christ to them

in genuine friendship? It is the love of Christ that transforms lives, and it is the love of Christ that can transform the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist worlds. If you would like to be a part of reaching out to people from other cultures, Carl Medearis has set up a website that can help. Just go to www.iwillbeafriend.com for more information on how you can be involved.

Clues to Ministry to Muslims

Carl and Ted’s experiences in the Middle East give us some insights as to what to do and not to do in bringing Muslims to Jesus.

God has already placed a deep level of respect and honor for Jesus in the hearts of many Muslims. In their travels, Carl and Ted found no opposition to their talking about the person of Jesus. In fact, talking about Jesus opened doors and broke down barriers of mistrust and fear. With this as a starting point, we can seek to lead Muslims to focus on Jesus, learn about Him from the Scriptures, and encourage them to follow Him. Imagine what could happen if Muslims actually started to study the Bible in search of Jesus?

Jesus is welcome, but our *Christianity* is not. What Carl and Ted heard repeatedly was that Muslims like Jesus but not our Christianity. We must come to terms with the fact that our job is not to go around the world and force our versions of Christianity on people and “convert” them to our side. This is not a contest to see how many people we can get to become like us and join our “team.” Our job is to introduce them to Jesus and His love for them and let the Holy Spirit guide them into following Jesus in their own unique way as they learn about Him from the Scriptures.

IF WE WANT MUSLIMS TO FOLLOW JESUS, THEN WE MUST COME TO THEM WITH LOVE AND RESPECT AND NOT TRY TO ARGUE THEM INTO THE KINGDOM.

It is also time for us to stop calling ourselves Christians. Does that shock you? At best the term has become meaningless, and at worst it has become an obstacle to sharing Jesus with the unreached. In our Western culture there is almost no statistical difference between those that call themselves Christians and those that don't. Rates for divorce, pregnancies outside of marriage, abortion and more are all virtually the same. People who believe the Bible and those that don't both call themselves Christians. In the Muslim world the term comes with much negative baggage. A few years ago my wife led a Muslim woman to faith in Jesus. The first thing the woman asked was if she had to start calling herself a Christian. My wife wisely said, "No," and the woman was greatly relieved. Much better, more meaningful terms would be "follower of Jesus," "disciple of Jesus" and "believer in the one true God." These are not offensive to most Muslims, and they are actually more descriptive. If we insist on

calling ourselves Christians, then we are insisting on miscommunicating to Muslims and causing unnecessary offense.

Bashing Islam and Muhammad is not an effective strategy. Over the years I have run into many books, emails and broadcasts from people who seem to think that running down Islam and Muhammad will convince Muslims to "convert" to their side. They seem to think that if they just have a good enough argument, then Muslims will see the light and dump their deeply-held beliefs. Yet note, by comparison, if someone comes to my home and says many ugly things about my mother, I am not likely to agree with him even if some of what he says is true. I am also not likely to want him as a friend or to listen to anything else he has to say. If we want Muslims to follow Jesus, then we must come to them with love and respect and not try to argue them into the Kingdom. People generally do not move instantaneously from one belief system to another based on the best of arguments

or evidence. God meets us where we are and often moves us gradually to where He wants us to be.

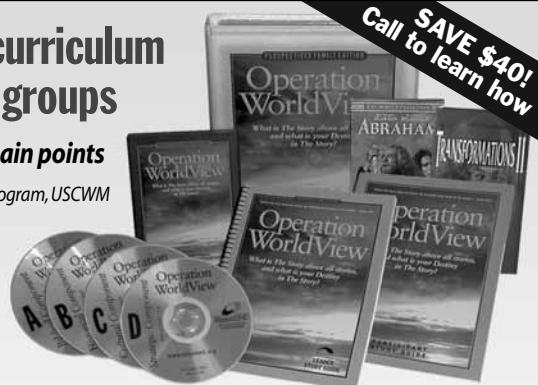
I have talked with enough missionaries to know that there are still many who believe that any believer in Jesus from a Muslim background must convert to our culture and traditions and reject their own in order to have a genuine salvation experience. This has been the prevailing method for the last 1300 years, with few Muslims coming to faith in Christ. Missiologists call this the "extraction" method because the Muslim is being removed from his culture and community. But as missionaries have begun to rethink their approach and reach out to Muslims with love and respect, a new day is dawning in Muslim ministry with growing numbers of Muslims beginning to follow Jesus within their own cultural contexts. A renewed focus on Jesus in both the Muslim and Christian worlds is what we need to finally find the love and peace we all seek with God and each other. **f**

Operation WorldView: Missions curriculum based on the Perspectives course for small groups

"Operation WorldView is an excellent and enjoyable summary of the main points found in the Perspectives course" —Dave Flynn, National Director, Perspectives Study Program, USCWM

- You'll feel the excitement of missions through classic videos and film clips from **"Ee-Taow!," "Abraham," "The Harvest"** and **"Transformations"**
- You'll find it easy to introduce the basics of world missions — **eight lessons designed for one-hour classes** using a turn-key DVD curriculum — ideal for **small groups** and **Sunday School classes**
- You'll see the **Participant Study Guide** has a just-right blend of... listening guide, discussion starters, compelling Bible studies, and the article, **"The Story of His Glory"**
- You'll be thrilled to **see friends discovering big truths about God** and the joy of being **involved in His mission** — through powerful, clear teaching and **interactive learning**

Operation WorldView is taught by
Bob Schindler and Werner Mischke



"In over 30 years of missions involvement I have never seen a more effective tool for mobilizing a congregation to become involved in The Story above all stories. In fact, I am in the process of teaching Operation Worldview to all our Sunday School classes, from the teens through the adults... about God's global purpose that is so powerfully presented in this course."
— Glenn R. Felty, Pastor of Missions,
Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church,
Allentown, PA

Operation WorldView, Perspectives Family Edition: \$269

Order online: www.mission1.org

Call toll-free: 866-346-1354

FREE SHIPPING for orders within continental United States

MISSION ONE • PO BOX 5960 • SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85261 • 480-951-0900





Loving Bin Laden

What does Jesus expect us to do?

TED DEKKER AND CARL MEDEARIS

“DO YOU MIND IF WE BLINDFOLD YOU?” the Hezbollah fighter asked nonchalantly. “If I have a choice, I’d prefer not, but I’m guessing it’s your call,” I replied with a (nervous) smile. For some reason, they simply chose to make me change cars (all black Mercedes) several times on the way to meet with the #2 man in the Lebanese Shi’ite organization.

My two Lebanese Muslim friends and I waited in the hallway of the dark building for about five minutes before someone walked through the door and said “Follow me.” We did, and found ourselves in a room adorned with yellow-and-black Hezbollah flags and big, soft armchairs. And we waited.

It was at this moment when it hit me what we were doing. We were meeting with an enemy of my country. Probably illegal – I think I had forgotten to check that little detail. (I’m not much for details.) We were surrounded by men with AK-47 machine guns, in an unfamiliar city, in an unknown building, meeting a man I’d never seen, who didn’t know why I was there. Other than that – all was good.

But as soon as our host walked in, I remembered why I was there. He broke into a huge smile as he clasped my hand with both of his and said, “Ahlan

WaSahlan” (Welcome). “I’ve heard so much about you,” he continued. Hmmm? “Heard what, exactly?” I wondered.

It never became clear why he agreed to meet me. Curiosity? To let the West know that the Hezbollah aren’t such bad guys after all? To win me to his point of view – either to Islam or his politics? Not sure. But I decided then and there that I didn’t care and really couldn’t care – otherwise I wouldn’t have come. I knew why I was there: to visibly share the love of Christ with an enemy.

But was he actually my enemy? Did he personally want to harm me? I doubt it. Yet by most definitions he was the enemy of my people, Americans. Maybe even the enemy of Christians. And for sure the enemy of the Israelis. But how could I follow the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth to love my enemies if I never met any? So here I was, on a quest to follow Christ. It wasn’t about doing something with or to Muslims. It was about following Jesus.

That day a friendship began. It was a cautious friendship – on both sides. We were equally skeptical of the other’s agenda. But over the years we have become friends. He’s still a Muslim, still the leader of the Hezbollah in all of south Lebanon, still at war with Israel. But he has now received prayer a

*Carl Medearis is a catalyst for a number of current movements in the Middle East to promote peacemaking and to promote cultural, political and religious dialogue leading toward reconciliation. He is the author of the acclaimed book on these issues, **Muslims, Christians and Jesus**. His new book, co-authored with Ted Dekker, is **Tea with Hezbollah: Sitting at the Enemies’ Table**.*

thousand times, often by the laying on of hands by my Christian pastor friends I take to see him. He has now read the New Testament. We talk often and deeply about the gospel, about big international issues, about the small hidden things of our hearts. He is my friend!

Since the release of *Tea with Hezbollah: Sitting at the Enemies' Table*, the most common question posed to me goes like this: "Yeah, I know that Jesus said to love our enemies, but... I mean, you're not suggesting that... well, you know, we should, like, love Osama bin Laden, are you?"

It's one thing to ask Western Christians to follow Jesus and point out that one of the things he clearly said, and taught, was to love our enemies. It's another thing altogether to make that teaching specific with an actual enemy. Like Bin Laden.

The question is a good one: what do we do with our actual, physical enemies (rather than our theoretical enemies), people who might want to kill us if they had the chance? We're not talking about an ideology or a religion, but a real person, like Bin Laden. What do we do with Bin Laden?

I believe that this topic is critical for our age. I doubt that we ("Christians") have more enemies now than at other times in history, but because of the "flatness" of a globalized world, we simply know about our enemies more than ever before. We see them on the news every day. We are reminded of them several times a day through various sources. So if there was ever an opportunity to fear the enemy, it's now.

Most Christians are left with only two choices, both political: the more "conservative" route of building a strong military case against our enemies, or the more "liberal" route of favoring diplomacy. (Both are generalizations, of course). But isn't there a third way that's actually more powerful, more pragmatic and therefore more effective? How about the way of Jesus? It's not passive, not wimpy, but instead an incredibly compelling method that moves beyond mere dialogue to actual solutions.

But because politicians, and believers of all stripes, don't think this way of Jesus is very useful, it's simply ignored. One of the most interesting aspects of the trip that Ted Dekker and I took was our question to the leaders of the Hezbollah, to Hamas,

So here I was, on a quest to follow Christ. It wasn't about doing something with or to Muslims. It was about following Jesus.

There are three biblical ideas that can help us think clearly about how to treat an actual, literal enemy.

- Joshua 5:13-14 is the story of the angel who appears to Joshua right before he takes Jericho. Whose side is the angel on? Neither. He is the Commander of the Lord's army. Understanding that God is on His own side is a great place to start when we think about our enemies. God is neither "for" or "against" America. He is hoping we are on His side, but He's not on ours.
- In Luke 6:35 Jesus states, "Love your enemies and do good to them." Pretty clear. The idea of "doing good" to our enemies is a powerful one. It really "works" to do good to our enemies – as a strategy for overcoming their agenda.
- In Romans 12:21 the apostle Paul says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." This is a rarely-followed biblical truth – to overcome evil by doing good to the one who is evil. We more naturally think of *running* from evil – a good strategy at times – but not necessarily fighting evil with the frontal assault of goodness!

and to the Bin Laden brothers – what was Jesus' most famous teaching? Most of them said, "To love your enemies." We'd then ask the "Dr. Phil" question, "So how's that goin' for ya?" To which they'd respond, "Not very well because it's not practical." I assured them that unfortunately most of my American friends thought the same.

So basically, few of us really believe that "doing good to our enemies" is actually a strategy to "win." But Jesus did.

Before I get into some specific suggestions for loving our enemies, let me share the three most common objections I get to this idea:

- 1) "It sounds like pacifism, and I believe in the Just War theory." But I'm not speaking politically. So that argument simply becomes an excuse to not personally follow a direct command of Christ. What the government has to do in order to keep its citizens safe is a great discussion – just not this one.
- 2) "It doesn't take into account that there is real evil in this world and that some Muslims are, in fact, engaging in a Jihad of

terrorism against the West." While I agree that some Muslims have and will engage in clear and horrific acts of terror, it doesn't follow that we should therefore stop loving our enemies. In fact, this may be the best argument for loving them. Could it be that this is our best, and possibly only, weapon against potential future terrorists? Could it be that if they personally experience the love of Jesus from one of His followers, they would not engage in such activity? Very possibly. I am not naïve. Several times my family and I have been the focus of violent actions by those who bear the label "Muslim." Evil is real, and it has a root – our one and only Enemy with whom we cannot reconcile – the Devil.

- 3) "‘Love’ doesn’t always work against such people." If we’re using “love” as a strategy to “get them”, then it won’t work. But if we love our enemies because God does, and if our hearts are soft towards them because we see God weeping over them, the effect is direct and powerful.



Love is by far the most powerful and forceful weapon we have at our disposal. It is not wimpy. It's not naïve. It led to the most violent, non-passive, act in history – the Cross. Love does not roll over and lay down. Love conquers all.

So, if you're still with me, *here are three steps for employing this strategy of Jesus:*

- 1) Take time to think about who your actual enemies are. It could include an in-law, a physical neighbor, even an enemy of the State – the Bin Laden variety. Then engage that person emotionally and spiritually. In other words, force yourself to think about him or her. Imagine what his or her life is like. Why is he the way he is? Now pray for him. Allow God to begin to place compassion and insight into your heart for that person, and to give you perspective. This is critical if you are going to make it to step two. And, by the way, this first step takes a ton of spiritual maturity on our part. Because, if someone is your enemy, you don't want to do this. But do it anyway!
- 2) Begin to ask God for a plan, for a specific strategy for meeting this person and talking to him or her. I didn't show up at the Hezbollah leader's office without first taking a lot of time to think, pray and plan how I would do that

A Unique Solution to Evil in the World

VINCENT J. DONOVAN

The following is excerpted, by permission, from *Christianity Rediscovered*, by Vincent J. Donovan (Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 2004, pp. 125-126).

If we take seriously the words and life of the man from Galilee, we are driven to the conclusion that his was a unique solution to evil in the world, a different kind of solution altogether, an unacceptable solution by any political standards: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you." Jesus spoke without fear against hypocrisy and injustice and corruption into the very teeth of his enemies. His fervor led him to peaks of anger as he physically scattered the men and beasts and goods which were desecrating the temple and the very notion of religion. But this action of his neither purified

the temple nor renewed the sense of religion nor did it obliterate evil or bring justice to the world. In the final analysis, the message of the New Testament, the message that passes from Jesus to us, is that the only way to overcome evil is to give into it. Overcome it he did, beginning with death which he turned into resurrection.

In his case, he could not have overcome death by violently struggling against it, or by disputing with Pilate or Caiaphas over the injustice of it all, and thus avoiding it altogether. It can be argued that his was a singular case, and a singular solution, and that it is not applicable to others, and to us. Singular

and what I would say once I was there. If you don't plan for this, it won't happen. So make it real. Make it practical. I am currently planning to meet some other high-profile enemies so that I can continue my quest of obeying Jesus in everything. And I pray that I will have the courage and the words to say what God gives me to say when the time comes.

- 3) Go. Across the street. Around the world. But you have to go. It's not rocket science for a reader like you. I'm guessing you've traveled before. You've been in cross-cultural situations and gone out of your comfort zone. This is simply one step further. You're now going to meet an actual enemy.

Think about it. What's the worse thing that could happen to you? "I could be killed," you say. But you're going to die anyway, so seriously, what's the worst thing? I think the worst thing is this – you fly halfway around the world to meet "Mr. Bad Guy," and you show up at his doorstep, and he isn't there to meet you. In that case, you wander around a bit and come back the next day. If he never shows up, you've had a good time of prayer and maybe have made some new, unexpected friends. Not so bad, really!

Oh, and by the way, the last time I was having tea with the Hezbollah, here's what I said: "Have you ever thought about employing the strategy of Jesus

in relation to Israel? It's simple, has immediate impact and can be done unilaterally. You can do it right now, all by yourself. You can forgive them. Love them. Start doing good things to them. Bless them. Pray for them. It will annoy and confuse them as much as anything else you've ever done. What do you think?"

The Hezbollah leader's reply? "Carl, Carl, Carl. I know this is the way of Jesus, but it won't work with them. They will simply abuse this kind of niceness, and then where will we be?"

Undeterred, I asked, "So how is your current strategy working? I mean, what do you have to lose?"

He looked down and said, "You know, I'm not sure I have the courage to do this. It might cost me everything."

"Thank you for your honesty, sir," I said. "It cost Jesus everything, too."

Then we prayed. We gathered around him and prayed. We prayed for wisdom. For courage. For honor. For him to do the right thing, the thing Jesus would do. And, well, who knows? It just might work. Because in this case, the "it" is Jesus! **f**

it was, but it stands nonetheless as the only solution to evil offered in the New Testament.

Even beyond his death, when we think of the other issues that were at stake at the time—the issues of justice and innocence and guilt, the question of the meaning of truth and of earthly and non-earthly kingdoms, the matter of the identity of the Messiah and of the true meaning of religion—we have to ask ourselves: who really triumphed? Jesus or Pilate? Jesus or the High Priest? Jesus or the Roman soldiers? Jesus or the Roman Empire?

There will always be a cross somewhere in the midst of the Christian solution to evil, a cross of the pain involved in not returning blow for blow; a cross of the natural, human bitterness felt in the experiencing of hatred and returning love in its place, of receiving evil and doing good; a cross reflected in the near impossibility

of counting oneself blessed in the midst of persecution, or of hungering and thirsting for justice, or in being merciful and peacemakers in a world which understands neither. Between us and fulfillment, between us and everlasting justice, between us and salvation of this suffering world, there will always stand the paradox of the cross, a cross not for others, but for us. "The Jews are looking for miracles and the pagans for wisdom. And here we are preaching a crucified Christ, to the Jews an obstacle they cannot get over, to the pagans madness" (1 Cor. 1: 22-23).

There is, on the one hand, a moral, human, political solution to evil in the world. And there is a Christian solution. The gospel, which contains the latter, will always be compromised by identifying it with the former. **f**

WHY DO YOU FEAR ME?



DARRELL DORR

On Thursday, January 28 I joined others at the U.S. Center for World Mission in watching "Why Do You Fear Me?", a 90-minute "live Web event" reportedly witnessed by Muslims and Christians in 57 countries. Co-hosted by former South Carolina Governor David Beasley, noted author Ted Dekker, and author and roving peacemaker Carl Medearis, "Why Do You Fear Me?" was partially a promotion for Dekker's and Medearis' new book, *Tea With Hezbollah*, but primarily a platform from which the three co-hosts could answer audience questions and promote their appeal for greater empathy and mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians. The evening's spotlight was on the

capacity of average people to affirm one another's humanity and to consider anew the person and radical teaching of Jesus.

Here are a few quotes to give *Mission Frontiers* readers some glimpses of this event:

- Medearis: "Prejudice goes both ways, which levels out the playing field."
- Dekker: "My fear doesn't change the nature of Jesus' command to love our enemies."
- Beasley: "Many Muslim leaders *did* speak out against 9/11, but I didn't hear about it."
- Dekker: "What does it mean to love your neighbor, or your enemy? What is your heart response to them? Love is meaningless without affection. Examine ourselves: it's important for me to develop affections for those different than me. Form a crack in your heart and a window in your mind, and get to know your neighbors so that you might love them."
- Beasley: "For the sake of humanity, follow Jesus' words about your enemies."
- Dekker: "To humanize is not to endorse."
- Medearis: "Which religion saves you? None. The issue is not religious affiliation, but what you do with Christ."

The video from this event is now available to registrants through the Website: <http://www.whydoyoufearme.com/live/archive/012810/>

Sponsors of this event plan to continue the conversation through Facebook, Twitter, the "Why Do You Fear Me?" blog, and utilization of www.iwillbefriend.com as a mechanism to grow the movement of people around the world who are committing to befriend someone from another culture in 2010.

Darrell Dorr is Contributing Editor of Mission Frontiers and an Associate Editor of the Atlas of Global Christianity.

AN HONEST CONVERSATION, LIVE AND UNSCRIPTED,
ABOUT AMERICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST...
AND HOW JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING.

HOSTED BY: DAVID BEASLEY // FORMER SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR
TED DEKKER // NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR
CARL MEDEARIS // MIDDLE EAST EXPERT, AUTHOR & SPEAKER



Tea with Hezbollah

TED DEKKER AND CARL MEDEARIS

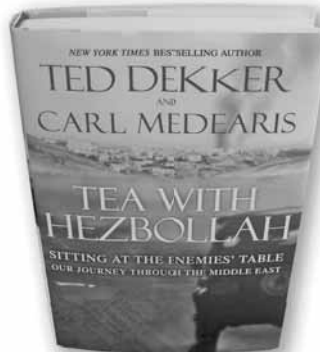
SO, WHAT IS IT LIKE TO LOVE AN ENEMY? What are our so-called enemies really like, one on one? What are their favorite movies? When was the last time they cried? What is their favorite joke? If we could only take *People* magazine-like snapshots of the very people who make many in the United States cringe.

And what do our “enemies,” being deeply religious people, think of this great teaching to love your neighbor, even if that neighbor is your enemy? It’s no secret that Muslims believe that even though Muhammad is the last prophet, Jesus is also greatly revered, having lived a perfect life, and destined to return one day and claim his own. What do they think of the parable of the Good Samaritan? Do they follow its lesson as poorly as most American Christians?

The events and people of the Middle East are inarguably crucial to every human being’s future, whether or not they recognize that fact. Our presidents are elected and rejected in part because of what occurs in this misunderstood land so far away. Mothers will lose their sons, and daughters will lose their fathers, as ideas and convictions clash in the desert. Countries will stand and fall. It’s an important place and its people are even more important. Are they our enemies? And if so, should we love them?

Surrounded by the aroma of food in the safety of a Hard Rock Cafe, Carl and I toasted the ideal travelogue. Assuming it could come together, of course. Little did we know what trouble we were inviting.

Excerpted by permission from Tea With Hezbollah (Doubleday, 2010).



First, what this book is not: This is not a religious book that seeks to correct anyone’s misguided beliefs, Christian or Muslim. This is not a political book that undermines any one ideology. And it certainly is not a historical narrative that pretends to revise any previous work by far more qualified historians.

Rather, this is a travelogue, albeit one with some fairly major twists.

In the pages that follow we will trace our journey of discovery through the heart of the Middle East with some simple questions for some unique and influential personalities whom most in the United States, including the government, think of as enemies who belong on Most Wanted lists.

We will ask ourselves whether anyone is interested in loving his neighbor. Whether, for that matter, it’s even possible to follow this scandalous teaching.

Excerpt from transcript #1 (Hussein Shobokshi)

Ted: Could you introduce yourself?

Shobokshi: I am Hussein Shobokshi. I went to high school in California and went to university in Tulsa. Then I did my training in New York at a bank. I loved the States. I played football in high school and

did some theater in college and played tennis. I still have friends. Now I'm heading a TV show. I also lecture and write various things on Saudi relations, the West, and Islam.

Ted: What would you say is the greatest misunderstanding Americans have of Arabs?

Shobokshi: Americans think the religion of Islam is an odd religion. But Islam is a continuous religion of Judaism and Christianity. We have the same ethics. Americans think Arabs are criminals, not trustworthy, back stabbers. It is, as you say, the flavor of the month.

Ted: And Arabs' greatest misunderstanding of Americans?

Shobokstil: Immoral, no ethics, no high standards, not conservative. Saudis who come back from California and the big cities see this immoral behavior, but the ones who visit or live in the Midwest or South of America come back with a very different conception. It depends where they go in the U.S. and their first impression.

Ted: What makes you cry?

Shobokshi: My daughter, Miriam, will be three in July and she has a very aggressive form of cancer. Her experience has been earth-shattering to me and I've never been the same. She's been through chemotherapy and operations in the United States. Her two doctors are very Jewish and her pediatrician is Irish Catholic.

Excerpt from transcript #2 (Sheik Muhammad Yamani):

Ted: Where did you study?

Yamani: Cornell. I got my Ph.D. in economic geology.

Ted: What is something that makes you laugh? Or a favorite joke perhaps.

Yamani: My friend from England went to New York. He was passing in traffic and didn't see a cab that almost hit him. The taxi stopped and yelled, "What? Did you come here to die?" And my friend yelled back, "No, I came here yester-die." (He bounces with laughter.)

Ted: What is something your children do that makes you laugh?

Yamani: Well, you see the differences from generation to generation. I see the relation between my children and me, and my grandchildren with me. For example, when I enter my son's home, he stands up and greets me. When I enter the house and see my grandchildren, they don't stand but only say "Hi. Hi, Grandfather." When I saw my granddaughter,

she was sitting in a chair, and I wanted to sit. But she said, "We are all family, and when the chair is free, you can have it. But now it is occupied." (Chuckles) Now she is eleven. Her name is Fatima. TV is definitely affecting their dialogue and their actions. We have to be careful.

Ted: Do you have any hobbies?

Yamani: When I was young, I played soccer and swam. And I like to watch TV, and I like to read at night, and I write articles for the newspaper.

Ted: When was the last time you cried?

Yamani: I usually don't cry. But if I see someone suffer, like if a friend has a mother or father die and I see him suffering, I feel very sad. One year ago, my friend's father was crossing a street and was hit by a car and died. The saddest day was when I lost my mother, because she was so kind to me and to others. She taught me to be kind to others. And also the death of my father ten years later.

Ted: What is the common Saudi's greatest misconception of Americans?

Yamani: They look at America as cowboys who all want war. But your information is not correct about the Arab world. I think we have to put more effort in the children, because they are the future. If the American people came to the Arab world and discover the culture, they would love the Arabs. Like when I went to the U.S., I liked the people. People need to see the good in the others. Secondly, the religion has been distorted. In both America and the Arab world. All people should love each other. Let us go and teach people that there is beautiful God. Politics do not help anything. Why not talk about culture and people? Not politics. I think your book will help.

Ted: What frustrates you among your people?

Yamani: When I discover that anyone has lied to me. Lying really affects me. I'd rather hear the truth.

Ted: When asked what his most important teaching was, Jesus answered that it was to love the Lord your God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself. What does this mean in relation to loving one another?

Yamani: I don't think this is the word of Jesus. It is the word of God. The same word was sent to Muhammad. It is the same teaching. The Qur'an orders us to respect Jesus and his mother, who is a noble lady. To be a Muslim, you must believe this. But people must see the good in one another in order to love each other; otherwise they cannot love each other. First you must understand each other.

**Excerpt from transcript #3
(Hezbollah fighter):**

Ted: Can you tell us about yourself? What you do?

Hezbollah fighter: Yes. I am now forty-three years old. I have a wife and two children, ages twenty and nineteen. I am a business administrator and this is how I earn my living.

Ted: How long have you been with the Hezbollah?

Hezbollah fighter: For a very long time. Since the first invasion.

Ted: What do you do for Hezbollah?

Hezbollah fighter: I do what is required to help the people. I sometimes speak for the organization. Everything. Most of the time I do my normal business, but when war comes, then I will fight.

Ted: So ... you've fought in these wars recently? You pick up a gun and fight?

Hezbollah fighter: Of course. But I only use a gun when it is required to defend my homeland. I am a peaceful man most of the time, but then I will pick up a gun to defend my home and children.

Ted: Have you ever killed someone?

Hezbollah fighter: Yes.

Ted: When was the last time you cried?

Hezbollah fighter: A week ago, when I went on TV and said that whoever shoots at us [in Lebanon], we would shoot back. And this is the toughest decision I have ever made. This is what made me cry. Nasrallah knows that my decision was very tough because he knows that we will now be seen as evil persons with weapons.

**Excerpt from Transcript #4
(Sheik Nabil Qaouk, the #2 leader in Hezbollah)**

Ted: Thank you for your time, sheik.

Sheik Nabil: Today is the busiest day, but when I heard about your purpose, I set everything aside to give you the whole day because I believe this type of dialogue is worshiping and pleasing God. This is a way to peace. We think that the three religions complement each other. We have to believe what Abraham, Moses, and Jesus taught as Muslims. We believe that Jesus and the nephew of Muhammad will come and unite all humanity. And all people will come together and pray one prayer.

Ted: I would like to ask you some questions that will help us know you a little better. Is that okay?

Sheik Nabil: Please.

Ted: What kind of car do you drive?

Sheik Nabil: (Chuckles) A Mercedes.

Ted: What color?

Sheik Nabil: Black. But you won't see my car from the sky, because I park under tarps. Many times I have nearly been killed by assassins and bombs targeting me.

Ted: Where do you live?

Sheik Nabil: I move many times so that my enemies can't find me. This isn't appropriate to discuss, you understand?

Ted: Of course. And your family?

Sheik Nabil: I have a wife and four children. My son Mokdadi is preparing an educational movie about children. I have a daughter who is in college in Iran. My third child, Abass, is nine years old and loves karate and soccer. He is also in Iran. And my youngest daughter is three.

Ted: When was the last time you cried?

Sheik Nabil: Every time I pray to God I cry. Recently I cried when I heard that a husband was killed with a cluster bomb. Now his wife and children are suffering. I met with them and showed them sympathy. The youngest child was crying. He was only three years old. He cried so much that everyone started crying with him. The thing that makes me cry the most is when I see children crying and suffering.

Ted: Jesus' greatest teaching was that we love our neighbors as we love ourselves. How do you recommend we love each other as he taught?

Sheik Nabil: Love has many stages. The highest level is when you cannot decide whether to love or not to love because there is no room for hatred. The love of your neighbors comes naturally in response to obeying Jesus and God. Loving the neighbor is proof that your heart is full of love. When we say neighbors, we mean all of humanity. All people are brothers because we all come from God.

If you believe in one God, you become equal with all Muslims. We believe there are many ways to God but there is one God. Praying is one way. Helping people is another way. Pleasing the heart of a sad person is a way to God. Serving people is a way. Only God can know what is in our hearts. It's not that you pray more, you become better. Some things might be more important than prayer. You cannot do things for yourselves or for show. You have to act from your faith. I know many Christians who are devoted to service and are very good people. We respect and love those people. f



Walking with Muslims

SHAMEEM LEE

... It has been an experience of utter faith and abandon to God's will in the deepest crevices of our souls, or a walking in our own pitiful strength. In the end, though, it was an experience of jubilant praises and quiet awe, of "praise the Lord" shouts and sighs of deep gratitude and imperative silence before the Almighty. As Jude walked with Muslims, he tried to place his feet in the footprints of God that he not fall out of sync, and dared not to leap away as the momentum grew.

It was frequently chaotic. Jude learned that chaos was part of the process about which the only thing constant was God's Spirit and the unexpected challenges and requisite dependence on Him....

Farooq and Rasheed were two very different Muslim men when Jude knew them. Their personalities, backgrounds, education, family relationships were distinctively different from one another. The difference required individualized methods, and their relationship with Jude was not the same. Those differences were not immediately apparent, but ultimately God taught Jude that respect, genuine love, patience, prayer and utter abandon to the leading of the Holy Spirit would yield fruit. The measure of the fruit of each man's ministry was more an indicator of their differences in personalities, rather than their commitment to the task or faithfulness to God's leading. Both men's faith, both men's diligence in doing the work of God often caused Jude to reflect on his own spiritual condition with repentance....

There were only a few lessons that Jude would pass on to readers, a few things that seemed to repeatedly call him to attention before the Lord.

Essentials:

- 1) The significance of his call to work with Muslims in the city. There was no turning back until God turned him back. Perseverance was essential.

Excerpted by permission from the Conclusion to Walking With Muslims, by Shameem Lee, BNB Publications, 2009 (available at Amazon.com). The author is an American missionary who served among Muslims with her husband, Jude, in a large city in South Asia. Jude invested himself primarily in Farooq and Rasheed, equipping these two men to represent Christ in their respective social networks.

- 2) Submission: wait on the Lord, then rest in Him, with or without an answer.
- 3) Believe that He will accomplish His purpose. . . .
- 4) Priesthood of the believers. His Holy Spirit indwells the hearts of ALL believers, including those he taught, including those newest of MBBs [Muslim-Background Believers]. They too are inspired.
- 5) Acknowledge that: neither the power of his planning nor the method he suggested to Rasheed and Farooq; neither by choosing the perfect Scriptures for each circumstance, nor by his winsome, culturally relevant words would MBBs be persuaded to grow in their faith and faithfulness. It was only by the power of God's Spirit working through an entirely submitted human spirit—if the MBBs were looking more at Jude, they may have missed the main focus! They need ALL focus on the King!"
- 6) "Leadership is more about 'being' than 'doing.'" Oswald Chambers' quote echoed often in Jude's spirit. Being was not only something to teach, it was something to 'be' himself as God's Word convicted him. Scripture repeatedly teaches "being" and then "doing." 1 Tim 3:1-13. For Jude, leadership was discipleship!

Indigenous:

- 1) Choosing to disciple in a way that will allow the work to be as indigenous as possible is just that, a daily choice. It may mean to set aside your own personal desires to "see" the work, or to "model" what your disciple should do, or to introduce someone else to your disciple or his work.
- 2) Deny yourself and commit your heart to your disciple's spiritual good. Those decisions aren't always easy or obvious, but require thoughtful practice and much prayer.
- 3) "You still look like a Muslim." "Of course I do. The change takes place on the inside." There is no substitute for the effective witness of an MBB who maintains his voice in the Muslim community from which he came.

Teaching:

- 1) Jude had, over time, formulated and adapted lessons to equip MBBs to evangelize Muslims, assure them of their new life with Isa and grow them up as strong disciples, but there was no set program of lessons, no quick response, short-term relationship, or seminar strategy that could have addressed the issues in the hearts and minds of eager new MBBs. It required patience, knowing them, and much, much prayer and humility before the Lord, that His will be done. A 1 Timothy 1:5 perspective is essential.
- 2) Make a point of listening to the Holy Spirit's strategy—from the MBBs!
- 3) Teach interactively, so you will know that they understand what you are teaching. f



MARGINALIA

Are Muslims the New Nazis?

DAVE DATEMA, GENERAL DIRECTOR, FRONTIER MISSION FELLOWSHIP

Recently I heard a comedian suggest that “brown is the new black”, that brown people (aka those of Middle Eastern/Asian descent) now receive the abuse, discrimination and suspicion that black people faced in the past. While he was speaking largely of the North American experience, I wonder if in a more global setting it is true that Muslims are the new Nazis. In some circles is the word “Muslim” held with the same contempt as the word “Nazi” was 65 years ago?

It would appear that since 9/11, Muslims are the favorite designees of the “AntiChrist” label American evangelicals are fond of updating. With increasing frequency and volume, and coming largely from conservative corners, there is a response to 9/11 and its aftermath that makes Muslims out to be Public Enemy #1.

Because the “real” Islam is not monolithic and cannot “stand up” as it were, these debates over its soul will likely continue unabated and with little consensus. Perhaps a more fruitful discussion can be had, not about the “real” Islam (what is the “real” Christianity?), but about our response to enemies in general. As can be seen above, the exact identity of our perceived enemies changes over time, while our biblical response to them, whoever they are, should not.

Human beings have always known that there is nothing like a good enemy to unite a fractured, divided people or nation. Every war needs a good propaganda machine pointing out the inhuman characteristics of the enemy. Every action/drama movie needs a good villain to capture the audience. Every story needs a good antagonist to secure a memorable plot. Our desire for justice, our desire to see the wicked get their

due, unites us with the protagonist in his/her quest for the common good.

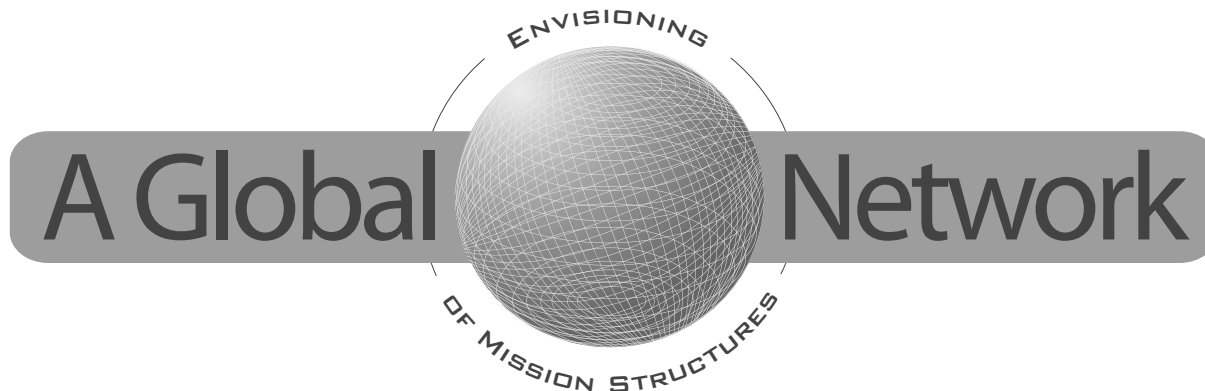
Enter Jesus with His characteristic refusal to be sucked into surface-level sides of a conflict, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also....You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?” (Mt. 5:38-39, 43-46).” Once again, Jesus meddles with us.

Here are two illustrative stories of the differing motivations that conflict us with regard to loving our enemies. In Ken Burns’ 2007 documentary on World War II, simply entitled *The War*, reference is made to the difficulty American young men had in learning how to kill another human being. One man reflects on how this internal struggle ended when he saw the corpse of an American soldier who had been killed and mutilated by the Japanese. “From then on”, he said, “I had no trouble killing Japs.” Contrast this with the story I heard at a recent memorial service for the late Dr. Arthur Glasser, who served with distinction as the Dean of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. During World War II Glasser was a Marine chaplain and tells of storming a beach on an island in the South Pacific. He saw a dead Japanese soldier with a book lying next to him. Curious, he went to see what the book was, and was surprised to pick up a Japanese

New Testament. He thought, “My God, we’ve killed our brother.” I can identify with both motivations represented in these two human experiences. The labels of “enemy” and “brother” are not as easily determined as one might think.

Well, you might say, I am comparing apples and oranges because in the first story the Japanese soldier was not a believer and in the second story he was. However, that only brings us to the same situation Jesus doesn’t allow: “If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?” (Mt. 5:46). We are not called to love only those Muslims who reject violence and fundamentalism; we are called to love all Muslims everywhere – bar none. This brings up the most difficult aspect of this topic – how do we love those, Muslim or otherwise, who are evil or wicked?

The quotes from the Bible given above seem straightforward enough, but everything changes when Christians get power. When Jesus said “Love your enemies,” he was talking to people who didn’t have a whole lot of choice in the matter. Sure, they could rebel (and they did), but it was always short-lived and futile in the wake of Roman retribution. American Christians today stand in a very different situation than did Jesus or Paul. Power changes love, somehow seducing it by reminding us what we have to lose. And when love has something to lose, it wavers. The love of Jesus is unhindered, unwavering, exuberant. I don’t know if brown is the new black or if Muslims are the new Nazis. But I do know that there is no “new love” to offer our enemies in this world. The old one, demonstrated so well by Jesus, works just fine, and remains the only answer, albeit a disturbing one, to this perplexing question. **f**



A Global Network

Will Tokyo 2010 Launch New Global Partnerships to Finish the Task?

DAVID TAYLOR

Today, there are over 4,000 known evangelical mission agencies sending out 250,000 missionaries from over 200 countries.

This is up from 1,800 known mission agencies and 70,000 missionaries in 1980. It is remarkable progress, and a powerful demonstration of global vitality and vision in the evangelical movement.

At the same time, less than 10% of these missionary resources are focused on the world's 2.7 billion living among the world's unreached peoples. The result of this imbalance is that over 3,000 unreached people groups remain without any missionary presence.

Additionally, hundreds of large unreached people groups are still woefully under-engaged, leaving vast population-segments without any significant missionary activity. Since

almost all of these same groups and population-segments were unreached and unengaged 30 years ago, it is safe to say that an entire generation of millions was left without any indigenous witness of the gospel.

Today, we have less excuse for not fulfilling the Great Commission than at any other time in history. We know who these 3,000 unreached and unengaged peoples are, where they are, their latest population and demographics, what languages they speak and where the closest believers are in

neighboring peoples. There's no mystery in it. There's just one thing missing: agents of the Kingdom seeking to do something about it!

Is this an unacceptable reality? Those mission leaders who will be gathering at Tokyo 2010 will be there precisely because they believe another generation should not pass and these groups remain unreached. These leaders will represent well over 150,000 missionaries on the field. And perhaps more importantly, they will be responsible for deploying an additional 50,000 workers over the next ten years.

So the exciting potential is there: if mission agencies work together, we could see for the first time in history all peoples *fully* engaged with evangelism, church-planting, and disciple-

	In 1980	Today
Known Evangelical Mission Agencies	1,800	4,000
Missionaries	70,000	250,000

making efforts. This is the vision behind the Global Network of Mission Structures (GNMS), which was launched in its conceptual form in 2005 by a representative group of mission leaders from major international sending agencies. The principle behind the Global Network is basic: How can we take the gospel from where it is to where it needs to go in the most effective way possible? And more specifically: what is the unique role of mission agencies in facilitating a global movement within the Church to finish the task?

The global presence of followers of Jesus has opened up incredible possibilities for accelerating the full engagement of all peoples, perhaps even in the next decade. Equally, the global diaspora of peoples (both unreached peoples coming to live among reached peoples, and hundreds of thousands of evangelicals being sent by their companies to work in areas

David Taylor is the research director of the Global Network of Mission Structures, one of the primary sponsoring groups of the Tokyo 2010 Global Mission Consultation. For more information on how you can participate in this gathering, visit www.tokyo2010.org.

such as the 10/40 Window), give unprecedented opportunities for equipping the entire Body of Christ to participate in reaching the final frontiers of the Great Commission.

At the same time, the gradual and steady breakdown of cultural and linguistic barriers between peoples is allowing new opportunities for the gospel to spread. In a recent case in South Asia, an American believer saw a movement to Christ among a totally unreached Muslim group by simply discipling two seekers, using only English and a translator. Ten years later there are now over 100 fellowships of Muslim-background believers.

In many areas of the world new paradigms such as this are resulting in incredible harvest. The traditional role of the missionary as a church-planter who spends years to learn the language and culture is giving way to the role of a catalyst who trains and disciples local believers to initiate house-church, lay-led movements among extended families and social networks. To be sure, such new paradigms are fraught with many challenges and risks! But at the same time they also hold great promise, and the potential for equipping millions of believers to act as such catalysts for Kingdom movements is growing with every new successful engagement.

American agencies now send out over 2,000 “tentmakers,” but obviously much more could be done, not just in the United States but around the world. We are only equipping a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of evangelicals who have already been sent overseas by multi-national corporations and companies. For this reason, one of the strategic purposes of the GNMS is to encourage the development of new mission networks and communities that will concentrate on recruiting, training and mentoring of previously untapped missionary potential such as this.

For example, might the next wave of new agencies and missionary orders specialize in equipping entrepreneurs for mission work in frontier regions? Imagine an agency that primarily recruits and facilitates Christian businessmen to start new companies overseas in the 10/40 Window. As has been proven in many cases, these companies can themselves become communities of faith when a spiritual breakthrough happens among them. In one such case, a businessman started a factory which began employing hundreds of people in the city that no one else would employ. Soon many came to faith in Christ, and a church was started right in the factory itself. And though technically no new churches could be legally established in this city, the

community was so impressed by this company that hired the unwanted, they honored the effort instead of shutting it down. Though a new paradigm for some, such developments are actually very close to how the early Church reached the Roman Empire in the first century. In those beginning years, *ekklesias* were not only spiritual communities, but economic communities as well.

Besides sharing and developing new paradigms and strategies for missionary deployment, there are many other needs that a Global Network can and should help address. Some that are being looked at presently are the following:

1. As the result of missionary work over the last hundred years, thousands of evangelical denominations have emerged in Asia, Africa and Latin America, many of which have thousands of local churches. But less than 80% of these groups have functioning mission sending departments. The Presbyterian Church in Mexico, for example, has 5,000 local churches and two million members, but no mission sending agency. Thus a huge part of the Body of Christ is not being tapped for global mission as it could be. In Korea, the 10,000-plus Presbyterian missionaries sent out from this nation might never have been sent had it not been for the dozens of pro-active Presbyterian agencies that recruited, trained and deployed them. Could these Korean Presbyterians be of help in assisting Presbyterian denominations around the world in developing their own mission sending programs?
2. Although we have excellent mission associations, such as CrossGlobal Link and The Mission Exchange in the United States, there are no field counterparts of these entities. These groups bring together the directors of sending agencies to discuss issues primarily related to a home-base sending perspective. However, there is no forum on the receiving or incoming end for bringing together regional and national field leaders to discuss matters of field concern. Additionally, there is no forum for international directors of large mission agencies to come together to discuss issues related to global mission sending strategy, as well as the challenges faced by multi-national mission team efforts.
3. Africa and Latin America have only three national missions associations between them, and no regional-level mission association, unlike Asia, which has had one for years. A Global Network could serve as a forum for bringing together the leaders of mission associations around the world to help strengthen one another and cooperatively launch new associations where they do not exist.

Of course, these are just a few of the many areas that could be addressed by a Global Network of Mission Structures. But perhaps the most important and strategic area is the potential for seeing a concerted global movement of mission sending agencies to give every community of every people group access to the gospel in our generation. This is the hopeful vision of Tokyo 2010 and the many missions associations and agencies which are sponsoring it. **f**

Worshiping Jesus

The One Who Dwelled Among Us!

SANDRA VAN OPSTAL AND STEVE HOKE

The first sound you heard in the cave-black, cavernous St. Louis dome was the clicking of a tap shoe on the stage. The beat quickened, as did the percussion. A spotlight silhouetted a slim dancer pacing the floor, wandering, jumping. Soon he was joined by other dancers, also walking, pacing, leaping. The narrator's voice shattered the silence with John's story of Jesus lonely descent to dwell among us. We watched Jesus' journey danced for the next 18 minutes. We paused. Then 18,000 voices broke into the Doxology, led first by a soloist, and then joined by the worship band and vocal ensemble. We had been ushered into the presence of the Lord of the Universe!

Not your typical first speaker at an Urbana conference, but an eye-catching and ear-arresting attention-getter for a younger, multicultural audience. Our every sense was activated to focus on Jesus—the One who came and “dwelled among us”—the Urbana '09 conference theme.

The vitality and diversity of the eight-member worship band, the six-person vocal group, and the mixed media was both stirring and served as a prophetic model to all participants—that the worshipping community around the throne has always been and will always be multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural.

Sandra Van Opstal served as worship director of Urbana '09 and vocals, is a second-generation Latina who is passionate about people of different cultures coming together to experience God's presence. She spent nine years as an InterVarsity campus staff at Northwestern University. She continues to live in Chicago with her husband as she directs InterVarsity Chicago Urban Program. Sandra gives much of her time to training in reconciliation and multiethnic worship, and is currently working on her Masters of Divinity at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.



Sandra Van Opstal
©Wayne Yuan photo

Impressed by the sheer magnitude of planning and orchestrating such richly variegated multicultural worship for over 18,000 participants, mission personnel, pastors and InterVarsity staff, Steve Hoke sought out Sandra Van Opstal, worship director of Urbana '09, for her perspective on worship and missions.

Sandra, share with us a little of your background and personal journey into worship.

I studied music as a college student, and was always

Steve Hoke serves with Church Resource Ministries (CRM), a mission agency focused on leader development and servant-stewardship in 25 nations. Steve has been heavily involved as a Perspectives lecturer, mobilizer and missionary trainer for the last 30 years, and is shifting his focus to coaching front-line mission leaders and missionaries in life and leadership transitions. As a life-long worshipper, he continues to trace the joyful integration of individual and corporate worship with Abba's heart for the nations. He lives with his wife in Fort Collins, CO. steve.hoke@crmleaders.org

involved as a vocalist in worship. I volunteered as a worship leader for IV on campus, where I worked for nine years, and now serve as an urban missionary in Chicago. I spent summers rotating between Africa and Asia, mentoring students into cross-cultural missions. But we currently focus our ministry in our local setting, and want to be faithful to our context. I see myself more of a mobilizer than a worship leader. But I love Urbana because it is such a great site for mobilizing young missionaries. The corporate worship setting of Urbana tills the soil of young hearts for missions, and their experiential encounter of who God is.

What is the connection between diversity and worship within the multicultural Body of Christ, between missionaries being comfortable with and advocates of diversity as servant-messengers in varied cultures around the world?

First, worship itself is diverse. The variety and range of God's creativity is seen and expressed in the vast range of human approaches to worship. Our music, our instruments, our words, our songs, our liturgies display incredibly different facets of God's character and acts.

When we speak of corporate worship, we must understand that worship is inextricably linked with one's own culture. Missionaries need first to understand their own worship in their own culture: What about God do you love and adore? How do you like best to encounter and experience God?

Most people, unfortunately, cannot articulate their own preference, and thus have trouble gaining a broader perspective on how worship has to be experienced in each culture. For missionaries it is vital to comprehend that there is diversity in worship, in how we understand family, relationships, and even how we do church. It's critical for missionaries to understand their own preferences in order to genuinely help cultures in which they wish to plant fresh expressions of the church. They need to know where they are coming from before they can help new believers create culturally relevant forms of worship in their culture and language.

Paul Gordon Chandler's book, *God's Global Mosaic*, gives a great global glimpse of the peoples of the world through God's eyes. It gives us windows into God's majesty in the creativity of the Russian, Chinese, Thai, and Guatemalan peoples. We

all need other peoples to worship God more fully.

What's the connection-linkage between worship and missions?

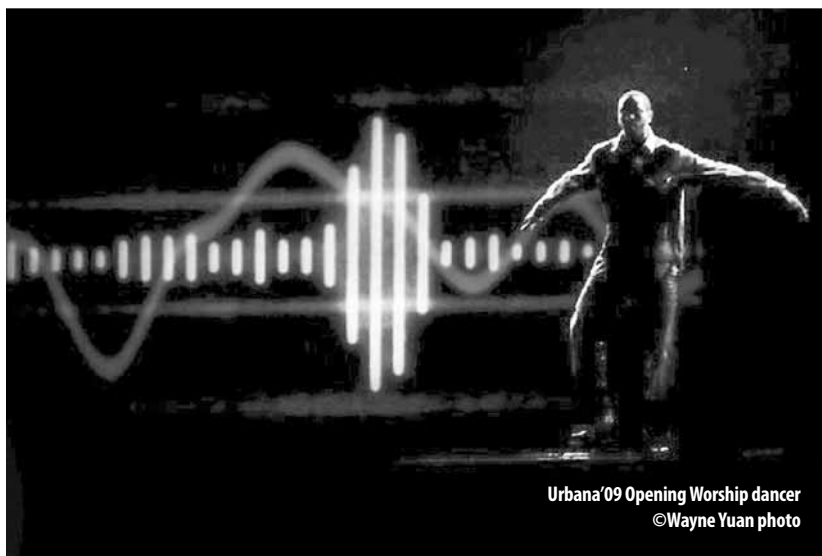
As a worship leader, I see that true worshippers need to move from their own preferences for worship, into the wider expression of worship expressed in God's global family. If God's church is global, obviously worship will be global and culturally distinctive.

Worship is also a dimension that helps us discover more of God. Corporate worship is a vital part of most missionaries' mobilization, because it was in worship that they encountered God and heard him speak to them.

Mark Labberton's *The Dangerous Act of Worship* helped me see that we can help people experience more of God in their own worship songs, before they are able to hear and see the experience of other people. I try to link people with the stories and experience of the poor and broken in other cultures by leading them in songs they know which have the same theme and words. I want to bridge them from what they know to experiences of worship that are not about themselves and just what they know. Worship thus becomes a multi-faceted bridge into broader expressions of praise and deeper experiences of God's grace and unlimited faithfulness.

Why is it important to help the Church expand its repertoire of worship in our increasingly global Church? What are the key blocks that impede such progress in the American Church?

Too often when we talk of multicultural or multiethnic worship, people respond that they don't



Urbana'09 Opening Worship dancer
©Wayne Yuan photo

worship or sing in other languages because there is no diversity in their congregation. If they don't see it in their own church, they think there is no need for diversity.

I don't believe the Church has had an understanding of why worshiping with or alongside of believers from other cultures would deepen their faith. They are waiting for their church to become more diverse before seeking a more diverse experience. They don't conceive that their worship is not as deep, diverse or rich as it could be. They see diversity as nice, but not necessary. I would argue it is necessary to connect with the heart of our brothers and sisters around the world. It is needed for our own personal growth. It is a mandatory pre-step before stepping into cross-cultural mission.

What's your impression of this generation of students' understanding of worship in mission?

They are highly experiential, and want to experience things that are different than what they are used to. They are willing to experience challenging and different things, as evidenced in the range of short-term trips they are willing to take. At Urbana '03 we began to model shared leadership, ethnic diversity, and leading across cultures. Students want to know why we are doing what we do. That's why we tried to drop in some teaching and biblical explanation for diversity in worship from the very start of Urbana '09.

What have you learned about how to help local churches (and missions) grow in their worship experience, to move beyond their favorite worship songs?

I've learned that people are often afraid of change. Change takes a long time and takes a lot of personal effort.

I've learned that people need to understand why they are doing this, both philosophically and theologically. "Why is this necessary? Why is this change worth the effort?"

Churches are hungry to go deeper, but need to know why. Worship leaders need help in explaining the why. And they want it to be easy—"Tell me what songs to sing and CDs to buy"—instead of really



grasping the broader issues of how and why.

Our world is changing, and too many churches are reactive to what's happening around us, rather than proactively and prophetically moving into what God is doing around them. If a local Caucasian church in a changing neighborhood, for example, would begin to learn some songs in Spanish, if and when Hispanic visitors came, they would feel we were worshiping in their heart language, and they would long to return. Worship can thus be a form of hospitality.

What is the role of personal worship in cross-cultural missions?

I can't imagine how an individual could serve between cultures in difficult places without being in regular, intimate relationship with God. It is easy to get busy in activity and cease relating or depending on God. Without personal times with Abba, experiences of weekly Sabbath and retreat, it is dangerous. It is naive that we can sustain ourselves. It is difficult to detect if you are accomplishing anything at all without the discipline of celebration in worship. And, you might miss out on what God is doing around you.

What is the role of corporate worship in cross-cultural missions? How are these two spheres linked?

The experience of being in community and worshiping, praying and sharing alongside others is what rejuvenates us and keeps us going. I live and work in a multiethnic community, and living missionally together helps me see that I am a part of something bigger. Without the perspective and encouragement of others, you can become self-righteous, you can become isolated.

How would you encourage prospective cross-cultural servants to go deeper in personal worship?

What's helped me is learning to worship God and practice the disciplines that help me connect with God in new ways, in ways that have stretched me beyond what I used to know. For example, the retreats I used to attend were full of activity, talking and teaching. Now I value retreats of silence, of time for listening, fasting, and reflection. None of these were part of my former worship pattern. It helps deepen as well as stretch us to experience aspects that are new to us.

How would you encourage prospective cross-cultural servants to go deeper in corporate worship?

Start locally. Visit nearby churches regularly where you are not the majority person. For example, visit a Latino church, or a younger church, or an African-American church. The experience of displacement is critical to recognizing how different you are—right here in your own culture. Step into places and worship where you are not the majority. Learn to follow worship leaders that are unlike you. Allow them to deepen and teach you. This is a part of learning servanthood.

Why and how is worship inextricably linked to world evangelization?

I believe that the world is changing and the Church is adapting to stay in touch with the world that is rapidly becoming multicultural, diverse. We need to learn to be in community and be able to experience God and worship with our brothers and sisters around the world.

I am constantly seeing how global God's Church is. Renewal and explosive growth is not happening in my neighborhood, so I need to learn from what God is doing in Argentina, Africa and Asia. The mission world is completely changing. Worship keeps my heart linked to God's global causes and His movements of freshness and fire.

What helps you enter the presence of God on a consistent basis?

First, a commitment to rhythms of worship and discipline. As a busy person in ministry, I regularly Sabbath on Sunday; I retreat for one day a month. Creating that space gives me time and room to hear from God. Ruth Haley Barton's book, *Sacred Rhythms*, says it best in her intro: "The disciplines themselves are basic components of the rhythm of intimacy with God that feed and nourish the soul, keeping us open and available for God's surprising initiatives in our lives. After we learn the disciplines, there is infinite creativity for putting them together in a rhythm that works for us and great freedom for adding other disciplines and creative elements" (page 15).

Second, being involved in community—regular involvement in intentional community. Build your life into living among and with people with whom you study, pray and worship. If you don't do it now, it will not be automatic when you move across cultures. Living in community is a learned heart-attitude and Kingdom skill.

Any closing thoughts?

It is an extreme privilege and necessary part of understanding our God to learn from people who are different from us about what it means to worship God. For many of us, we have the opportunity to do that now, right where we live. That is a blessing and gift from the Lord. **f**



New Bridges: Connecting People Through Language and Culture

Authors: Nancy Cheek, Ed.D; Kathryn Herbert, Ed.D * Illustrator: Gwen Turner

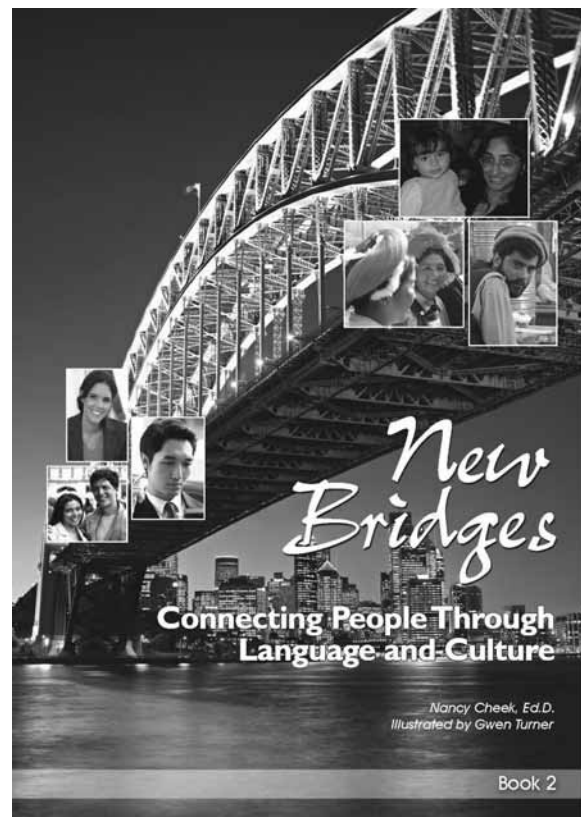
Interlink Resources International, Reading, PA

REVIEWED BY LISA LA GEORGE

The algorithm required to answer the question: “Can you recommend a text for me to Teach English as a Second/Foreign language?” is normally complex. I calculate location, native language, course objectives, and teacher experience; I sift through the existing texts; and then I have to explain why no text is adequate to accomplish the task. That calculation just got much easier, thanks to the introduction of the *New Bridges* curriculum. Written by Nancy Cheek and Kathryn Herbert, *New Bridges* showcases the best of interactive teaching methodology in a relevant topical format without sacrificing the grammatical and linguistic foundations that students need to become confident and competent interlocutors.

The *New Bridges* curriculum is comprehensive. The five levels of the curriculum span the spectrum from middle novice to upper intermediate, and the accompanying placement test allows the teacher to analyze a student’s capabilities in reading, writing, speaking and listening for accurate placement in the appropriate level. Each book in the series contains eight units which include three two-hour lessons for a total of 48 teaching hours. The teacher’s manual mirrors the student’s book, and both books can be supplemented with well-integrated conversation cards, game cards, and a teacher’s resource packet. Gwen Turner’s charming line-drawings illustrate the texts with pictures of modestly-dressed individuals from multiple cultures.

The *New Bridges* series states that the two authors have a wealth of cross-cultural experience, curricular

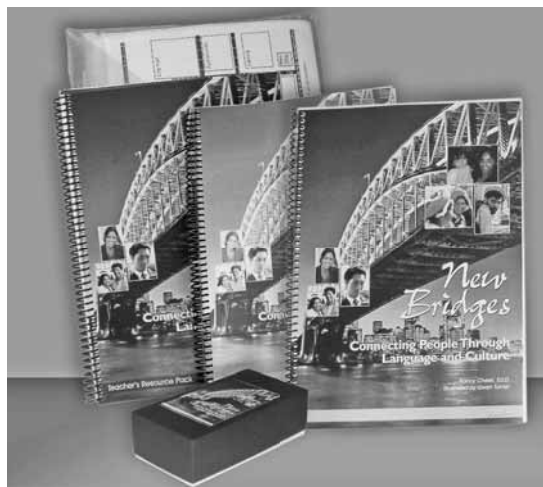


development, and many years of teacher-training between them, and it shows in the finished product. For the past ten years, I have been training undergraduate ESL/EFL teachers-in-training, and this series has proved to be clear enough for even my newest trainees to use in multiple educational, religious, and

Lisa La George is Director of International Ministries, The Master's College.

ethnic contexts, including urban U.S. multi-lingual classrooms and mono-lingual settings in Tanzania, South Africa, Thailand and Central Asia.

The *New Bridges* series is also simple to purchase and transport. Although the series is available in hard-copy, spiral-bound texts, the publisher, Interlink Resources International, also offers bulk licenses for electronic editions. My teachers who travel internationally can take the entire series on a flash drive and print the texts locally for a fraction of the cost of transporting heavy texts.



After a year of working through these texts with my teachers and their students, now when I hear the question: "Can you recommend a text. . .?" I

unhesitatingly recommend *New Bridges*. **f**

Interlink Resources International
P.O. Box 12546
Reading, PA 19612
610-370-8329
info@ilinkres.org

Direct book orders to:
Cherie Rempel
New Bridges Project Director
571-481-5396
books.kiteb@gmail.com

New Bridges

connecting people through language and culture

English conversation curriculum for adult speakers of other languages in conservative cultures

Teacher-friendly materials make *New Bridges* ideal for new teachers as well as seasoned instructors looking for fresh ideas. The curriculum covers English conversation basics and introduces deep and controversial topics.

New Bridges can be used effectively anywhere in the world, and has been proven successful in over a dozen countries.

For more information email books.kiteb@gmail.com, or call (571) 481-5396.

Buy a license and print your own textbooks on the field!

Each license* includes all *New Bridges* books in PDF format, which print well in grayscale on A4 paper. PDFs can be downloaded or purchased on CD for a nominal fee. Permission to sell printed textbooks is included with all licenses.

* Teachers based in the United States may purchase printed books and cards but may not purchase a printing license.

- ideal for use in conservative cultures
- cost-efficient
- the only complete EFL/ESL curriculum you can print on the field
- easy to photocopy on A4 paper
- teacher-friendly
- field-tested
- professionally designed

InterlinkResources
International

P.O. Box 12546, Reading, PA 19612
610-370-8329; info@ilinkres.org



A Strategic Vision: Mobilizing the National Church to Reach Unreached Peoples

HOWARD FOLTZ

It was my first trip to Ethiopia. My pastor, Dr. Charles Blair, had preceded me on three previous visits doing leadership training with the 17 denominations of the Evangelical Church Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE). On his third visit, the Ethiopian leaders told Pastor Blair that he could bring other teachers to Ethiopia. Pastor Blair had worked with me on our AIMS project for the former Soviet Union right after the Berlin Wall came down. In this vast project, we trained national leaders in church planting who were experiencing newfound freedom in unevangelized areas, including work among unreached Muslim and Buddhist peoples. The results and miracles in the former Soviet Union were tremendous! We made a video of this project, and Pastor Blair took it with him to Ethiopia to show the ECFE leaders. They were inspired and said, "We need this training and impact here." We were eager to respond.

We started our training with our proven *Harvest Connection* seminar. *Harvest Connection* includes a teaching on the *Biblical Basis of Missions*, *The State of the World*, *The State of Ethiopia*, *What a Great Commission Church Looks Like*, and *The Eight Best Practices of Doing Missions*. The goal is to help leaders make their churches mission-based churches that would send missionaries where the Gospel has never gone before.

The second component is the *State of the World and Ethiopia* that highlights the unfinished task around the world, but particularly in Ethiopia. We asked

the Ethiopian churches to do their own research on unreached peoples in their country. This was an interesting step, for it took some explanation to help them understand the particular terminology of reaching unreached people groups. They found 70 groups that they determined were unreached and without sufficient churches to sustain an indigenous church movement. It was amazing to see how few of the leaders had a complete understanding of the unfinished task both in the world and in Ethiopia. The statistical facts struck them, and I can remember clearly many of these wonderful leaders openly

weeping as they considered those in their own country who had never heard the Gospel.

The third component of *Harvest Connection* is a look at a *Great Commission Church*. We taught that the church is not made of wood and straw or bricks and mortar, but is built by the dynamics of God working in the midst of His people.

Then, church structure emerges from the dynamics of God. The end result is the dynamics of God being released through church structures to see the Body of Christ expanded through new souls coming into His Kingdom and churches planted.

The fourth component is the *Eight Best Practices of Doing Missions through Local Churches*. We taught that these practices are proven experiences in America and other parts of the world, and we want them to pray and think through how they could be contextualized within the Ethiopian context. The eight best practices are: prayer, missions task force, strategy, faith promise giving, missions conferences,



Application time—generating a "grass-roots" missions movement

Dr. Howard Foltz is president of AIMS (Accelerating International Mission Strategies).

For more information, please contact AIMS. Phone: 757-495-5850 • Email: aims@aims.org • Web: www.aims.org

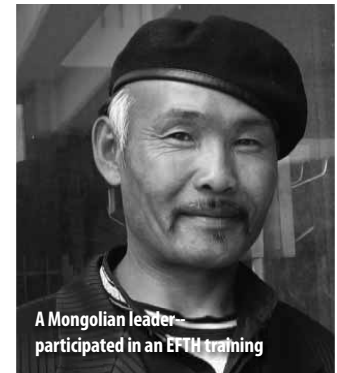
National leaders praying for their adopted Unreached People Group



short-term teams, adopting unreached people groups and missionary training.

Since I have been part of this training ministry around the world, I have seen what I call "prophetic intervention" occur multiple times. In prophetic intervention, the anointed Word of God enters into the minds and ministry of God's leaders and leverages them into a new biblical worldview, where their churches become mission sending churches, instead of doing Jerusalem/Judea outreach only. Because of prophetic intervention, AIMS has

returned to Ethiopia 23 times for follow-up training, consultation, evaluation and refinement of our partnership with EFCE churches. From that first training in 1993, when the leaders told me they had not sent out Ethiopian missionaries before, they have now deployed and sent out over 1,600 Ethiopian missionaries. The number of unreached people groups has decreased from 70 to 35, and thousands of new churches have been planted. The missionaries have reported dozens of miracles, and over 20,000 Muslims have come to Christ in East and South Ethiopia alone. They have even sent missionaries to Sudan, India and Pakistan. In addition, the practice of faith promise giving that they now teach their churches has broken some of the power of negative dependency, for nearly all of these missionaries are supported only with Ethiopian funds.



(continued on page 26)

TO THIS WORLD, WE TAKE THE GOSPEL.



THE SCHOOL OF EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

At Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary we have a mission.

It's the same mission we've always had, and it doesn't change. Our mission is to produce Christian leaders capable of guiding the church to fulfill its role in the Great Commission. To accomplish this task, we offer the finest training in biblical, theological and ministry disciplines known to man. Each of our programs is designed to prepare students for effective ministry both in North America and around the world.

For more information or to apply online, visit
WWW.SWBTS.EDU or call **1.800.SWBTS01**.

SOUTHWESTERN
 BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HYDROGRAPHICAL MAP




crescent project
 HOPE WORTH SHARING

Sahara Challenge 2010

One week of intensive training in ministry to Muslims

Muslims are searching. Meet the Challenge!

Every year at Sahara Challenge, ***Crescent Project's seminary-level training***, believers from around the globe gather to deepen their knowledge and passion for sharing the hope of Christ with Muslims.

Crescent Project's training is practical, biblical and much-needed in today's climate of misunderstanding.

Ravi Zacharias, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries

Crescent Project's message of love and reconciliation through Jesus is refreshing and desperately needed today.

Dr. Eugene Habecker, President of Taylor University

"This training" is a powerful tool for churches and small groups desiring to understand Islam and connect with Muslims in their communities.

Steve Richardson, Pioneers USA

June 5-12

Atlanta, Georgia

Optional Domestic and International Mission Trips Following

Reserve your spot today at www.crescentproject.org/sahara
Space is limited to 150.

(continued from page 25)

In the follow-up visits to Ethiopia and the other countries, we further developed our curriculum into what we call *Equipping for the Harvest* (EFTH). It includes: 1) *The Harvest Connection* seminar as cited above; 2) *Networking* national pastors and churches together into a partnership targeting a specific unreached people group; 3) *The Biblical Basis of Faith Promise Giving* with testimonies from developing world churches and the power of applying these biblical principles.

We always ask the national leaders to pray about what unreached people groups they want to target. The fire and passion of intercession grows through these prayer times day after day. Then we teach how they can financially sustain a missions movement within their country through *Faith Promise Giving*.

The last application of the EFTH training is to gather pastors in partnership groups. Prior to the training conference, we train facilitators for each people group, who in turn lead the pastors in that partnership in adopting that people group. The partnership then develops a basic initial strategy to raise up missionaries to send to the unreached people. The end goal is a church-planting movement in that group. This process has generated over 1200 strategic national partnerships designed to reach unreached peoples. To Him be all the glory! **f**

New Tools and Resources from Joshua Project

A Revised Progress Scale

Joshua Project (www.joshuaproject.net) is a research initiative of the U.S. Center for World Mission, seeking to highlight the ethnic people groups of the world with the fewest followers of Christ. In an effort to continue to focus on the unfinished task and highlight the unreached, Joshua Project has revised its progress scale. For simplicity and clarity, we have moved from a four-color to a three-color scale. The new colors (represented here in *Mission Frontiers* by shades of gray) are:

- Red = Unreached / Least-Reached
- Yellow = Formative/Nominal church
- Green = Established / Significant church

These three colors are used throughout the Joshua Project website to indicate the level of reachedness for people groups, people clusters and countries. Clicking the progress scale color block

Joshua Project Progress Scale
Unreached / Least-Reached Less than 2% Evangelicals and Less than 5% Christian Adherents
Formative or Nominal Church Less than 2% Evangelical and Greater than 5% Christian Adherents
Established Church Greater than 2% Evangelicals

anywhere on the Joshua Project website brings up a description of all levels. A summary of all progress levels and a revised progress level world

map are available at: <http://www.joshuaproject.net/global-progress-scale.php>. Click a progress level for a listing of people groups at that level, and then drill down to a specific people group for detailed statistics, photo, map, text and links.

Online New Testament in 400 Languages

Did you know you can listen to the New Testament online in 400 different languages? Faith Comes



By Hearing (www.faithcomesbyhearing.com) has developed an impressive online audio player that can be embedded in most websites. Joshua Project is a test site for this New Testament player. For a list of languages with an online New Testament audio player, go to <http://www.joshuaproject.net/nt-audio.php>. Click on the speaker icon to listen to any book and chapter of the New Testament in a particular language. You can also select another language from within the audio player itself. Just think: because of Faith Comes by Hearing's efforts, the entire New Testament is available online at no cost in the primary language of nearly four out of every five people in the world, and new languages are becoming available all the time.



Pray for the
Unreached People of the Day

Uzbek, Northern of Uzbekistan



Uzbek, Northern of Uzbekistan
The earliest ancestors of the Uzbek, the Central Asian Turk, arrived in the region in the 13th century. As early as the 13th and 14th centuries, the Turkic and Mongolian tribes, nomadic, were nomads. They were nomads. It was from several of these nomads that the Uzbek descended.

Identity Obstacles
Creative ideas are needed as to how to lead into the country and remove, preventing it from being.

Outreach Ideas
Many people in Uzbekistan are looking for a better system to satisfy their deepest spiritual hunger. Christ can fulfill this hunger.

Pray for the believers of Christ
Pray for the believers among the Uzbek, that the Lord will give them pastors and teachers who will rightly teach the scriptures, model Christ behavior, and who are zealous in their love for the Lord.

Pray for the unreached people group
Pray the Uzbek will hunger and thirst for life to be found only in Jesus Christ.

Scripture Focus
"You belong to the Lord, call on his name, make known among the nations what he has done." Psalm 117:1



Uzbek, Northern of Uzbekistan
Presented by Joshua Project

Daily Unreached People Email

Do you enjoy the daily newspaper (or at least the Sunday edition) delivered to your home? What if you could get an unreached people profile in your in-box every morning or every Sunday morning? Joshua Project offers a daily email featuring the Unreached People of the Day with a photo, map, text, prayer

items and basic statistics. Sign up at: <http://www.unreachedoftheday.org/unreached-email.php>. Join thousands of others praying for the same unreached people group each day. Joshua Project works in conjunction with the *Global Prayer Digest* (<http://www.globalprayerdigest.org>) to feature the same people group on the same day where possible. Sign up for both today!

Signs of the Times PowerPoint


Joshua Project now offers a new PowerPoint called "Signs of the Times." It gives an overview of some of the biblical signs that will characterize the end times. In addition, this PowerPoint provides an overview of some of the major positive and negative trends in global missions today. It is a visionary tool for small groups, churches, mission conferences, denominations and mission agencies. This PowerPoint and other Great Commission presentations are available at:

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/great-commission-powerpoints.php>

Unreached People Prayer Cards

Need an unreached people prayer reminder? Check out the Unreached People Prayer cards

Pray for the Unreached
Arab, Bedouin of Saudi Arabia



Country: Saudi Arabia
People: Arab, Bedouin
Population: 954,000
World Popl: 1,688,000
Main Language: Arabic, Algerian Saharan
Main Religion: Islam
Status: ■ Least-Reached
Christ-Followers: Few, less than 2%
Bible: None
www.joshuaproject.net
www.ethne.net
www.etnopedia.org

"Declare his glory among the nations" Psalm 96:3

at: <http://www.joshuaproject.net/prayer-cards.php>. Prayer cards are available in English, Spanish, French, German and Portuguese and in a variety of sets such as by region, by religious bloc, the 100 largest unreached or the unreached of the day. They are in PDF format—eight different cards per sheet. Print them out on cardstock, and use them as prayer reminders or share them with others to help spread vision for the unreached. Joshua Project can also generate custom sets such as for a specific country or for a single people group.

Please contact Joshua Project [<info@joshuaproject.net>](mailto:info@joshuaproject.net) for more details on any of these resources. We also are very interested in feedback regarding new features and user-friendliness of the Joshua Project website.

Unreached People Information on your iPhone

A volunteer team has been working on a Joshua Project application that will allow iPhone users to view unreached peoples and strategic mission information right on their mobile phones. The application is now in beta-test. Watch the Joshua Project website for details! f



RAISING LOCAL RESOURCES



Do No Harm

GLENN SCHWARTZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WORLD MISSION ASSOCIATES

Medical people have a basic guideline for the treatment of patients: “Do no harm.” I have often thought about that when dealing with cross-cultural situations. I know by experience that it is easy to do harm, especially when living and working in a cultural situation very different from one’s own. It is embarrassing to think back over some of the mistakes I made simply because I did not know that the “side effects” of my desire to help might be negative.

One aspect of the dependency syndrome is that when we try to be helpful we can actually do harm without realizing it. When I speak or write about this, I sometimes get a response something like this: “I had no idea that what we were doing could have that kind of impact on those we are trying to help.” I will provide an example to illustrate this.

A church in North America has a burden for those in need in Africa. A short-term team from America or England visits East or West Africa on an exploratory trip looking for some meaningful way to become involved. As often happens, they encounter an African pastor who has an idea for an income-generating project that simply needs funding. What a wonderful opportunity—helping people who already have the idea, as well as the personnel and the desire to get something done. From the perspective of the pastor in Africa, this is a blessing from the Lord—people are offering to provide the one thing he does not have, which is start-up capital. The American church believes they have found a worthy investment.

Assume for a moment that this income-generating project is to make and sell

clothing or some other service. The people with the ideas and willingness to work now have a financial partner willing to make it happen. But there are several things that the well-meaning outsiders might not know.

One of these is the potential for church leaders to become sidetracked by running a business that diverts them from their primary calling of evangelism and discipling believers. In Acts 6 the apostles found that they needed to delegate to others so they could “turn over responsibility and give attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:7).

But, something else may be happening that well-meaning outsiders do not see. They may not realize that the funds they are providing for believers to operate a church-run business are giving an unfair advantage to some people in the community while others do not get such help. Let’s assume that it is the clothing business I mentioned above. How would you feel if you were a non-church member in that community with a clothing business who did not have access to the capital that comes from overseas? You own your own sewing machine and operate a small business trying to make a living for your family.

Now along comes a new competitor—a church-run business funded with capital from overseas. That new competing business gets cloth, sewing machines and money to pay laborers while you have none of those things available. It would be as if a foreign government came into a community in North America and subsidized a major industry that put thousands of people out of work—essentially killing small

business initiative on a large scale. Yes, a few people in the church now have employment, but others in the community cannot compete with the power provided by the outside resources which the church now has available.

A more serious problem happens when a church project competes with the private business of a church member. If I am a church member struggling to run my own business and committed to paying my tithes and offerings to the congregation where I worship, how will I feel about going to Sunday services and putting money into a collection for a church that is funding my biggest competitor? It simply would not seem to be fair. Surely there must be an alternative to this kind of unfair competition led by the church and funded by outsiders. The good news is that there are alternatives.

Thankfully we are beginning to see in some places “village savings and loan societies” and some micro-loan projects designed to mobilize local resources and avoid the negative consequences of outside funding. In addition, the manner in which many such groups are organized means that competition is reduced through cooperative efforts, allowing all boats in the harbor to rise together. It is a spirit of cooperation rather than a spirit of competition that makes this a wholesome process.

Admittedly, it takes more time and effort to mobilize local resources than it does to simply write a large check. But experience has shown that when done appropriately, there can be long-term positive impact, rather than a short-term “fix” which may result in harmful consequences. **f**

FURTHER REFLECTIONS



Learning the Lay of the Land

GREG H. PARSONS, GENERAL DIRECTOR, U.S. CENTER FOR WORLD MISSION

The rescue and reconstruction of Haiti weigh heavily on many minds and hearts.

Much could be said about this small nation, including the difficulties of meaningfully helping a country where the rule of law is questionable and where only a few people control the flow of money.

In 1980 my wife spent a summer in Haiti while she was in nursing school. Then, in 1982, with the same long-term missionary from the country, I visited Haiti to set up a similar summer trip for a team from the USA. We've both known a number of missionaries working there, who have more than 100 combined years of experience in the country.

With that background in my mind, I wonder again, "How prepared are the 14-day teams that have gone to Haiti or other places we in the USA consider 'needy'? Were these teams really helpful? What did they actually do? How prepared were they to understand the situation in the country before they got there?"

Last weekend I heard part of a radio interview with travel guru Rick Steves, who was discussing travel questions with callers about their upcoming trips. One caller is traveling next summer with his two teenagers to Costa Rica. He wanted to know what he should learn about the country in preparation. He added that he was going with a church group, so I perked up. I expected a generic answer, but Rick Steves surprised me.

Rick first talked about the need for the group to learn about the situation, learning about the history of Latin

America and the relationship between rich and poor. He said they should read a little about liberation theology and about how church leaders in Latin America have struggled to answer difficult questions of poverty and injustice. He recounted the uneasy historical tensions between the rich and the poor, and the cycle of the rich often oppressing or killing the poor and the poor often revolting and killing the rich. He mentioned the year of Jubilee in the Old Testament and how that ideal might apply in Latin America.

Then Rick Steves added a comment that points to a core issue in mission today. Church people (and he is a church person, he noted) tend not to ask the questions as to why the poverty is there in the first place. They often think that what the Church can bring impacts only the future lives of those they serve, assuming that their problems will be solved ultimately but not now. While there is some truth in that way of thinking, Rick said, he hoped the Church would discover more to offer to people now mired in preventable suffering.

I'm sure that Rick Steves has his bias. Many of the answers offered by liberation theology are limited at best. But what serious alternatives have evangelicals suggested?

I couldn't help thinking about the lingering question: Why are we "church" people often so far behind in our awareness, reflection and action? I know there are many exceptions, but we often seem to be stuck in a sort of "pre-Information Age" in which we bumble around the world with two-week teams ignorant of the histories and cultures of those we serve, and then we're so

relieved to go home, "where people at least pick up the trash." But what does that kind of mentality communicate to those we visit in other nations?

These short-term trips may impart some blessing to the peoples they purport to serve, but how do these trips really help these peoples deal with their situation? What other problems do we ignore or create while trying to help?

Just today I heard a pastor from Africa answer a question about mistakes made in a partnership with a church in the U.S. The church was trying hard and was committed to the process in what now appears to be a helpful, two-way partnership. But in early days of the partnership one of the American pastors went to visit the African church plant and was so shocked by the needs in the area that he opened his wallet and started handing out money to different people around him. This uninformed generosity prompted some Africans to wonder if their leaders had always been getting funds from the Western visitors; were the African leaders keeping those funds for themselves? Oops.

The African pastor said that it took years to resolve the issues caused by that incident. He still wondered if they actually had resolved it.

Like many *Mission Frontiers* readers, I long for the day when Christ-followers do a better job of keeping up instead of catching up. What could you do to help your fellowship, or those nearby, in their engagement with global issues? **f**