



## Asian Frontier Mission Initiative **AFMI/ASFM BULLETIN** Asia Society for Frontier Mission

# The Kingdom of God and the Mission of God: *Part Two*

*Rick Brown*

### STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Unlike most earthly kingdoms, the Kingdom of God has stages of development. It was prefigured in the Kingdom of Israel and was foretold by the prophets as its ideal successor. God inaugurated the Kingdom by sending the Savior-King himself, Jesus Christ, in whom the Kingdom was visibly present. Ridderbos wrote:

The secret of belonging to the kingdom lies in belonging to him (Mt. 7:23; 25:41). In brief, the person of Jesus as the Messiah is the centre of all that is announced in the gospel concerning the kingdom ... The kingdom is concentrated in him in its present and future aspects alike.[1]

Since Jesus' ascension and enthronement in heaven, the Kingdom has undergone a stage of growth under Jesus' invisible reign that continues at the present time. (Most modern amillennialists and postmillennialists identify the millennium with this period of growth.) This stage will end when Jesus returns manifestly to judge all people, eliminate dissenters,

remove all evil, and "consummate" (i.e., complete and perfect) the total reign of his kingdom over all the earth. (Premillennialists identify the millennium with this stage.) Finally, when every evil has been eliminated and the world has been made new (1 Cor 15:22–28), the "kingdom of the world" will become "the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev 11:15–19), also called "the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph 5:5), "the kingdom of their Father" (Matt 13:43), and "the age to come" (Luke 18:30; 20:35). This is commonly called "the Eternal Kingdom" (based on 2 Peter 1:11) and includes "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet 3:13). MacArthur refers to these five stages as prophesied, present, interim, manifest, and eternal.[2] It is significant to note that during the interim Kingdom, between Jesus ascension and his return, his throne is in heaven, as are the saints who die before his return. Paul calls this Christ's "heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim 4:18).

It is common for theologians to lump the three middle stages together and describe the whole period from the inauguration of the Kingdom to its final consummation as a single development. This is variously called "the present Kingdom," "the provisional Kingdom," "the mediatorial Kingdom," "the Messianic Kingdom," "the Kingdom of Christ," or in Western tradition, *regnum Christi*. The last stage is called "the future Kingdom," "the final Kingdom," "the Kingdom consummated," and "the eternal Kingdom," and in the Bible "the age to come," "salvation," and "eternal life." It is this last stage that is frequently mentioned in the New Testament as the "hope" of the Gospel.

*(continues to p. 4)*

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# Editorial Comments.....

John Kim

**ASFM** (Asia Society for Frontier Mission) has a unique vision statement, that is *“To promote cutting edge thinking and sharing on an international level with a specific focus on Asia and/or Asians in the area of frontier missiology”*

The second annual conference of AFMI-ASFM was held on October 2010. Around 100 participants who attended the conference mostly came from mission leaders, reflective field practitioners, theologians, and missiologists. Cutting edge thinking and sharing on an international level was made as described in the vision statement. Whole three day sessions were divided into three main tracks dealing with “Global Cooperation”, “Asian Initiatives”, and “Insider Perspectives”. Both the Asians and Westerners practiced humble spirit to learn from each other. Around twenty presentations and workshop sessions were made. People were asking how to keep maintaining the momentum of this new Asian initiative in the atmosphere of international cooperation for frontier mission. It seems that we need to encourage or initiate similar movements in other countries. All of the presented articles were compiled in the proceedings of the conference. *(If you need an electronic version of “the proceedings of ASFM/AMLF 2010”, you may contact John K. at yahya\_kim@hanmail.net).*

ASFM has 6 objectives among which you see the following definite statement including *insider perspectives* (See the back page of this bulletin):

*“To promote, though not exclusively, thinking and focus on insider perspectives and to support insiders who have heart and faith allegiance to Jesus and the Bible.”*

In order to meet this objective, *the next gathering for ASFM (Oct. 2011) will be sharply focused on “Insider Perspectives”*. Nowadays we have been observing new movements to Jesus “happening” within non-Christian major socio-religious people groups on the earth. The Gospel looked confined within Jewish culture and religion in its early stage. Since it started to be spread out of Judaism, the faith community has become such a globalized but diverse Christianity among so many people groups in various cultures. However, at a glance we may recognize almost all of those Christians are only found among the tribe peoples, savages, barbarians, animists, and shamanism/folk believers. However, throughout the Kingdom history, we *now* seem to see God’s own marvelous redemptive work for His Kingdom that has never been observed. This looks like what Peter confessed,

*“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.” (Acts 10:34)*

What Peter said is surely understood when we observe such a multitude who are moving towards Jesus from within Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other socio-religious people groups. This is the fulfillment of God’s own promise as He declared His own marvelous redemptive work that human could never even imagine. We are so privileged to see His Kingdom development in such a dramatic way.

**Rick Brown** continues to talk about **the Kingdom of God and the mission of God**. This is a part of what he presented at AFMI event on October 2010, that is the second part following his previous work. (See the last issue of AFMI Bulletin) Insider perspectives must be based upon the Kingdom perspective. Rick as a Bible scholar, through his comprehensive work on the theme of “the Kingdom of God and the Mission of God”, shares the foundational basis and nature on such a peculiar redemptive work of God that we now see in various socio-religious people groups in a grand scale:

*“From the foundation of the world, God prepared the future Kingdom for his children to inherit at the end of this age (Matt 25:34), and we can say that the mission of God has been to direct history towards this goal. To that end God gave us the Scriptures and the Savior, Jesus Christ—who is God himself, the Word of God incarnate—to be the Messianic King of God’s present (and future) Kingdom and to save people into it for God’s eternal glory.... Jesus did not found an institutional religion or commission his disciples to propagate one. Nevertheless, organized religions have enormous instrumental value in serving God’s mission. Christian religious institutions provide an organized means of evangelizing, baptizing, discipling, and teaching, supplemented by home groups. When disciples of Christ in non-Christian cultures remain outside of institutional Christianity, they must rely on home meetings alone for these services. On the other hand, when these disciples retain their native social identity and take a Kingdom-of-God approach to mission and ecclesia, the Gospel of the Kingdom often spreads throughout their social networks, leading many more to faith in Christ. This rarely happens with a conflict-of-religions approach.” (p. 10)*

To complete the mission of God, many of us have been involved in the “closure movement”. If you are interested or involved in the closure movement, here **Kevin Higgins’** article will give you a fresh insight. This was originally published in IJFM and presented at the last ASFM gathering (Oct 2010) as somewhat *post-Tokyo* reflection. In the closure movements, the terms like

“unreached” or “unengaged” are important to be determined in certain scale (ex, IMB scale—see Kevin’s article). However, new Jesus movements taking place within major religious affinity blocs seem to appeal somehow new but the Bible old definitions. Regarding this matter, Kevin appeals as follows and proposes four ways to deal with “insider perspectives” in the closure movement. 1. “*Gamaliel-Open*”, 2. “*Security-Closed*”, 3. “*Grace-Tongued*”, and 4. “*Biblically-Reformed*”.

“If follows of Jesus within Islam, or Buddhism, or Hinduism are reaching a people group by sharing the gospel and developing appropriate forms of fellowship for believers, is that people now engaged?”

We are now observing new Jesus movements within so called world religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The implication of the insider perspectives for missionary task must be found in any socio-religious groups as long as they pertain to the Biblical basis and appropriateness for the Kingdom development.

Thus in this issue, you are to read some articles dealing with the insider perspectives and issues in those major affinity groups. Case studies will guide you to have concrete and practical understanding whether they are local ones or nationwide. **H. L. Richard** is talking about the church and the Hindu heritage by sharing 5 historical case studies in India. According to his conclusion through those case studies, pioneering new approaches that seek truly Hindu expressions of *ekklesia* (church) seems a commendable effort. **Harun Kim** serving in SEA shares his own practice in a local Muslim context, based on insider perspective. Not many Asians are found in the ministries driven by insider perspectives yet. In fact, Asians are surrounded by those insiders as their neighbors. Harun as a Korean outsider describes some steps that we need to take and share case studies in order to experience meaningful sign of breakthrough. **David Lim** introduces somewhat nationwide movement in Philippines where he tries to find any linkage with the closure movement and insider perspectives. Philippines is a good example as a country where we can see what kind of mission efforts are now made in this era of globalization. Diaspora and tent-making ministries at overseas countries are the key words. David reports a recommendable situation for Buddhism ministry in this nationwide mission movement.

In order to foster the worldwide frontier mission movement, training is one thing we should consider carefully. For this year too, AFMI provides a training opportunity not only for Asians but also for Westerners who are willing to seeking for the Kingdom development on the cutting edges of frontier mission. Some reflections that two trainees share after their training experience will help you understand how things are going through the training. AFMI will call for **ASFM (Asia Society for Frontier Mission) conference** and provide the training in September and October 2011. (See p. 37-41 for more details)

AFMI-ASFM is always waiting for your contribution not only in the form of articles but also by sharing your direct inputs, feedbacks and reflections through emails. (email contact: yahya\_kim@hanmail.net) We expect to see many more contributors take their participations in this Asian initiatives through **Asia Society for Frontier Mission**.

May His abundant joy and blessings be with you in this new year of 2011 as you seek for His Kingdom!

John Kim

Jan 2011

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Our primary focus this year will be **INSIDER PERSPECTIVES**. Participants are encouraged to submit papers providing relevant insights, models, and/or case studies toward the purpose of Kingdom advance—the Biblical Jesus movements in other socio-religious traditions like Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Shinto, and postmodern atheist groups.

The due date for submitting papers is Aug 31 2011. Please feel free to contact John Kim at yahya\_kim@hanmail.net if you have any questions. Decisions on which papers to include will be made by the steering committee.

**The 3th Annual Conference of AFMI**  
***Asia Society for Frontier Mission* in SEA**  
**4-8 Oct 2011**

(Continued from the front page)

## The Kingdom of God and the Mission of God: Part Two

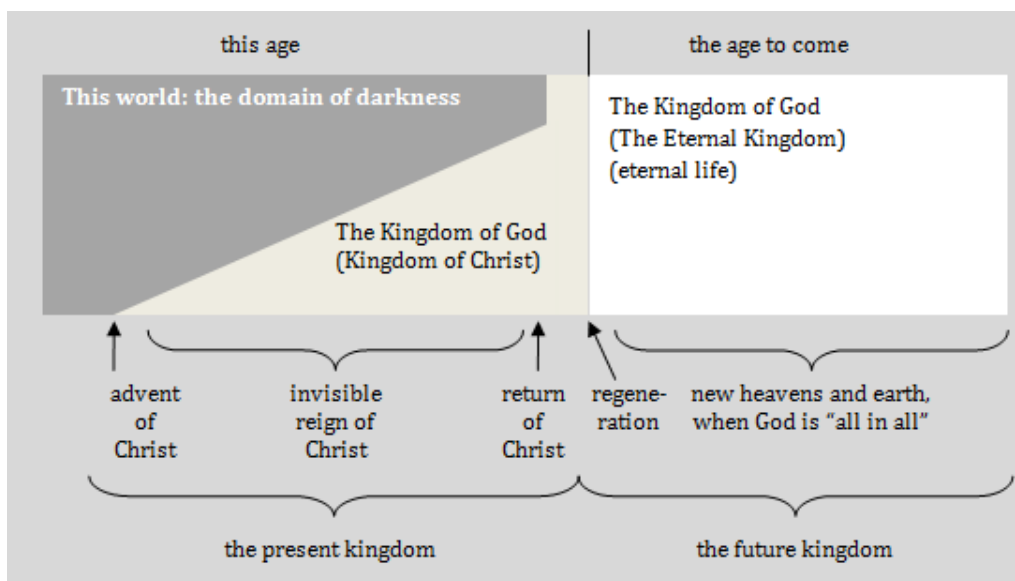
It is important to keep in mind, however, that these are two stages of the same kingdom, named “the Kingdom of God,” which includes the very same citizens in this age and the next. This is represented in Figure 1:

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Nevertheless, members of the Kingdom do have a “taste” of the blessings of the future Kingdom, especially in the fruit and gifts of the Spirit:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22–23)

*May [we] know what is the hope to which he has called [us], what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. (Eph 1:18).*



**Figure 1** The stages of development of the Kingdom of God

Paul wrote, “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1 Cor 15:19). He went on to explain, “For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality” (1 Cor 15:53). It is clear from the future tenses in most of the beatitudes that while the disciples of Christ have citizenship in the Kingdom and receive many blessings in its present stage, the full blessings of the Kingdom are in its future stage (Matt 5:3–12):

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

## THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM

The Old Testament prophets, especially Isaiah (Isa 40:9; 52:7), proclaimed in advance the “good news” of God’s mission. They said God was planning to establish an eternal age of perfect righteousness and blessing, and that he would do so through his special “servant” (Isa 42:1; 52:13). Isaiah described this Mediator as the very “arm” of God (Isa 40:10; 52:10), suggesting the incarnation, and as a divine and everlasting king who is like a son to God (Isa 9:6–7; Ps 2) “his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Daniel said God would establish this eternal and righteous kingdom through a heavenly figure who is “like a son of man” (Dan 7:13–14) and that it would grow to encompass all the earth (Dan 2:35). The New Testament reveals that person to be Jesus. He began his ministry by proclaiming “the Gospel of the Kingdom,” meaning the good news that God was now inaugurating his Kingdom and calling people into his Kingdom community. Jesus indicated that he is the Savior-King whom God had sent and the heavenly “son of man” whom Daniel foresaw.

Unfortunately, the people of this world are all sinners and do not qualify for a Kingdom that is free of sin and evil, but

Jesus proclaimed the good news that people could be forgiven and become citizens of the Kingdom by repenting and believing in him. This offer is implied in his initial proclamations: Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." The phrase translated as 'at hand' has been explained several ways, but the one that best fits the context is that the kingdom is now available, "within your grasp." The statement in Luke 17:20–21 that "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" is explained similarly by some to mean "within your reach," meaning present in Jesus and available to you but requiring your response.[3]

More importantly, Jesus is the sacrifice of the new covenant by which it is possible for people to be accepted into the Kingdom.

Jesus entrusted his disciples with the same message (Matt 10:7; Luke 9:2, 60) to all the nations (Matt 24:14), telling them to say "The kingdom of God has come near to you" (Luke 10:9), and this is what they conveyed (Acts 20:25; 28:31). They announced in Christ the inauguration of the Kingdom and the opportunity to be accepted into it as full citizens and as heirs of eternal life when the Kingdom is consummated after Christ's return. W. F. Arndt wrote:

What is offered to those that accept Jesus the Savior and King and become citizens in that blessed realm of which He is the Ruler is not wealth, not power, not health, at least not directly. With the forgiveness of sins they have received rest for their souls, a joyful outlook upon the future, the assurance of heavenly bliss, and with this righteousness all other things will be added unto them (Matt 6:33)."[4]

Jesus highlighted the gift of the Holy Spirit as a major blessing of the Kingdom (Luke 11:13).

Jesus said "this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14). That task in the mission of God was passed from Jesus to his disciples; he said, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21). The mission he delegated to his followers involves more than proclamation; it involves the discipleship of people in every ethnic group: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19–20). Paul says this involves "training" them "to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age," that they might be "a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (Titus 2:12, 14).

Earthly kingdoms do not allow foreigners to become citizens unless they pledge loyalty to the king. Applicants who reject the king are rejected as candidates for citizenship. The

same applies to the Kingdom of God: people cannot enter the Kingdom unless they accept Jesus as their King. Jesus made this fairly clear when he condemned the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida for not responding when they saw his miracles (Luke 10:13). He made it clear in a parable, when the king says on his return, "But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me" (Luke 19:27). He uttered a similar judgment against the wicked tenants in the parable of the tenants (Matt 21:33–41), and "when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them" (Matt 21:45). Jesus went on to make it explicit that the "son" in the parable was also the "cornerstone" of (the Messianic) Psalm 118:22 that the (religious) builders had rejected (Matt 21:42). "Therefore I tell you," Jesus said to the Pharisees, "the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it" (Matt 21:43).

Jesus gave similar warnings for those who reject the proclamation of the gospel by his disciples. He said:

And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.

Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. (Matt 10:14–15)

Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near. (Luke 10:11)

What had come near to those people but passed them by was the opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God as sons of God, brothers of Christ, and heirs of eternal life. Charles Erdman wrote, "The very essence of the Gospel becomes embodied in the promise of a place in the Kingdom for all who will repent of sin and believe in Christ."[5]

**What had come near to those people but passed them by was the opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God as sons of God, brothers of Christ, and heirs of eternal life. Charles Erdman wrote, "The very essence of the Gospel becomes embodied in the promise of a place in the Kingdom for all who will repent of sin and believe in Christ."**

It is evident that the mission of God is not to institute a religion but to replace this fallen and sinful world with his perfect and eternal Kingdom and to save into this glorious new world all who believe in the Savior-King whom he has sent. By their faith they are born again of God's Spirit as children of God and become heirs of eternal life in the age to come. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). God's saving mission reveals his love for humankind, and his eternal Kingdom will reveal the fullness of his love and glory, not in a new religion, but in a new world. The future Kingdom will have no temple or religion, but will be filled with the glory of God and the Lamb, by whose light all the "nations will walk" in love and harmony (Rev 21:22–24).

The biblical words for 'send' usually mean to commission

someone to carry out a mission. For that matter, the English words ‘mission’ and ‘commission’ come from the Latin word for ‘send.’ Clearly the sending of Jesus as the Savior-King, the Christ, is central to God’s mission of love. The gospel can be seen as the proclamation of both God’s Kingdom mission in Christ and of the opportunity to become a beneficiary of that mission through faith in Christ. Thus one cannot fully understand the gospel without also understanding the mission of God, the Kingdom of God and the role of Christ the King in that mission. These all go together and are best understood as a whole.

Jesus sent his disciples to help fulfill this mission, telling them to “go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). This requires us to inform everyone of God’s mission in Christ to save people from this fallen world, to cleanse them from sin by Christ’s death and resurrection, to sanctify them by his Holy Spirit, and to make them citizens of his kingdom and heirs of the age to come, after Christ returns in glory. For in this present Kingdom we “have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come” (Heb 6:4–5), but our hope, as Paul often says, is for the glory of the age to come. This is “the hope to which he has called you” and “the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:18).

Paul summarizes this gospel in his letter to Titus (2:11–15a):

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things ...

Peter summarizes the gospel in a similar way (1 Pet 1:3–5):

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We can praise God forever that we are among the people of God, whom he has called “into his own kingdom and glory” (1 Thess 2:12), and that God has commissioned us to extend his call to people in every ethnic group.

*But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:11)*

## MYSTERIES OF THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

Many first-century Jews had great expectations of the Messiah and his kingdom. Some of them anticipated a messianic kingdom that would include all nations (based on prophetic passages such as Isaiah 2:4; 11:10; 42:1; 52:10, 15; 55:4–5; Psalm 2:7–8; Daniel 2:44; 7:13–14). It seems, however, that most Jews of the time were expecting the Messiah to set up a Jewish state. But the kingdom that Jesus brought differed from what was generally expected, and these differences constitute what Jesus called the “mysteries of the Kingdom.” In general he taught a very different concept of the Messianic stage of God’s Kingdom from that which people expected, and in doing so he taught a very different concept of the Messiah King.

Jesus revealed the true nature of the Kingdom through many parables, figurative sayings, and symbolic actions. Thus the Kingdom parables are also parables about the person and work of Jesus the Messiah, and to understand the mysteries Jesus revealed, it is helpful to know the common misconceptions that he was correcting.

### ***The benefits of Kingdom citizenship are present now in part and fully in the future***

- The beatitudes (Matt 5:3–12)
- The wheat and weeds (Matt 13:1–43)
- The vineyard workers (Matt 20:1–16)
- The faithful servant (Matt 24:45–47)

### ***The Messiah came, not in glory, but as a servant***

- And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. (Luke 2:16)
- And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matt 8:20)
- Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:5)
- They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. (Matt 21:7)

### ***One becomes a citizen of the Kingdom, not by birthright as a descendant of Abraham and not by the Mosaic covenant, but by entering a new covenant of faith in Jesus as one’s savior king***

- “Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child like a child shall not enter it.” (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17)
- “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved” (John 10:9)

### ***Personal regeneration is requisite for citizenship in the Kingdom***

- Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

- “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 18:3)
- And he [the king] said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt 22:12–13)

***Most people will reject the King and citizenship in the Kingdom and so will be excluded***

- For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (Matt 7:14)
- The sower (Matt 13:3–8, 18–23)  
The banquet (Luke 14:15–24)

***Many Jews and their leaders will reject the King and be excluded from the Kingdom***

- The nobleman (Luke 19:11–27)
- The tenants (Matt 21:33–41)
- The cornerstone (Matt 21:42)
- The unfruitful fig tree (Mark 11:12–14, 20; Luke 13:6–9)
- And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’” (Luke 5:39)

***Citizenship in the Kingdom will be offered to the lowly and to Gentiles, some of whom will accept it***

- The banquet (Luke 14:15–24)
- The two sons (Matt 21:28–32)
- The tenants (Matt 21:33–41)

***The number of those who become citizens of the Kingdom will increase gradually***

- The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches. (Matt 13:31–32)
- The mustard seed and the leaven (Matt 13:31–33 and parallels)

***Growth will come by divine grace.***

- The growing seed (Mark 4:26–29)

***Citizens of the present Kingdom may experience ill treatment and loss rather than safety and prosperity***

- “A disciple is not above his teacher” (Matt 10:24–25).
- “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matt 10:34).

- Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:27)
- So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:33)

***The present Kingdom and its surpassing value are not visible to most people***

- The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened. (Matt 13:33)
- The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Matt 13:44)
- Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matt 13:45–46)

***The King will be killed.***

- The tenants (Matt 21:33–41)

***The King will triumph, rising from the dead***

- The cornerstone (Matt 21:42–44)
- The sign of Jonah (Matt 12:40–42)

***The King’s death will bring life to many***

- Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit (John 12:24)
- I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)
- The cornerstone (Matt 21:42–44)

***The King will leave, return, and judge his servants***

- The ten talents (Luke 19:12–27)
- The two servants (Matt 24:45–51)

***During his absence, the King will rule, bless, and empower his people.***

- The vine (John 15:1–6)

***The King will not immediately destroy the unrighteous but will postpone the reckoning until the judgment day***

- Weeds among the wheat (Matt 13:24–30)
- The fishnet (Matt 13:47–50).

***Judgment will be based, not on religion or claims, but on the evidence of faith in Christ seen in love for him and his people***

- “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter

- the Kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matt 7:21)
- “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.” (Gal 5:6)
- “I will show you my faith by my works.” (James 2:18)
- “They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.” (Titus 1:16)
- The sheep and goats (Matt 25:31–46). “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” (v. 4)
- “These trials will show that your faith is genuine ... So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” (1 Peter 1:6–7)

One of the greatest mysteries is the suffering of the Messiah. This had been foretold in Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22, 110, and 118, but Jewish theologians expected this to occur near the completion of his conquest, not the beginning, and none of them expected him to be killed and rise again after three days. [6] Bright noted that “a Messiah King who should suffer and die was the last thing in the world that Jewish nationalism expected or wanted.” [7] In contrast, as Matera shows, Jesus clearly understood Psalms 22 and 118 to prophesy “that the Messiah King would suffer before he inaugurated his kingdom,” and he clearly understood the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 in the same way. [8] Some scholars assert that the main mystery is that the Kingdom is present in a hidden form in Jesus, who hides his kingship until his exaltation. [9] The theme of Ambrozic’s book on the subject is to demonstrate that from the beginning Jesus’ kingship *and* kingdom were kept nearly invisible: “The present kingdom is thus a hidden kingdom, a reality which is already with us and yet is still coming, a fulfillment straining for its completion, a glory visible only to those to whom its mystery has been entrusted.” [10] It should be clear, however, from the discussion above, that there was not just one mystery about the Kingdom, whether the messiahship of Jesus or the interim stage of the Kingdom, but there were many ways in which the King and his kingdom differed from expectations. [11]

*“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. (1 Cor 2:9-10)*

## THE KINGDOM-OF-GOD PARADIGM VERSUS THE CONFLICT-OF- RELIGIONS PARADIGM

Historically, missions have followed a conflict-of-religions paradigm that sought to extend a particular denomination or a particular religious tradition in opposition to other religious traditions, both Christian and non-Christian. So they propagated the distinctives of their various forms of Christian religion,

such as their particular theological formulations, their form of church polity, their professional clergy, their religious calendar, their rituals, their order of worship, their denominational associations, their own religious buildings, etc. While all of these institutions can be useful for nurturing God’s people and for advancing the Kingdom, these customs and institutional religion in general should not be viewed as ends in themselves, as the New Testament does not even mention them, much less mandate them for Kingdom communities (ecclesiae). Instead of religious rituals, it recommends kindness and purity:

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (James 1:27)

In place of religious rites and rituals, the New Testament emphasizes the Kingdom of God, living “in Christ,” praising God, praying in one’s heart, and meeting together frequently as loving faith communities.

The conflict-of-religions approach assumes the Bible encourages a social struggle with the different religions and religious groups in the world, in which people of other religions are persuaded to convert to one’s own, but this is not the biblical mandate. The Bible says “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against ... the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12). So the struggle is spiritual rather than social, and “conversion” is likewise spiritual rather than social, a struggle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan (see Matt 12:26, 28). Biblical “conversion” is spiritual as well, not from one religion to another, but from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God. “For he has rescued us,” Paul says, “from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13 NIV). Thus the Bible represents a Kingdom paradigm of God’s mission, in which the goal of mission is to advance the Kingdom of God in all social groups rather than to promote one religious tradition over all others.

Paul encouraged fellowships (ecclesiae) of believers to grow through love and obedience to Christ’s teaching. These faith communities were far different from the pagan religious institutions, which focused on temples, idols, priests, rituals, and sacrifices. They were not competing on the same level. Paul was polite towards Gentiles rather than polemical, drawing them towards the Savior (1 Cor 10:32–33). Rather than revile their idols, he proclaimed “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Cor 5:19). He showed respect to each socioreligious group by adapting his lifestyle to fit its customs and background (1 Cor 9:20–23). When speaking to Pharisees, he adapted his identity and preaching style to that of the Pharisees (Acts 22; 23). When preaching to Greeks, he praised their religious fervor and cited verses from their sacred poems (Acts 17), while staying true to the oneness of God and the lordship of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 9:21). In Ephesus, for example, Paul and his “fellow workers for the kingdom of God” (Col 4:11) taught daily for over two years, and they had

a great impact, yet they never insulted the traditional religion of the Ephesians nor their goddess (Acts 19:37). They proclaimed “the word of the Lord” regarding his Kingdom (Acts 19:8–10), without polemics, and they looked to God to confirm the word with grace and power. The result was that many believed and then abandoned their idolatry and secret arts on their own. Thus Paul is a model of the Kingdom-of-God paradigm of mission, as opposed to the conflict-of-religions paradigm.

Jesus is the perfect model of the Kingdom paradigm of mission. When Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God among Samaritans in Samaria (Luke 17:11–19; John 4:5–42), to Gentiles in Lebanon and Decapolis (Mark 5:1–20; 7:24–8:10), and to Romans in Galilee (Matthew 8:5–13), he did not command them to observe the Jewish religious practices that he and his own disciples observed. He did not proselytize at all. Although in Galilee he lived in close proximity to pagan temples, and he traveled in the pagan regions of Lebanon and Decapolis, he did not condemn their religious traditions and institutions but revealed to them something far better: the Kingdom of God and the surpassing grace of the King. The ones he criticized were the leaders of the “house of Israel,” who were too judgmental and narrow-minded to receive the Kingdom.

When Jesus commissioned his apostles to make disciples in all ethnic groups, he told them to teach the new disciples to do everything he had commanded. This would have included beliefs about God’s oneness (as commanded in Mark 12:29) and beliefs about the Kingdom of God, as well as the good attitudes and behavior he commanded for the people of God’s Kingdom. Jesus did not, however, command everyone to observe one particular pattern of worship, and he did not establish one himself. He commanded his people to be constant in prayer, faith, love, peace, and joy. In practice these virtues have been encouraged by religious services of a variety of forms, highlighting the fact that religious activities are instruments of God’s mission rather than the goals of mission.

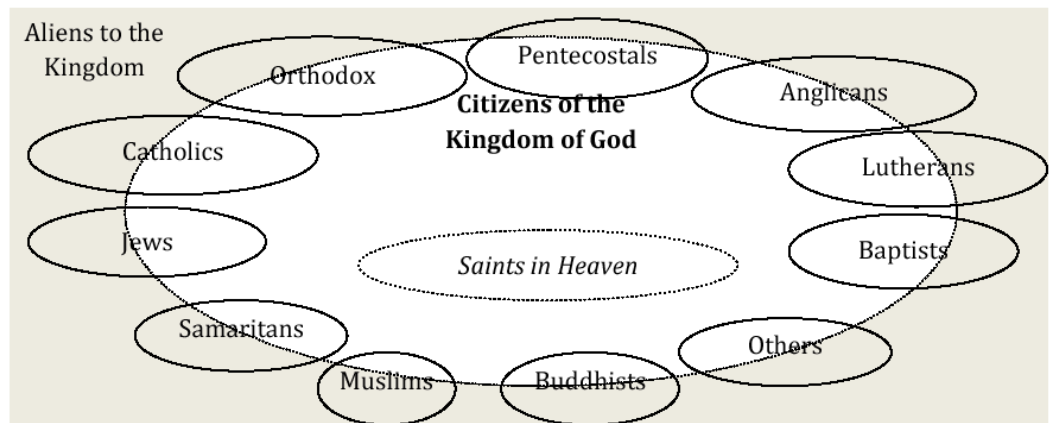
E. Stanley Jones described the relationship between the Kingdom of God and religions, including forms of Christianity (which he called “the Church”). He wrote:

This kingdom is bound up with no culture, no nation, no race, and no religion. It is open to everybody, everywhere on equal terms. Jesus never used the word religion, for he was not founding a new religion to set over against other religions, for religion is man’s search for God. The Gospel is God’s search for man. So anything good in any race, religion, or culture, which is worth preserving, will not be lost in the Kingdom. “I come not to destroy but to fulfil.”

Anything good that can be fitted into the Kingdom in culture or religion will be fulfilled in the Kingdom. “Into it the kings of earth bring their glories . . . they shall bring to it the glories and treasures of the nations” (Rev 21:24–25 Moffatt).

But the Church is not the exclusive agency of the coming of the Kingdom. Wherever men bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom, there the Kingdom is, to that degree, inside the Church or outside the Church.[12]

Jones observed from experience that there are people belonging to diverse socioreligious groups who accept the authority of the Bible, believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and “bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom,” and who must therefore belong to the Kingdom. Today there are hundreds of thousands of people like this in non-Christian socioreligious groups, and the amazing evidence of God’s grace and spiritual fruit in them is undeniable. This situation is represented again in Figure 2:



**Figure 2 The Kingdom of God includes people from many different socioreligious groups**

Many Christians regard this situation as less than ideal and want believers in non-Christian cultures to leave their social group and join a Catholic or Protestant group like their own, so they can be alike and can be nurtured to greater holiness. This happens, of course, but it is more likely to happen with the children or grandchildren of these believers, unless by that time God has brought so many of their social contacts into the Kingdom that the whole subculture of the group has been transformed.

When John was granted an end-time vision of the redeemed in heaven, as recorded in Revelation, he could discern representation of every social group. But since there are no religions in heaven, the diversity would have been purely cultural and linguistic.

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands (Rev 7:9)*

## CONCLUSION

From the foundation of the world, God prepared the future Kingdom for his children to inherit at the end of this age (Matt 25:34), and we can say that the mission of God has been to direct history towards this goal. To that end God gave us the Scriptures and the Savior, Jesus Christ—who is God himself, the Word of God incarnate—to be the Messianic King of God’s present (and future) Kingdom and to save people into it for God’s eternal glory. Jesus fulfilled the divine mission in several ways. He proclaimed the opportunity for people to become heirs of the Kingdom of God through faith in him; he taught them what to believe, what to value, and how to behave as citizens of the Kingdom; he died for their sins and rose to life for their salvation; and he sent the Holy Spirit to guide his disciples, empower them, and sanctify them. Jesus then commissioned his disciples to serve the mission of God themselves by proclaiming this Gospel of the Kingdom to every ethnic group (Matt 24:14; Mark 16:15), by discipling those who believe in each group, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to obey all that Jesus had commanded (Matt 28:19). God gave the people of his Kingdom—the global ecclesia—the Bible, the Holy Spirit, the fellowship of the saints, and gifts of ministry to equip them to minister and lead them to maturity in Christ. Local ecclesiae foster the spiritual growth and ministry of God’s people by facilitating their meeting together to study the Bible, to praise God, to pray for one another and for others, and to nurture the Kingdom qualities of love, righteousness, peace and joy (James 2:8; Rom 14:17). Thus the Bible reveals a Kingdom paradigm of the mission of God and of the role of God’s people in this mission.

Jesus did not found an institutional religion or commission his disciples to propagate one. Nevertheless, organized religions have enormous instrumental value in serving God’s mission. Christian religious institutions provide an organized means of evangelizing, baptizing, discipling, and teaching, supplemented by home groups. When disciples of Christ in non-Christian cultures remain outside of institutional Christianity, they must rely on home meetings alone for these services. On the other hand, when these disciples retain their native social identity and take a Kingdom-of-God approach to mission and ecclesia, the Gospel of the Kingdom often spreads throughout their social networks, leading many more to faith in Christ. This rarely happens with a conflict-of-religions approach.

It is evident from the Bible and from observation that the ultimate mission of God has not been to make some particular denomination or socio-religious group triumphant over others, nor to limit his grace to one of them, but to lead history and humankind into a new and perfect world, his eternal Kingdom. That future Kingdom will have no temple and no need for religions as such, “for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (Rev 21:22). God himself will dwell among his people (Rev 21:3; cf. Lev 26:12; Zech 2:10; 2 Cor 6:16), and they will delight in his presence. They will have perfect “righteousness, peace and joy” in their relationship with God

and with one another, to the eternal glory of his name. God’s mission will have been accomplished. **(AFMI/ASFM)**

*Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. (Rev 21:3-4)*

## ENDNOTES

- [1] Herman Ridderbos, ‘Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven’, in J. D. Douglas (ed.), *New Bible Dictionary* (2nd edn.; Leicester, England: IVP, 1982), p. 657. See also Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: P&R Publishing, 1962).
- [2] John MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), p. 56. More common are analyses such as that in Boyd Hunt, *Redeemed! Eschatological Redemption and the Kingdom of God* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1993), pp. 66-67, 73. Hunt analyzes the usage of ‘kingdom of God’ into two categories. The first is God’s universal rule in creation. The second category has three senses: “the kingdom of Israel,” “the kingdom present” and “the kingdom consummated.”
- [3] See G. R. Beasley-Murray, ‘The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus’, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 35/1 (1992). He writes (p. 23), “May we translate the phrase ‘in your midst’? That is possible, for Jesus was standing there; and where Jesus is, there is the kingdom. But that is a very rare use of the term *entos*. More likely we may take the meaning to be as in various contemporary papyri: ‘The kingdom of God is within your reach.’” Wright takes the same view in N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God: Christian Concepts and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), p. 469: “But philologically the meaning is most likely to be a third option: ‘within your grasp.’ ‘If you had eyes to see,’ Jesus seems to be saying, ‘you could reach out and take hold of the new reality that is already at work.’ This reading is backed up by the following verses (17.22–37).” So also J. C. O’Neill, ‘The Kingdom of God’, *Novum Testamentum*, 35 (1993), p. 139. Luz suggests that it means both “in your midst” and “available to you” in U. Luz, ‘Basileia’, in Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (eds.), *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 202.
- [4] W. F. Arndt, ‘The New Testament Teaching on the Kingdom of God’, *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 21/1 (1950), p. 20.
- [5] Charles Erdman, *The Gospel of Mark: An exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), p. 35.
- [6] See Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (3rd edn.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), vol. 1, p. 205, vol. 2, pp. 433–35.
- [7] John Bright, *The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and its Meaning for the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), p. 200.
- [8] Frank J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15* (SBL Dissertation Series 66; Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 151.
- [9] This view conflicts somewhat with dispensational teaching; they say (rightly perhaps) that the main mystery is that the kingdom will have a hidden interim stage before it comes in glory. They differ from other scholars in claiming that this mystery kingdom was not put forth until the Jews had rejected the messianic kingship of Jesus and the nationalistic kingdom that they say he offered to them. *(continues to p.22)*

# Missiology and the Measurement Of Engagement:

## Personal Reflections on Tokyo

*Kevin Higgins*

### *Introduction*

The Consultation and Celebration held in Tokyo in May, 2010 was one of four events held in 2010 to commemorate in various ways the great Edinburgh 1910 conference. In chronological order the four events included gatherings held in Tokyo, Edinburgh, Cape Town, and Boston. Each was conceived with a unique purpose and audience.

Tokyo will very likely prove to be the gathering most directly connected to the vision of “finishing the task.” As such, in addition to numerous workshops and plenary addresses devoted to missional and biblical themes and issues across a broad spectrum of concerns, there was a distinctive focus in Tokyo on coordinating as organizations and churches to achieve “closure” of the missionary task by measuring the extent to which we have reached the unreached and engaged the unengaged. For ease of discussion I will refer generally to this as the closure movement.

In this emphasis on finishing the task, the leadership of Tokyo 2010 was self-consciously standing on the shoulders of prior leaders and movements in the history of the missionary expansion of the church. This great chain was traced again and again in plenary sessions and workshops from Tokyo back through time including (quite selectively): an important gathering in Singapore in 2002 called for by the network of various Centers for World Mission, InterDev, Joshua Project II and others,<sup>1</sup> the AD 2000 movement; Ralph Winter and hidden peoples (subsequently, unreached peoples); Donald McGavran; Edinburgh 1910 and its emphasis on reaching the world in a generation; the great missionary expansion of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; movements of monks and migrants; Jesus’ final words on reaching all nations; and ultimately back through the Old Testament to Abraham’s calling to be a blessing to all nations.<sup>2</sup>

The missionary effort to complete the Great Commission has successively reworked its terminology and methodology. One major emphasis has been the collection of data about people groups and the status of evangelization and Christian expansion. Depending upon the researcher or the specific database in

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question, such data may include percentages of exposure to the Gospel, resources or literature available in a people group, the status of church planting, etc.

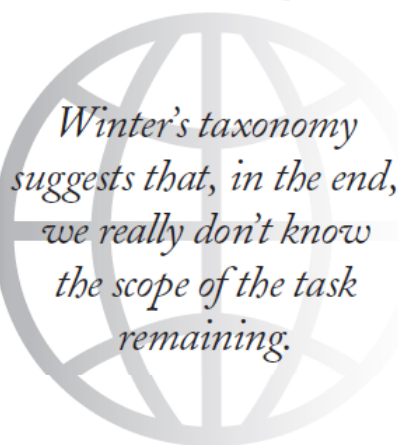
This work of data collection, definition, categorization, communication, and coordination has been immense and has left a lasting legacy for the mission movement to build upon.<sup>3</sup> To describe the data, various attempts at definition have been employed to clarify what constitutes an unreached or unengaged people group. The variety in how such terms are employed results in further variety when attempts are made to list which groups are unreached or unengaged.

Of the major attempts at seeking to bring different perspectives on closure together in a synthesized perspective, Ralph Winter's 2002 article, "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge" stands out.<sup>4</sup> Winter discusses four perspectives observed in seeking to define the task of closure relative to understanding which people groups remain unreached. He "slices" the world into 8 Blocs (cultural and affinity, including Muslim, Hindu, etc.), Ethno linguistic peoples (of which 3,000 are unevangelized), Socio-peoples (described as "peer groups" but clearly larger than the way most might use the term peer, of which 10,000 are unreached), and Unimax peoples.<sup>5</sup>

The last term in the list is defined in the way I had come to understand one of the common definitions of a people group: the largest group of people within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering significant barriers.<sup>6</sup> Winter says there is an unknown number of such Unimax peoples, a statement which is important to hold in balance as we mission strategists seek to use lists of people groups for the purposes of planning the alignment of personnel and resources for closure. Winter's taxonomy suggests that, in the end, we really don't know the scope of the task remaining.

In Tokyo, there was no attempt to try to come to consensus regarding this variety of definitions and assessments. The reality of the existence of such a variety was acknowledged and maintained. Participants were encouraged to look at and use all of the databases, for example.

In one track of the Tokyo gathering mission leaders were encouraged to commit themselves on behalf of their respective organizations to engage specific people groups over the next three years with focused church planting efforts, and to assist in various other strategic tasks such as cooperating in



the production/distribution of the *Jesus* Film, etc.

### *Asking Questions . . . of Myself*

My purpose in this essay is to try to bring to the fore some questions about the approach just described. I do so from two self-conscious perspectives.

First, I write as a friend of the "closure" movement. The organization I direct has crafted its own mission statement largely in keeping with objectives that can be traced to the Great Commission as framed by McGavran, Winter, the AD 2000 movement, and the Finishing the Task effort.<sup>7</sup>

As a friend of the closure movement I have embraced in my thinking, for example, the commitment to the emergence of church planting movements as a key indicator of whether a people group is reached or not. As such I have encouraged our organization to use the scale developed by the Southern Baptist research effort (see endnote 2). The scale is represented in Table 1 below.

Much of the criteria in this scale is related to the existence and extent of church planting taking place in a given people group. In our case, we have focused strategically on people groups in the 0 to 2 range for our pioneer efforts, and see 3 and above as more appropriately calling for a mobilization effort.

But such criteria, not only in this particular scale but any similar versions currently in use, presuppose a number of assumptions: what is a church? What is church planting? What constitutes a church planting strategy or plan or even team? What is evangelical Christianity? What is *Christianity* for that matter? I am not suggesting that a scale like this one should provide such definitions, I am

Table 1. Global Status of Evangelical Christianity.

Status Level	Description
0	No evangelical Christians or churches. No access to major evangelical print, audio, visual, or human resources.
1	Less than 2% Evangelical. Some evangelical resources available, but no active church planting within past 2 years.
2	Less than 2% Evangelical. Initial (localized) church planting within past 2 years.
3	Less than 2% Evangelical. Widespread church planting within past 2 years.
4	Greater than or equal to 2% Evangelical
5	Greater than or equal to 5% Evangelical
6	Greater than or equal to 10% Evangelical
7	Unknown

Source: [www.imb.org/globalresearch/gemodel.asp](http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/gemodel.asp)

merely pointing out that the answers to the questions I just listed would likely be answered in a variety of ways by leaders of organizations who are totally committed to the closure vision. Clarity on this issue is crucial, for the criteria behind our data will directly affect our measurement of closure.<sup>8</sup>

This leads me to my second frame of reference. I also write as one associated closely with the so-called “insider movement” approach.<sup>9</sup> I have spent over 20 years in a particular Islamic context and have seen the rise and growth of a movement to Jesus that fosters both an ongoing commitment to remain within the religious community of Islam and to plant and multiply intentional communities of believers in Jesus at the same time. This experience shapes my understanding of how to measure or verify church planting, evangelical Christianity, and thus closure.

These twin convictions have given rise to numerous questions, internally. My questions are birthed from my reflections on certain aspects of the closure movement from the perspective of someone who has witnessed the growth and expansion of a movement to Jesus among Muslims that has not fit the pattern that seems to be assumed by our measurements of whether a people group is engaged or reached.

In fact, for me personally, Tokyo served as the event that for the first time brought both of these sides of my thinking into direct connection in a new and profound way. It was during the time in Tokyo that I first began to ask the questions I raise here. This is just one of the valuable results of the Tokyo event.

Because I am shaped by both the closure movement and the so-called insider approach, I have referred to this sub-section as “asking questions of myself.” These are questions I had not asked prior to Tokyo, which served as the catalyst for seeing these issues as I do now. Having spoken with several others who led the meetings in Tokyo, I know there is sympathy towards what I am raising here. I offer these reflec-

*I am raising the wonderful fact that we can assume that God is already engaging and reaching peoples without our strategies.*

tions in the spirit of seeking to further understand the mind of Christ and further discern what the Lord of the Harvest is doing in His fields.

### *A Short Story*

First, it might be helpful to say a bit more about my context. For the past twenty years I have been in a position to observe the growth of a movement to Jesus that has intentionally remained within the fabric of Islamic culture and practice. The movement does not describe itself as a Christian movement. However, at the same time movement leadership intentionally focus on obedience to biblical teaching and truth and a deepening discipleship as followers of Jesus. Forms of fellowship for believers have emerged, and there has been intentional expansion of the movement both within the original people group in which it was birthed, and beyond that people group to peoples of other languages and in other countries. Regular training for leaders takes place, based upon understanding and applying the Bible in daily life and in addressing theological and cultural questions that arise.

At one point, nearly fifteen years ago, using one of the lists of remaining unreached peoples, we identified a people group in our country that was on the list. I will call them the “Jedi.” I invited churches to adopt the Jedi and we began to pray for a strategy. We surveyed the people group with the help of believers from a geographically and culturally-near people. We listed possible approaches, and enlisted prayer.

About two years into that process, and well before we had been able to launch any of the possible plans or strategies conceived from our survey work, I was at a gathering of leaders from the emerging movement. There were new leaders present and I was getting to know them. It so “happened” that two of these leaders were Jedi, the people for whom we had

been praying. These two leaders had become believers and had joined our monthly leader training events, but without any launch of our plans or strategies.

### *And Some Observations*

This is not to say there was no strategic value to what was happening. As I discussed further how this had all come about I realized several important things:

First, though we were seeing the Jedi as a distinct people for the purpose of our planning and strategizing, and though they had a distinct language, they saw themselves as part of another people group, and were seen as such by others around them.<sup>10</sup> As such, our already existing way of working with that larger group had folded naturally into reaching the smaller. This illustrates the process by which experience “in context” shapes *prior thinking and assumptions*.<sup>11</sup>

Second, the decision to “focus” on this people group, or to “engage” them, was a distinct decision from my etic (outside) perspective, but was not so from an emic (inside) point of view. It happened naturally, via lines of relationship. As a result they were in fact engaged, and church planting was beginning, before we knew it was happening. All of us in the closure movement would agree that our lists of unreached and unengaged peoples are our best understanding of field reality based on available, reported information. I am not raising that exact point in this illustration. Instead I am raising the wonderful fact that we can assume that God is already engaging and reaching peoples without our strategies and beyond what we think the reach of our personnel might be. Again, this is a point upon which I find wide agreement in the closure movement.

The third observation I would make is the place in which I think our prior conceptions will shape what we find in the field. Since the closure criteria revolve so

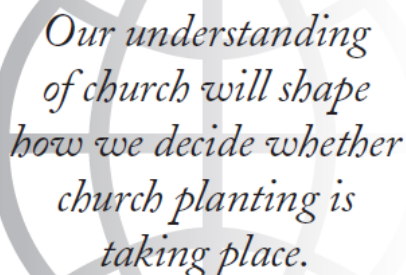
much around church planting, then our understanding of church will shape how we decide whether church planting is in fact taking place, or not.

In our case, as the movement was beginning and growing, I and others sat with key leaders to study the scriptures, seeking to understand and apply biblical teaching about “church” to the movement: How do we know when a church is planted? What do such churches do when they meet? When and where do churches meet, or when and where does church happen? These are thorny issues for many. Our movement developed a few criteria, based finally in Acts 2:42ff. Based on our study we concluded that healthy churches are committed to ongoing learning from the Bible, to regular fellowship/being together, to some expression of breaking bread (including meals and some form of the Lord’s Supper), and prayer. Based on Acts 14:21ff we also agreed that it was key to assure our movement that, indeed, we had trained leaders.

But during this exercise we did not specify anything like a description of the *form* any of the above functions should take in order to be church. Our focus was on functions we found in scripture, not on specific forms that must be taken as universal carriers of those functions. “Churches” in our movement might meet at any time, any day, and with any number of people. While such churches generally grew out of already existing social networks, they might be a nuclear or extended family, or a group of families, or a group of non-related individuals with or without a prior friendship or connection already in existence. They might meet weekly, but they might meet less or more frequently.

My sense is that the forms of church and fellowship that are taking shape in this movement would not fit the criteria most would look for in order to determine whether a people group was reached or not. I do not think anyone in the closure movement is suggesting a specific polity (much less denomi-

national form) for “church.” In fact, I have sensed a genuine flexibility in the viewpoints that are brought to the table. But some of the models presented at Tokyo 2010 in the track devoted to closure were built around measuring the extent of church planting by collecting data for churches such as meeting location, numbers of members, names and addresses of pastors, etc. I do not see anything wrong with seeking such data, and in some contexts this may well be quite appropriate and helpful. In the context of our movement it would not only be impossible, but also an attempt



*Our understanding  
of church will shape  
how we decide whether  
church planting is  
taking place.*

to measure things we would not see as essential to “church” and thus not actually informative as to the extent of a church planting effort.

This brief window into my background and ministry might help explain the questions I am now posing as I try to understand what finishing the task might look like and how it might be understood when we take such movements into account.<sup>12</sup> My questions are many! I have already posed several, relative to the understanding of church. But in applying all of this to the closure movement and measurement of engagement and extent to which a people group is reached, I will limit myself to what I see as the two major questions.

**What does this mean for determining whether a people group is *engaged* or not?**

I gave just one example in one country for one people group, but it is a story

repeated in other people groups in our region. One nexus of questions this raises for me is how such realities on the ground should shape how I think about measuring and promoting engagement. To rephrase the question, in the example I gave, at which point was the people group I use in the example “engaged?”

Typically, I have viewed “engagement” the way I am sure most of my colleagues in the wider mission movement have done. I have assumed that engaging a people group meant that an organization or church intentionally selected such a people group as a focus for strategy and evangelization. My colleagues and I would include western and non-western mission and church structures in our understanding. But now I am asking myself and by extension the wider missions movement:

“If followers of Jesus within Islam, or Buddhism, or Hinduism are reaching a people group by sharing the gospel and developing appropriate forms of fellowship for believers, is that people now engaged?”<sup>13</sup>

I am more and more convinced that those of us in the closure movement should find a way to take such movements to Jesus into account as we evaluate what God might be doing to bring the nations to Himself. How should we do so? I will suggest a few thoughts at the end of this essay.

**What does this mean for determining whether a people group is *reached* or not?**

I mentioned above that our own organization uses the database and criteria developed by the International Mission Board.

As we saw above, the database uses a scale of 0 to 7 to measure the extent a people group is reached or unreached. The higher the number the more a people group is considered reached. Among the criteria used there, we mentioned that church planting is key.<sup>14</sup>

But how do we measure that, in light of the example I gave above? One organization I know sets the standard

as a gathering of believers that includes at least three family heads. Another says ten families. Both are helpful in setting a measurement, neither could (or does) claim to be biblical, strictly speaking.

Some may be tempted to suggest that we should simply claim the words of Jesus as our measure, “where two are three are gathered together in My Name...” Tempting as that may be, He was not in fact seeking to define church, per se, in that verse but rather the function of discipline within what we call church.

The movements I am most familiar with do multiply and encourage expressions of koinonia among disciples. If these are growing in number, then would we not want to say that the progress of church planting is also growing in that people group?

Of course, the answer to that will depend largely on the perception, and especially ecclesiology, of the person answering.<sup>15</sup> As I said earlier regarding engagement, I am more and more convinced that those of us in the closure movement should find a way to take such movements to Jesus into account as we evaluate what God might be doing to bring the nations to Himself. How should we do so?

I promised before that I would suggest a few thoughts at the end of this essay about how we in the closure movement might keep movements such as I have described on our radar as we seek to assess which people groups are engaged and reached. I turn to that now by way of conclusion.

### *Our Posture in Discerning Engagement*

Before presuming to outline suggestions for others in the closure movement I want to go on record regarding my appreciation for this movement:

I stand on the shoulders of previous and current leaders who are focused on finishing the task.

I do not presume to think that what I will say has never been thought of or taken

*We all come to such issues ... with a mixture of vital biblical insight and also inescapable presuppositions.*

into consideration by individuals or other leaders within the closure movement.

I have already indicated my dual allegiance to both the closure movement and the paradigm of mission that rejoices in movements to Jesus within non-Christian religious traditions. As such, I personally would be happy to include such movements in any measurement of church planting progress or engagement. However, I know that there is nothing approaching consensus on this point, and that this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future. Therefore, addressing others in the closure movement, I would like to suggest the following ways that we might keep such movements in view without requiring that all my colleagues share my exact point of view.

First, I would like to suggest a posture that I will call “*Gamaliel-Open*.” A famous passage in Acts portrays Gamaliel, while in apparent opposition to the new Jesus movement taking place among his fellow Jews, recommended that his colleagues take a longer view and wait to see what happened, not in compromise of their convictions, but in the awareness that God might be doing something which they would not want to be found opposing should it turn out to be of God. The implications for the closure movement should be clear enough: keeping abreast and aware of the existence and status of such movements as I have described, and doing so with a mindset that allows the possibility of their validity without feeling pressed to express conviction thereof, seems to be a realistic and practical step.

Second, this would need to be done with another posture, committed with utmost seriousness to remaining “*Security-Closed*.” Regardless of what one thinks about the type of movement I have described, there are real human

lives at stake and at risk. Therefore, while I do suggest that various networks that meet to seek to follow up and further the closure movement encourage and foster open discussion about what might be happening in and through such movements among the least reached and unengaged on our various lists, I balance that with a counter call: that the information thus shared and discussed remain within the confines of such meetings, safe and secure.

Third, I would encourage us all to remain committed to speak the truth, but as “*Grace-Tongued*” men and women. This echoes much of what I presented in my own Tokyo address<sup>16</sup> relative to the ongoing dialogue in the mission world about contextualization, Jesus movements, etc. Speaking the truth does not preclude but rather requires speaking in love.

Finally, acknowledging that I myself am in constant need of biblical re-tuning and re-adjustment, I would suggest that those of us in the closure movement also embrace fully the hallmarks of the Reformation, including a passion to be continuously “*Biblically-Reformed*.”

We all come to such issues as our understanding of church with a mixture of vital biblical insight and also inescapable presuppositions due to our different denominational heritage. I include in this heritage not only the politics or expressions of church we have embraced, but also those we have rejected. This process of rejection often in turn shapes what we later embrace, and vice versa. None of us think or believe or become disciples or study the scriptures in a vacuum. We are all shaped by our past and present contexts as we seek to live biblically, and (we pray!) our past and our present also become shaped as we encounter the Bible ever more deeply.

But this much can be said with utmost surety: none of us has a corner on all

that the Bible says, and this includes what it says about the church and being the church. As such, if we measure the status of a people group's being reached or not reached based upon the status of church planting, then it seems we would be wise to be humbly open to correction by the Lord of the church as we try to assess and discern what He might be doing, even when it does not coincide with our expectations.

## Conclusion

Not every gathering of every closure movement network of leaders and organizations and churches can or will give over large portions of their meeting time to reopen biblical discussions of church. But the values and assumptions outlined above might at least help form our hearts as we engage each other and partner together to complete the task.

At the very least, it would seem safe to assume we can join together in praying for the attitude of Gamaliel, the holiness that will enable us to speak with grace-filled tongues, a commitment to giving each other safe and secure places to share what we see God doing, and a desire for His Spirit to continuously reform us in the light of His Word. **IJFM**

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See the brief discussion of this event and its focus in Greg Parsons' editorial comments in *IJFM* 19:4 (2002), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, McGavran's seminal article in the 1982 version of *Perspectives*. McGavran, Donald, "A Church in Every People," *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, Chapter 64; William Carey Library, 1982. Also, see Samuel Wilson's discussion in the *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, "Peoples, People Groups," page 746 (edited by Moreau, Netland, Van Engen).

<sup>3</sup> A detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this essay. For a helpful summary, the abridged version of Paul Eshleman's plenary address in Tokyo found in the most recent edition of *Mission Frontiers* is a succinct discussion (*Mission Frontiers*, July-August 2010, pages 10-11). Some of the major web-based lists of people groups being consulted in the closure effort include: [www.finsihingthetask.com](http://www.finsihingthetask.com); The Global Status of Evangelical Christianity,

a research effort of the International Mission Board, which can be found at <http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/sge.asp>; and the Joshua Project, at <http://www.joshua-project.net>. The statistics in each differ in varying ways since the compilers employ different criteria for measurement.

<sup>4</sup> In *IJFM*, 19:4, 2002, pages 15ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Winter provides a helpful chart for summary on page 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> The mission statement I refer to is as follows: "The mission of GLOBAL TEAMS is to equip and send teams of missionaries from many nations to multiply disciples of Jesus within cultures least aware of the Gospel."

<sup>8</sup> The very term "measurement" implies a clearly articulated standard of reference. On this point Winter's 2002 article offers a helpful perspective once again, though I suspect some will find its vagueness difficult to apply. Winter seeks to articulate a difference between measurability and verifiability. He rejects the former and encourages us to think in terms of the latter. He uses the example of AIDS, implying that we are not able to measure, and do not seek to measure, "how much AIDS" a person has, but we can verify that they have it. Implication: we can not measure how reached a people group is, but we can verify whether or not they are. Winter, "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge," *IJFM* 19:4 (2002), p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, many of us would like to see the missions community move away from the term "insider movement" as it does not connote accurately what we are seeking to describe. Instead we are seeking to use language such as "movements to Jesus within Islam (or Buddhism, etc.)," or "biblically faithful movements to Jesus within Hinduism (etc.)."

<sup>10</sup> Going back to Winter's taxonomy, referenced earlier, we were actually experiencing a very different reality. The Jedi would be defined by outsiders such as ourselves as an ethno-linguistic group, within which (according to Winter's model) we would expect to see further distinctions such as sociopeoples and even unimax groups that would require more segmentation in approach. In fact what we found was that the Jedi identified with a larger ethno-linguistic group and saw themselves related to that group in terms more akin to what Winter called a unimax group. The segmentation followed a *larger* rather than a *smaller* link.

<sup>11</sup> As a note, everyone I have dialogued with in other organizations committed to finishing the task would certainly

endorse the idea that field experience and information trumps prior working assumptions. I am just relating my particular case, not suggesting that the closure movement would not agree or are not also committed to this point.

<sup>12</sup> I know that some readers will take the view that my questions are moot since such movements are not, in their view, valid or at least not completely valid expressions of the Gospel or the expansion of the Kingdom. I cannot in the space of this article try to address such questions, as important as they are.

<sup>13</sup> Proponents of the so-called insider movement approach have been misunderstood as if we were advocating some sort of individualistic expression of the Gospel. In fact, every such movement I have witnessed personally or have seen described by others has developed very clear forms of *koinonia* among believers.

<sup>14</sup> There are also a number of theological assumptions underlying the data. For example, people groups in which the majority of people are Roman Catholic and Orthodox tend to be considered unreached, since the index measures the extent of *evangelical* Christianity.

<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere I have suggested using the description of functions found in Acts 14:21 to 28 as a grid for understanding the core functions of church: evangelizing, discipleship, ongoing encouragement, appointment of leaders, and remaining relationally connected to a wider network of churches. However, I also tried to be clear that such functions could take a wide range of formal expression, including forms found in other religious traditions. Higgins, Kevin, *Identity, Integrity, and Insider Movements: A brief Paper Inspired by Timothy C. Tennent's Critique of C-5 Thinking*, *IJFM* 23:6 (Fall 2006).

<sup>16</sup> For a summary of my address, see *Mission Frontiers*, July-August 2010, pages 12-13.

# The Church and the Hindu Heritage: Historical Case Studies in a Rocky Relationship

*H. L. Richard*

**C**oncerns about the historic Christian church and its dissonant relationship with Hindu contexts and with Hindus who follow Christ are widely evident in missiological literature. This paper will not offer a careful diagnosis of the issues, but let alone a prescription intended to salve or solve all wounds and tensions. Rather it will illustrate the problems and varied attempts at resolution from five striking figures in Indian church history.

These five case studies from history have been carefully chosen for the varying responses they developed to their experienced dilemmas in relating to historic Christianity and its institutions. The lesser known will be discussed at greater length than those about whom information is more easily available. Many more could have been included, and it is hoped that this paper will inspire deeper study on the five chosen, and also interest to study the lives of many other disciples of Jesus from Hindu families.

## KALI CHARAN BANURJI (1847-1907): RESTARTING THE CHURCH IN THE HINDU CONTEXT

Kali Charan Banurji was a Kulin Brahmin Bengali who was born in Jabalpur in M.P. where his father was working. He was the eighth son in the family and his father died while he was still young. The family returned to Bengal and Kali Charan was invested with the sacred thread at Kalighat in Kolkata when 8 years of age.

Family stories tell that a number of children had died at birth, so Kali Charan's mother was given an amulet with some special powder in it, and this was worn until Kali Charan was born. It was then worn by him for many years. Later back in Bengal a palm reader had warned that this boy should not be taught English or he would become a renegade.

Kali Charan's elder brothers had attended a mission school in Jabalpur, and he first saw the Bible there. He was an excellent student and at the age of 13 was ready for university. He entered the Free Church Institution founded by Alexander Duff; his family pressed him to marry at age 15, but Duff exhorted him to marry his books, and he managed to resist the pressure to marry until he was 17. He passed his B.A. as gold medalist in his class, was hired as a professor at the college, and complete his M.A. a year later.

Kali Charan began to study the Bible at college, as it was required at Duff's institution. He was especially struck by the prayers of Duff before the Bible studies, as he did not understand such boldness in calling down blessings from God. For two years at college Kali Charan was an orthopraxic Hindu; when a cousin of his ate some rice that had been touched by a Sudra, Kali Charan insisted that he eat nothing else until a proper *prayaschitta* was performed.

The greatest influences in leading Kali Charan to Christ were a medical missionary and some other students who had turned to Christ. A group of four students, including Kali Charan, used to meet together for prayer and Bible study. Gradually Kali Charan became convinced of the truth of the gospel, but now he was confronted with a major change of life. He was sixteen, had worn his sacred thread for eight years, and now felt it necessary to abandon the thread. His family refused to eat with him when they learned he no longer wore the sacred thread.

Kali Charan kept up contact with his family, and when he earned scholarships for outstanding study and a salary as professor he sent funds home to support them. The greatest crisis in his family was that his wife was not permitted to live with him after his baptism. This finally changed after the 1866 "Converts' Remarriage Act" allowed him to go to

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court. Under threat of becoming legally a widow, his wife finally joined him and eventually also became a faithful follower of Christ. In the rest of his family, however, only a few nephews also turned to Christ. One of those, Bhabani Charan Bhandyopadhyay, became well known as a follower of Christ in later years as Brahmabandhab Upadhyay.

Kali Charan taught for 14 years, but during that time felt a call to Christian ministry. He was given a scholarship for theological study and began preparing for the ministry while still teaching. But at this time the noted Bengali Lal Behari Day resigned from the pastorate due to the inability to care for his family on the meager salary offered. Day had previously been in conflict with the Scottish missionaries; he was one of three Bengalis ordained but not accepted as full members of the mission in 1856. Under pressure, two submitted. But Day refused to accept a lesser role and threatened to resign. A compromise was reached and Day worked in a leadership role in the mission for four years before leaving for his pastoral position. Kali Charan Banurji was not given adequate assurances from the missionaries about his status and about the care of his family in case of his death, so he gave up looking towards the ministry and studied law instead, graduating in 1870. Despite never becoming a Christian minister, he was always known among Hindus and Muslims as the Rev. Kali Charan Banurji.

Besides notable work as a lawyer, Kali Charan was always active in Christian work, leading Bible studies and prayer meetings, preaching to Hindus in an evangelistic hall, and as an elder in the church. He became a friend of Keshab Chandra Sen of the Brahmo Samaj, whom he considered a brother in Christ. In 1870 along with Joy Govinda Shome he started a weekly newspaper which ran for 33 years, *The Indian Christian Herald*. The point of the paper was to develop a more robust faith in Christ as well as to bring the message of Christ before Hindus. He was politically active, being one of the speakers at an 1877 meeting protesting that the Indian Civil Service was not open to Indians, except those who studied and took the exam in England. Also in 1877 he helped found the Bengali Christian Conference. He was a member of the Indian National Congress from its inception in 1885 and served on a number of committees that guided the Congress. He continued to be interested in education as well, and particularly was involved in opening higher education opportunities for women.

The lasting legacy of Kali Charan Banurji is his patriotism; he refused to accept that following Christ led to foreign ways. Yet Christianity in India was deeply marked by foreign patterns and doctrines, so in 1887 he withdrew from the church and started the Christo Samaj. The strength of institutional Christianity was too strong for the Samaj to overcome, however, and it died in 1895. The ideals that drove Kali Charan to resist the Christianity of his time were spelled out in a message to the 1888 Calcutta Missionary Conference:

The impression is abroad in India that Christianity is a foreign religion and in order to dissipate this impression (1) just as Paul became all things to all men, so missionaries without ceasing to be Christians might become Hindus in order to reach Hindus; (2) they should be associated with a

life of poverty as is the idea of a religious teacher here, instead of living in ease and comfort; (3) they should recognize the germs of truth in the religions of the country, and (4) a convert should be allowed to be an Episcopalian without joining the Church of England or a Presbyterian without joining the Church of Scotland. In short, might not missionaries make it possible for converts to become members of an Indian rather than a foreign church?[1]

Despite his effort to start a separate Indian church, Banurji was never of a narrow mind or spirit. When the YMCA began in Calcutta with interdenominational evangelistic fervor he quickly got involved and became one of the key leaders. When in 1905 17 key leaders from around the country met to inaugurate the National Missionary Society of India, Kali Charan was elected vice-president. At his death in 1907 Kali Charan was mourned by people of all communities as a humble and godly leader. He had failed to impact the Indian church with a proper regard for its cultural heritage, and his effort to restart a truly Indian church quickly foundered; but his testimony of faithfulness to Christ and his cause as an Indian will continue to speak to all who learn of his life.

## PANDITA RAMABAI SARASWATI (1858-1922): LIVING WITH THE TENSION OF CONFLICTING HERITAGES

Pandita Ramabai's story is widely known, but has also been surrounded with myths and exaggerations. This brief account will try to clear some of the fog and raise some of the difficult questions related to her legacy.[2]

Ramabai's Brahmin father was an interesting mix of reformer and traditionalist. He is noted as a reformer for teaching his daughter Sanskrit; yet he was very traditional in refusing to allow her access to the Vedas. Ramabai memorized the Bhagavata Purana, yet knew nothing of the Marathi *bhakti* poets who so influenced her contemporary, Narayan Vaman Tilak (see the next section of this paper).

The family was on pilgrimage for many years as the father recited Puranas in various parts of India. Ramabai saw many of the abuses of popular Hinduism and especially the mistreatment of widows. In a severe drought and famine while on pilgrimage in 1877 her parents and sister died. When she and her surviving brother got to Calcutta in 1878 life began to change. Ramabai was honored for her knowledge of the Sanskrit Srimad Bhagavatam, and was honored as Pandita and Saraswati. She got involved with the Brahmo Samaj and for the first time read the Vedas. After marriage in 1881 to a non-Brahmin under Brahmo Samaj influence, she first received a gospel of Luke from a missionary. After the birth of her daughter her husband died, and Ramabai herself became a widow.

Ramabai returned to her native Maratha country where she would later become famous for her humanitarian work. She left to England to pursue medicine, but had to abandon that quest due to hearing problems. While in England she was baptized, but refused to submit fully to the authority of

the Anglican Church. She spent three years in England and then three in America, raising funds and forming a service mission to widows in India during the years in America (The American Ramabai Association). In 1889 she was back in India, but soon found reforming work among widows to be complicated beyond expectation.

Initially Ramabai worked in close conjunction with Hindu reformers, and sought to work on a non-religious basis. She was a baptized Christian but did not believe in proselytizing. Yet as one of the very few individuals who cared for widows, it was only natural that the young widows around her would be drawn to her faith. In 1891 during the early years of her work she also entered into a living faith relationship with Christ. In her own words, "One thing I knew by this time, that I needed Christ, and not merely His religion." [3]

After entering into vital union with Christ, Ramabai became more active as an evangelist, and tensions with her Hindu supporters increased. In 1896 when severe famine hit central India she decided to launch a faith mission on the lines of George Muller and Hudson Taylor. She developed the Mukti Mission in Kedgaon, about 30 miles from Pune. Ramabai continued to care for widows but also gathered famine orphans and built a huge humanitarian institution that was clearly Christ-centered. A famine in western India in 1900 brought another influx of helpless children, swelling the numbers at Mukti to nearly 2000. Many foreign and Indian volunteers worked under her leadership in the great challenge of caring for and raising these children, many of whom themselves grew to take on leadership roles.

1905 was a landmark year as revival came to Mukti. Many children were transformed and teams went out across India to share the gospel of Christ and the power of revival. But hopes that revival would transform India proved an illusion. Controversies about the revival were not the only complex topic Ramabai engaged. She was a critic of Bible translations in Marathi, so did one of her own! She learned Hebrew and translated the entire Bible into vernacular Marathi; sadly, her translation principles were very inadequate.

In Ramabai one sees the tensions involved in being in Christ and relating to the Hindu heritage. Ramabai remained vegetarian her entire life, was the first to publish a Marathi songbook of *bhajans*, and opposed the Westernization of Christians and churches. But in her Bible translation she sought to avoid all Sanskrit terms, suggesting that they contained a poison of Vedanta that is counter to biblical thought. She refused to allow her daughter to learn Sanskrit, and for many years had Latin taught in her schools. Yet her own mission was named *mukti*!

We must leave Ramabai and her legacy of tension, summing up from her biography by Nicol MacNicol:

In spite of the fact that she rejected peremptorily so much that we call Hindu, it was as what we must call a Hindu woman that she so charmed and subdued. Her soul was in its texture Indian and in her we see what such a soul may be under the control of Christ. The instinct of India, in spite of so much alienation and so much calumny, recognized with pride this kinship and, when she died, in many of the cities of the land people gathered to honour one who by her life had brought honour to her race. In Bombay at a public memorial meeting Mrs. Sarojini Naidu...laid claim to her in behalf of Hinduism as "the first Christian to be enrolled in the calendar of Hindu saints." [4]

## NARAYAN VAMAN TILAK (1868-1919): A CHRISTO-CENTRIC MOVE BEYOND THE CHURCH AND CHRISTIANITY

When Ramabai published the first collection of Christian *bhajans* she included a few of her own publications but relied mainly on the work of Narayan Vaman Tilak. Tilak grew up under the influence of the Marathi *bhakti* saints, known to the world through a series of translations by missionaries called The Poet-Saints of Maharashtra. [5]

Tilak turned to Christ in 1895 after a period of disillusionment with Hinduism during which he contemplated beginning a new religion. He met a missionary on a train journey who first spoke at length with him about Sanskrit poetry and later urged him to read the New Testament. The reaction to Tilak's baptism was electric, and he was separated from his wife for over four years before she re-

joined him and also later came to Christ.

Like many Hindus who turn to Christ, Tilak assumed that Christ and Western Christianity are part of one package, and he became a good Christian. But a major transition began in his life one day when he heard the pilgrims of the Marathi poet-saints singing their songs and decided to write *bhajans* to Christ. As his pilgrimage progressed Tilak became a remarkable pioneer in what we now call contextualization, developing patterns of evangelism and discipleship that fit local contexts.

Tilak and his wife had visited Ramabai at Mukti in 1905, just a few months before the revival broke out there. But there were too many differences between them for close cooperation to develop. In fact, it was at Mukti that Tilak's wife Lakshmbai, by then following Christ for five years, was convinced by Ramabai to cease wearing the *bindi* (red dot on the forehead). Lakshmbai reflected on this in a presentation given in 1933:

After becoming a Christian, for many years I would apply

***Like many Hindus who turn to Christ, Tilak assumed that Christ and Western Christianity are part of one package, and he became a good Christian. But a major transition began in his life one day when he heard the pilgrims of the Marathi poet-saints singing their songs and decided to write bhajans to Christ.***

*kunku*. No missionary objected to this. Once, however, a learned Indian Christian lady connected *kunku* with the Shakta cult, misled me, and took a promise from me that I would never again apply *kunku*. Afterwards Tilak explained to me the meaning of *kunku*. But since I had given a promise I did not apply it again and Tilak never insisted that I do so.[6]

But Tilak went far beyond some outward accommodation to Hindu forms. The themes of his writing also resonated with *bhakti*, while being faithful to biblical revelation. In 1917 his life took another turn, this time through meeting a Hindu during a train journey. This Hindu man referred to the dynamism of Tilak as a young leader, and asked what had happened to him.

Tilak realized he had drifted too far from his own people, and was now isolated in communalized Christianity. After months of struggle and hesitation he resolved to begin a new movement which he called *devachadarbar*, God's royal court. This was to be a brotherhood of the baptized (Christian) and unbaptized (Hindu) disciples of Jesus; what today we might call a true church that transcended the sociological boundaries of religious affiliation.

Tilak's new work did not proceed far, as he died within two years of its start. But he left a legacy and a dream that remains to be realized by new generations of Hindus who follow Jesus. [7]

## MANILAL C. PAREKH (1885-1967): MOVING BEYOND THE CHURCH, CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTO- CENTRISM

Manilal C. Parekh was a Gujarati from a family that was traditionally Jain, but his father converted to Vaishnavism and Krishna *bhakti*. Through a friend he became attracted to Christ by reading *The Imitation of Christ*. When he learned about Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) of the Brahmo Samaj he found a guru, and followed Keshab in everything, including his reverence for Christ. He went to Calcutta for four months of training and then worked as a Brahmo missionary for eight years in western India, being ordained a Brahmo minister in 1915.

Manilal's own statement about his years as a Brahmo worker summarize the situation best: "During these years I stood strongly for Christo-Centre, although I was almost alone in this state of mind." [8] During an illness Manilal read the Bible and was completely won over to Christ. He contemplated beginning a Hindu Church of Christ, but was told by a Brahmo friend that the Indian church was moving on those lines so he joined the Anglican Church in 1918. He spent about a year at Mukti with Ramabai, and another six months with Christians in Bombay after his baptism. But he was very unhappy with what he saw of Christianity in India.

It is best to let Manilal describe his thoughts and actions at

that time:

The Indian Christians could by no means be called Christians in my sense of the term, and they were not only not national in any sense of the term but were positively anti-national and still more anti-Hindu. The so-called Church of Christ was almost entirely "carnal" in the Pauline sense of the term. If Saint Paul could complain of their being "carnal Christians" in his own time, that is about thirty years after Jesus, how much more would that be true in India where Christianity was being propagated with all the material resources of the Western World? I used to discuss these things with some of the leading Indian Christians and missionaries who were frank enough to talk about these matters, and I found them to be fully aware of these evils though they would not speak of them openly. As regards myself, I could not tolerate this situation, since to my mind it was most harmful to both Christianity of the right type and to Hinduism. To me both these faiths were not only not antagonistic as practically all Christians, Indian and Western, believed, but they formed integral parts of one whole. To me, to be a true Hindu was to be a true disciple of Christ, and to be a true disciple of Christ meant to be more a Hindu and not less. This belief was woven into my being and it was the light of all my seeing and thinking. Thus, I had to fall back more or less on what I called the Hindu Church of Christ and I severed my connection with all organised Christianity.[9]

Manilal saw the same problems of the others introduced in this paper, and seeing no like-minded community set out on his own path. He had come to the notice of many Christians and was invited to be the head of the Christa Seva Sangha ashram in Pune, but felt he could not join a distinctly Anglican institution. In 1924 an American sponsored him as a freelance evangelist, traveling around India speaking to educated people. This lasted for five years. He was made a member of the National Christian Council of India during this time and was supported in his work by Stanley Jones and others.

During visits to America in 1929 and 1933 Manilal became convinced that Christianity was not in any way producing better fruit than Hinduism. The publication of the book *Christian Mass Movements in India* became a watershed. Manilal was committed to a spiritual faith and was deeply dismayed by the shallowness of the Christianity he saw almost everywhere. This 1933 book by Bishop J. W. Pickett seemed to glorify the weakness of Christianity and support the less-than-spiritual methods and motives of many of the mass movement converts. Manilal responded with a bitter book entitled *Christian Proselytism in India: A Great and Growing Menace*, published only in 1947. This publication closed all doors for Manilal in the Christian world.

It is sad to note that conflicts and disillusionment with the Christian world led to Manilal drifting away from the Christ-centered position he had affirmed even while with the Brahmo Samaj. He became an advocate of what he called Bhagavata Dharma, an ideology that found truth in all religions and many prophets worthy of honor and discipleship. When I visited his

grand-daughters in Rajkot, Gujarat, in 2000, they had no knowledge of his Christian involvement and stated that in his last years he faithfully visited a Swami Narayan temple.

The last word on Manilal will be that of his friend R. C. Das, from an obituary written in 1967:

Bhai Monilal was a valued and beloved friend. He and I, of about the same age, we found our saviour and Lord in Jesus Christ, he in 1915 and I in 1908. We soon became fast friends as in 1919 he lived with me in St. John's College, Agra, for a while, where I was teaching at the time. He not only taught and preached in different churches and among other groups in India but also in many other countries of the world. He was a cosmopolitan Christian, a true member of the holy catholic and apostolic church. We shared many ideas and convictions as regards the Christian faith and its role in the context of the spiritual and social culture of India. It was a misfortune and a first class blunder on the part of the church, missionary ridden and western oriented—that such a humble, devout and loving soul, a dhoti-wearing and vegetarian Jain, a practical disciple and follower of Christ, could not be fully integrated in the visible fellowship of Christ and had to confine himself in his generous and loving family group—[that he] of the eminent qualifications of head and heart, of a convert who had been a missionary of the Brahmo Samaj, could not be utilized for the widening and humanising of the lives of Christian leaders who have been living in narrow theological and cultural grooves. The loser is the church and not he.... [10]

***I** t seems safe to say that the way of Ramabai, living with the tension of conflicting heritages, has generally been the pattern of Hindus who turn to Christ. Those committed to the Bible can only take the case study of Manilal Parekh as a warning of danger.*

## **KALAGARA SUBBA RAO (1912-1981): CHRISTO-CENTRIC AVOIDANCE OF CHURCH AND CHRISTIANITY**

K. Subba Rao was a Kamma from Andhra Pradesh. He grew up as a cynic against religion and led a rebellious life against religion and religious leaders. He managed to get an education and a job as a teacher, and married in 1937. His dissolute life broke his health, and in a period of convalescence he had a vision of Christ that transformed his life in 1942.[11]

Subba Rao wrote a striking song about Christ appearing to him, a fallen atheist, when many churches had been built in his name. He was a reluctant disciple of Jesus at first; after all, he had a reputation as a mocker of religion. But he found that healings followed when he laid hands on people in Jesus' name, and soon his faith and works brought him to the attention of both Hindus and Christians.

Subba Rao's initial contacts with Christians were not good, and to the end of his life he refused to be baptized or to work

under the "Christian" label. Due to his healing ministry he developed a considerable following in Andhra and also Karnataka, but he was opposed to religion as such and never started anything resembling a religious organization. He highlighted the opposition of religious leaders to Jesus and suggested that the same situation continues today. Among his writings is a biting tract entitled "Gurudev: Where Can I Get So Many Millstones?" where he says that there are so many Christian pastors putting burdens on the little sheep of Christ that it is hard to imagine where so many millstones can be found to put around their necks.

A considerable movement of disciples of Jesus gathered around Subba Rao, and after his death an ashram hall was built on the outskirts of Vijayawada. The movement is in a major transition period due to the deaths of both Subba Rao's widow and his successor as leader of the ministry.

The healing ministry of Subba Rao drew people, but they were held by the *bhakti* focused on Jesus that is the mark of their public meetings. Subba Rao wrote 34 songs that are constantly sung, and numerous songs used by Christians in Andhra Pradesh are also part of their hymnody. Despite disdain for organization and a refusal to accept the label of "Christian," the marks of a New Testament *ekklesia* (church) are present.

Subba Rao was not a deep Bible student and was loose and even reckless in his terminology and teaching. Yet he demonstrated that it is possible to follow Jesus Christ as a Hindu and gather other Hindus into a *bhakti sampradaya* with a focus on discipleship to Jesus. Thus he presents a challenge and illuminates possibilities for other followers of Jesus from Hindu families.

## **CONCLUSION**

Different conclusions can be drawn from the varying approaches to "church" evident in these case studies. It seems safe to say that the way of Ramabai, living with the tension of conflicting heritages, has generally been the pattern of Hindus who turn to Christ. Those committed to the Bible can only take the case study of Manilal Parekh as a warning of danger. The danger lies in two directions; that of leaving Christ-centeredness but also that of aggravating others away from Christ and his people due to perpetuating Western forms and attitudes.

Pioneering new approaches that seek truly Hindu expressions of *ekklesia* (church) seems a commendable effort in light of these case studies. K.C. Banurji's effort really was in the direction of reforming churches that existed in a deeply Western model, and there is little hope for this to succeed. Tilak and Subba Rao went further, desiring to transcend Western models with something deeply Hindu, not unlike the way Gentile churches transcended the established Jewish expressions of

communities, it is clear that multiple Christ-movements need to develop and these will no doubt evidence significant differences. That movements resembling each of the positions outlined historically in this paper will appear in our day should excite rather than concern disciples of Jesus. May it so be, and may we embrace with grace and joy the various expressions of discipleship to Jesus that develop in the Hindu world.

(AFMI/ASFM)

## ENDNOTES

- [1] Barber, B. R., *Kali Charan Banurji: Brahmin, Christian, Saint*. The Christian Literature Society for India, London, Madras and Colombo, 1912, pg. 50.
- [2] For the facts on Ramabai see Ram Bapat, "Pandita Ramabai: Faith and Reason in the Shadow of East and West," in *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*, eds. Vasudha Dalmia and H. Von Stietencron; Delhi: Sage, 1995, pp. 239-49.
- [3] Ramabai, Pandita, *A Testimony*, Pune, p. 23.
- [4] Macnicol, Nicol, *Pandita Ramabai*. Builders of Modern India, Calcutta: Association Press, 1926, pg. 140.
- [5] 12 volumes published between 1926 and 1941, many available in reprint still today.
- [6] The Marathi original of this is in Tilak, Lakshmibai, *Sam-purna Smrutichitre*, ed. Ashok Devdatt Tilak, Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 1989, pg. 704. For the English translation see Richard, H. L., *Following Jesus in the Hindu Context: The Intriguing Implications of N. V. Tilak's Life and Thought*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1998, pg. 118.
- [7] Tilak's story is told in more detail in the next chapter.
- [8] "An Autobiographical Sketch," in *Manilal C. Parekh, Dhanjibhai Fakirbhai*, ed. Robin Boyd, Library of Indian Christian Theology, Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1974, pg. 25.
- [9] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
- [10] *R. C. Das: Evangelical Prophet for Contextual Christianity*, ed. H. L. Richard, *Confessing the Faith in India*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1995, pp. 272-273.
- [11] Subba Rao's life and teaching are outlined and analyzed in my study *Exploring the Depths of the Mystery of Christ: K. Subba Rao's Eclectic Praxis of Hindu Discipleship to Jesus*, Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2005.

(Continued from p. 10)

- [10] Aloysius M. Ambrozic, *The Hidden Kingdom: A redaction-critical study of the references to the kingdom of God in Mark's Gospel* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1972), p. 45.
- [11] Ladd's view of the mysteries seems overly reductionistic. "The mystery of the kingdom is this: Before this eschatological consummation . . . the kingdom of God has entered this age and invaded the kingdom of Satan in spiritual power to bring to men in advance the blessings . . . which belong to the age to come." George Eldon Ladd, 'Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven', in Walter Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), p. 609. The actuality is much more complex, as indicated by the variety of parables required to represent the various mysteries.
- [12] E. Stanley Jones, *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), pp. 292, 293.

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# Ask! Search! and Knock!

## A practical approach to a closed cousin village

Harun Kim

### INTRODUCTION

“**H**ey, it's here, don't you see it?  
It's right in front of you.”

Have you ever heard that sound of discontent from your wife? I do hear it frequently. Sure, I couldn't find the object that I wanted, but ('out of the blue') my wife always found it. Does she have a special gift of finding things? No, I don't think so. It is mainly because I didn't do my best when I tried to look for something. I just expect it to automatically appear. *I think it's a matter of mind rather than sight.* If the mind is not prepared, then the object you want to find will elude you.

In John chapter 4, the story of Jesus in Samaria, Jesus saw what the disciples didn't see. So, He entered the region where the disciples even never tried to go (due to their prejudice toward Samaritans and the land of Samaria), and dared to talk with a woman there. Why did Jesus declare Samaria a 'harvest area'? Didn't He know the relationship between the Jewish and Samaritan people? Or was He sure that His spiritual power was so great that He could ignore all of the problems in reality. No, as it was mentioned above, He really saw something important that His disciples failed to see.

Since 9.11, the atmosphere of conflict between the Christian West and the Islamic Middle East seems to have reached its peak. As a result, our mission work for them has become much more difficult. A Korean man was martyred in Iraq, and several years later, two more Koreans

were martyred in Afghanistan. The deaths caused the retreat of all Korean missionaries from these two countries. Nowadays, the image that the Islamic World is a very difficult place for us to harvest as well as enter has become fixed in our minds. Moreover, the sharp increase of Muslim immigrants into Korea has made us become more frustrated and more distant from them.

Then, how can we expect to see the harvest for that area? Is the Islamic land closed or open? If Jesus were here with us, would He declare again that 'this is a harvest land'? Yes, I am sure that He would. In Jesus' eyes, the entire world including the Islamic land is open. If we begin to look at the current situation in the way that Jesus did, not in our own way of thinking, I think it is possible.

John Chapter 4 describes a ministry across socio-religious barriers. The barriers existed between the Samaritan woman, who was influenced by a culture which was regarded as a cult according to Jewish religious point of view, and Jesus who was a Jewish. But Jesus won the Samaritan woman over by conveying a message that passed through the barriers. He successfully conveyed the essence of faith and worship, and He must have known how to reach out across the socio-religious barriers. Jesus demonstrated that the essence of the Gospel can be expressed differently depending on cultural background.

On the basis of this proposition, Jesus executed His strategy for the Samaritan mission. Let us trace His strategy. First, He boldly went into the Samaritan territory and associated with them. He asked for water from a woman beside a well. He approached this woman on her level as a human being and not as a prophet. Secondly, He saw into her heart where there was a lot of pain and great need. He identified and dealt with her current issues of relationships (such as multiple husbands and prostitution) and other personal problems (such as avoiding the other women when fetching water). He tried to meet her needs as He spoke with her. Thirdly, He respected her religion and culture and He talked to her keeping in mind her religious and cultural context rather than His own. Furthermore, He freed her so that she could manifest her faith life in her own socio-religious setting. This

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was a very different approach than what the typical Jewish person had done in their relationship with a Samaritan.

Now, it is the time for us to change the way we have looked at the Islamic World, where in history a deep emotional valley has grown due to the religious and cultural differences. New approaches but the Bible old ones are needed. I think this is an approach that we should identify ourselves with them in order to find their real needs as human beings, accept their culture as far as the Bible confirms, and adapt it in evangelism.

I have lived in the Islamic World for 10 years. I have experienced many things during this time. All of my activities in the mission field have been inspired by Jesus' incarnation model. It's a way to enter a village as an outsider in order to win a soul, cross-culturally. This was supported not only by my own experiences, but by the experiences of my predecessors and their practical teachings.

This is a sequel to my personal research on **'Understanding the Localized Religion - Javanese Islam'** which examined Islam by tracing its propagation and the resulting social stratifications. Here through this article I attempt to present a particular strategy for the mission field. I need to mention that the last step of mission work, which is multiplication or movement, has been omitted because I have yet to experience it. It's a long term goal, but God's willing, it should be done.

Some of the terms I use in this article are local ones that might be different from those of the Middle East. I hope this difference does not cause any misunderstanding in worldviews or in the expression and understanding of the Gospel. This article addresses ways for Muslims, not us, to understand Jesus and the Gospel. I don't deal in detail with all of the mission field issues; instead outline a process to be used when approaching Muslims.

## SMOOTHLY SETTLING DOWN IN A VILLAGE

A keyword of my ministry is "smooth". The first step of my ministry is smooth settling-down in a village. It is very simple; just "living" as a common villager. If you want to name it as a strategy, I would call it that of being a "common neighbor". I participated in almost every village event with an open heart; even in the "night watch program" (it is a duty of all men in the village to watch over their village monuments on significant holidays such as national or presidential Election Day, etc.). The duty continues over night when it is very cold (it does get cold at night even in the tropical area). I do my best in performing the assigned duty honestly until completed. As a result, the villagers gave me even the right to vote and I was accepted like one of them.

My social identity is a businessman (I opened a legal trading company). As a businessman, I could legitimately meet people in all the villages without any suspicion. I swept away all the vagueness of my identity when I had a student visa for four years. I think it very important to settle down well as the first step for doing ministry in a closed area. It is the time to let them know me as who I am where I live. It is a process that the villagers come to know me and form their opinion on whether

I am good or bad, proud or humble, outgoing or closed. The groundwork for my ministry has been established during this stage.

## MY RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

How you introduce yourself in a seriously-Gospel-resistant-area is critical for an evangelist. To say "I am a Christian" is one way and I hope so as much as possible. Yet, you might have side-effects if you use that expression. This is due to (I am sorry to say this, but as we know) their misunderstanding on Christianity as a religion containing immoral western culture and influence from their rivalry Euro-American politicians. So, your relationship would never start and you would lose a chance to share the Good News. But remember; never hide your faith because of fear. Therefore, in order to build up good relationship with them, we must introduce ourselves as true believers as clearly as possible in a way that avoids the misunderstanding. We need an approach based on the Bible and genuine faith (not on our own skills/techniques) that is acceptable in Islamic culture.

When you are asked about the nature of your faith, I suggest that you begin your reply by stating "I am one who follows Abraham's way of faith." The father of our faith is a righteous man whom God made so through his faith apart from the law. (Romans 4) Muslims also regard themselves as Abraham's descendants. Abraham is the father of their faith, too.[1] So, we can claim to Muslims that, just like for the Jews, Abraham's faith took precedence over all laws including Muhammad's law which was developed a few thousand years later. It is important to have confidence that this can be the basis for our cousins' belief. I would like to say, "I believe and follow one God whom Abraham the forefather of our faith believes." The belief that Jesus is the Savior is included in the faith of Abraham. I believe this is captured in the words of Jesus when He said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56) Even though this doesn't look like a common Christian approach, it is an important and very acceptable way in the Islamic context. This helps our cousins understand what the faith in Jesus means without any stereotypical prejudice about Christianity.

It is recommended to talk about Jesus when a close and intimate relationship has already been built with trust. Moreover, it needs to be the perspective of Abraham's belief. At this point, we may prepare to talk much more about Christ and our belief in Him, yet how much we share is totally dependent on the field situation. And how we live our life will give direct message as well. But if sharing more about Jesus is held back due to the fear factor, it should be avoided. We are encouraged to be ready to reveal that you are a genuine follower/disciple of Jesus. However we need to know how much we open will depend on the preparation of the receiver's heart and mind.

## DEMONSTRATE THE GOSPEL THROUGH WORSHIP, PRAYER AND SERVICE PRIOR TO TALKING ABOUT IT

Like Judaism, Islam is also a religion of ritual. Your belief is to be evaluated only by the practice of worship, prayer, and almsgiving, etc. Anyone who practices these things regularly is so to speak a good Muslim or a Jew. For the Jews, they rarely analyze the Word of God, instead just receive as the Word of God in fear/reverence and do as the Word commands. We read in James as follows: "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." (James 2:26) The first receivers of this Word were the Jews. Everybody who read this passage at that time must have known that their everyday actions were not just a matter of behavior but faith. Whereas, in the book of Romans, we read another message about faith. "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." (Romans 10:10) In this passage, it is important that faith is linked 'to something that we believe in our heart and confess with your mouth'. We must think carefully about the background of the first readers. It was intended for the Romans in Hellenistic worldview.

Therefore, for the Muslims who have a similar worldview like Jews, I dare to suggest expressing the love and power of God through their form of worship and prayer as well as good life behavior rather than trying logical explanation on the Gospel. This approach is most effective in helping Muslims understand and accept God's gifts of faith and holiness.

These forms should always be biblical and at the same time contextual. For example, when we practice the Muslim form of worship, it does not mean that we have become a Muslim. Rather, we are lifting up to God our prayers of intercession for Muslims through their custom of worship, whether in a personal or in group setting. Yet, it is important to understand it as not a pretending technique but a contextual and biblical form of worship. Any form of true worship must be internalized in our heart where genuine faith in Jesus is founded. When our heart is prepared, we can truly worship God through *Sholat* (Islam form of worship) and pray real prayer through *Do'a* (Islam form of prayer). Our prayer is not a tool of demonstration to influence them. Genuine, intercessory prayer itself is a powerful weapon of spiritual warfare that reveals the entities of darkness and unties all bondages in any situation. We can sit on a *Sajadah* (Islam worship/prayer matt) wearing a *Topi* (traditional hat) and pray to God in our mother tongue or even in tongues. When our Muslim neighbors listen to our voice of prayer, our hope is that their hearts will be calmed and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Once again, it surely is not a technique what we do. It is a natural expression of the lives of holy people who know and love God through Jesus as well as the people whom He has sent us to. By doing so the Gospel of the Kingdom will gradually take root.

In addition, we can find much more proper expressions in the biblical perspective for the celebration days of Islam (e.g.,

'*Bulan Puasa/Ramadan*'[2], '*Idul Fitri*'[3], '*Idul Adha*'[4], and '*Sukuran*'[5], etc.).

## PREPARE FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD THROUGH BUSINESS

Since independence day and passing through the Korean War, the Gospel was preached in a way that Jesus is the only way to Heaven and non-belief leads to Hell. This message met the needs of Koreans who had been living with suffering in poverty without hope for the future. They desperately needed a way out of their anguish. Even though many Koreans responded to the Gospel message leading them to the heaven afterworld, yet the significance of our lives in this world was omitted. The only goal of mission in Korea looked like only winning souls. As the result, even though ten-million people has embraced Christianity, the Kingdom of God has not yet been realized from many aspects in Korea. The absurd reality is that Korean missionaries are diligently repeating this kind of incomplete mission for the sake of the Gospel. I truly think we need to demonstrate the Kingdom of God as a present reality in the earthly lives of those who truly receive our Lord.

A way to realize this is through social development activities in which most village people can take participation voluntarily. By acting business model we can create opportunities for employment and let them exercise creative wisdom, cooperation, faithfulness, earnestness, and relationships based on biblical principles. Social development programs (like CHE)[6] deriving the self-esteem of villagers can help them build the Biblical worldview too. This kind of development, which could be called the Kingdom ministry or movement, should not belong to outsiders but belong to *insiders* who really enjoy the progress of developing their society for themselves.

There are two fold reasons on why we do these activities. One is to demonstrate the power of the Gospel to the people who were reluctant to hear it because of the misunderstandings and prejudices pertained in their lives. And the other is to provide background for the truth in the Gospel that is to be shared later. Anywhere that this movement is successfully established, the people will taste the Kingdom of God and be happy.

## LET THE GOSPEL DANCE IN STORIES

It is a well-known fact that most people enjoy stories more than logical debates. Stories are a melting pot conveying joy, anger, and love into people's hearts as an entertainment. Stories seem to be little known as a tool for communication. As an owner of a company, I usually use storytelling as a method to share the Bible message when I conduct training in my staff meetings and try to share the Gospel with the villagers. Sometimes they politely reject the message of the stories, but they do not reject me. In most cases, I experience the stories of the

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Gospel affecting people's hearts. Stories can be good tool for preparing the hearts of those who receive the Gospel as well as creating an atmosphere in which the evangelist can share the Gospel directly. Storytelling can continue to be used to help believers grow as disciples after accepting Jesus as their Savior. The same storytelling may be used by those new believers to evangelize their families and friends. Even many parables in the Qur'an that are parallel with the themes of Bible can be used to make stories. This may help our cousins listen easily.

## LET THEM TASTE THE KINGDOM OF GOD THROUGH A HEALING AND POWER ENCOUNTER!

This step can go side by side with storytelling. Generally, when we talk to people, we have a chance to talk beyond a planned subject. When I meet people in a business setting, the topic of discussion frequently moves from business to other issues, such as our common interests. This also happens in the relationships with my neighbors. If it is a more intimate setting, people love to talk about their families, neighbors, and private emotional issues (e.g. sadness, hardship, and personal difficulties, etc). These moments are good opportunities to invite people into the Kingdom of God by counseling and praying for physical or spiritual healing, as well as freedom from demon possession. This experience could make them open their hearts widely toward Jesus Christ. I dare to say that this is evangelism via life situation without direct mentioning of a specific verse from the Bible. His Kingdom is realized when many are to be healed and freed from their bondages just as Jesus did.

## INTRODUCE JESUS BY WORD AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT ONLY

As we pass through the above two steps, our cousins' hearts are being prepared to accept Jesus' reign. Yet, at the same time they may fall into anxiety. By choosing Jesus as their savior, they may question whether or not they should leave the community where they were born and have always lived. Now, this is the time, I think, for us to do evangelism by using the Scriptures. In doing so, we need to add a bridging step prior to talking about the Scriptures. Some phrases from the Qur'an can be selected as connecting tools for evangelism. Introducing Jesus as the Savior through some phrases from the Qur'an could calm down the difficult and mysterious issues in their hearts. There are many Bible friendly stories in the Qur'an. Most phrases in the Qur'an addressing Jesus are very positive. Jesus is described as a great healer (even one who restored life to the dead), the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. In addition, you may verify that He is the Savior through reinterpretation of some verses in the Qur'an written in the original Arabic language.

## SOME CASE STUDIES OF TINY BREAKTHROUGH

### *A cursed man*

It happened when we lived in a mountain village before moving to the village where we now live. My housemaid's

brother had been sick due to being cursed. One day, his condition suddenly worsened. One of my local co-workers was called by his family and asked help. She (a young lady) went to his house and found that he was demon possessed. So she removed an occult ring from his finger, and a demon fled from his body after approximately 10 minutes of spasms.

I arrived at the house soon after the demon had gone and realized that the demon was no longer present. So I prayed for the brother's physical recovery (he was still sick with disease). I invited the villagers to pray together by saying, "Well, I found a great prophet who healed people and raised the dead. His name is 'Isa Al Masih' (Jesus the Messiah in Arabic). Whenever I pray, I rely on His Name." I challenged the villagers by asking "Can you pray for him in His name?" I could hear their response saying "Amin".

One month later, the man died. The day before he died, the local co-worker visited him. Actually, she had been visiting him very often since the event. She prayed for him along with her expression of giving him comfort. An 'Imam' (Islamic teacher) had visited the man and prayed for him and a 'Dukun' (shaman) did the same, but the man couldn't do anything except moan due to his pain and his terror of death. But, when the local co-worker came into the house, the man welcomed her with smile. All of his family members were surprised by this. He asked her to sing, so she sang the hymn: "The Bright Way to Heaven". As soon as the song finished, he asked for one more song. So she sang the hymn: "Amazing Grace". Soon after she finished, he thanked her with a bright face. The next day he was gone.

We are not sure whether or not he was saved. But we confirmed the power of the Name of Jesus and the Gospel in front of the Muslim villagers.

### *Storytelling and Evangelism*

A man whom I have known for several years shared his problem with me. He was my driver, so I could have some time together with him almost every day. His story was about a former boss visiting a shaman to secure his success in business. He gave a ride to the boss. And yet he also wanted to be rich. So he tried to follow the boss when he visited the frightening place owned by a shaman. Along the way, they had to pass through six gates and declare an oath to a spirit in front of each gate. When the driver was about to pass through the third gate, he stopped because of great fear. However, his boss continued. As a result of this, his boss became richer, but there was a price to be paid. The boss had promised a sacrifice to the spirit. The last son of his boss was dead as a result of the oath and the driver witnessed everything. Since that very day, whenever the driver was alone or just about to go to bed, he was greatly troubled by a terrible fear of the spirit. This lasted until he listened to a story that I shared with him.

I have read 20 times the story in the Bible which talks about a demon possessed man named "Legion". I memorized it in the local language and dramatized it in order to make it look like a common story. One day when I met the driver, I asked him, "Do you still have the problem you have shared

with me?” He said “Yes”. So I asked him another question. “I have a story of a prophet who is capable of casting demons out of a man. Do you want to hear this story?” He appealed his interest, so I told him the story like a drama. I challenged him so that I could pray for him in the name of “Isa Al Masih”. As he wanted so, I prayed for him in Jesus’ name so that he could be freed from any fear of the spirit troubling him. (He didn’t look like fully overwhelmed by demon possession. Rather, he appeared to be annoyed by a spirit. But this spirit was not in his body.)

Several days later, I asked him, “Do you still have the problem with the spirit?” He replied, “No, brother.” (He was intimate enough to call me his brother.) He continued, “Since that very night when you prayed for me, I have slept very well without any problems.” After that, I used the passages in Al Qur’an several times to acquaint him to Jesus as his Savior, and he ultimately accepted Jesus as his Savior. Now I am training him through bible study.

### *Jesus Film and Evangelism*

It was Good Friday Night when I was on night watch duty. A carpenter who had worked on my house for two months was on duty with me. We chitchatted about several topics. As I had known him for two months, I had been praying for a chance to share the Gospel with him. I felt that night was the time. So, I started to talk about Jesus by questioning: “Have you ever heard about Jesus?” I asked very cautiously because I wasn’t sure how he would respond. But surprisingly enough, he said, “Yes, I have been seriously thinking about Him.” I asked him, “Why?” He replied, “I watched the Jesus Film on a public TV channel.” (The Jesus film used to be on air by a public TV station every Good Friday in this country.) He continued to talk. “Jesus was arrested, accused, beaten, and even killed on the cross without any sin. Jesus withstood this suffering without any self-defense or counterattack. He went His own way. It was very impressive to me.” With all of surprise in my mind I explained the carpenter why Jesus did so. I talked about our sin (including the carpenter’s) and emphasized the fact that anyone who believes in Jesus who died on the cross and rose again as the Savior would be saved. I challenged the carpenter to accept Jesus as his Savior and he did.

Incidentally, within a week I had to fire him because of his harsh treatment of other workers in my office and home as well as his insincere work attitude. Ever since that time, I have not seen him because he won’t meet with me.

I am still not certain of his motivation for accepting Jesus as his Savior. Maybe he was motivated just to keep my attention in a positive way. I hope to be able to check on him sometime when we meet again.

### CONCLUSION

The Kingdom of God, as it is so in heaven, should be real on earth. We, as messengers of God’s Kingdom, must have knowledge about the earth as well as knowledge of heaven. Specifically, if we are mission workers for the Islamic World, then we must know this world well. Not just through our own

eyes, but seen from every perspective. Is it really closed? Does God command “Mission Impossible”? No, never! So, what is the problem? Do we need to reveal ourselves to a totally different world by approaching them only from our own perspective? If we did so, we would realize the reality of its ineffectiveness and take a new approach which is meaningful for them.

In addition, this reminds us of the boldness that Jesus demonstrated to reach out to the Samaritans without concerning on the break of Jewish customs and laws. Just like the Samaritan woman who became a stepping stone for bringing revival to the whole of Samaria, who knows if there will be another “Samaritan woman” in our cousins’ region, waiting for us to come? **(AFMI/ASFM)**

### ENDNOTES

- [1] It is not important that they are really descendants of Abraham or biblically-based, because the most important thing is that they truly believe it. Even though it is their doctrine, in their mind set, it is the real world. So if we develop dialogue based on what we want, it is impossible to breakthrough their mindset.
- [2] The month for the fasting of Muslims.
- [3] The festival after the fasting month.
- [4] The festival for the pilgrims after travelling to Mecca.
- [5] Thanksgiving ceremony
- [6] CHE is short for Community Health Evangelism created and ran by the Life Wind International. The formal name was Medical Ambassadors International. CHE is a strategy approaching the mission fields in holistic way which discipleship, church planting and development are integrated.



# Filipino Insider Missions in the Buddhist World

David S. Lim

**W**hat constitutes Filipino missions to reach the one billion Buddhists in the world today? This article will show that tentmakers (Christians who evangelize and make disciples cross-culturally) are most effective in doing frontier missions, especially if they are trained in catalyzing “insider movements” (IM) on indigenous principles of self-governing, self-support, self-propagation and self-theologizing groups of believers.

Though there are no concrete data yet on how many Filipino Evangelical missionaries are in the Buddhist world, I estimate (conservatively) there may be about 2,500 of them, mostly tentmakers. Perhaps about 500 of them went forth with intentions to be church-supported “career missionaries” in Buddhist lands, but almost all of them soon discovered that finding employment (almost always in cities) in their target country is the only way they can stay long-term.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT: FILIPINO MIGRATION

In the last three and a half decades, there has been a massive movement of Filipinos into almost 200 countries of the world. The causes are economic and demographic: the weak economy with high rates of unemployment and rapid population increase,[1] together with an inward looking industrialization policy. Thus, the economy has become more and more dependent on the remittance of these overseas contract workers (OCW) as a valuable source of foreign exchange currencies.[2]

Though it started mainly as “muscle drain” to work in oil fields in mid-1970s, by 2004, thirty-five percent were “professional and technical workers” (engineers, pilots, physicians and nurses), which constitutes a large-scale “brain drain.” (Wehrfritz and Vitug 2004:32). The main problem is low pay at home: For example, in 2002, nurses were paid \$139/month in the country, but \$650/month in Singapore, \$982/month in Saudi Arabia, and \$1,666/month in United Kingdom (:32-33). All the while, the Philippine economy earned \$58.5 billion from 1990-2002, for an average of \$4.5 billion/year from their remittances. In 2003, they brought in \$7.2 billion or 20.6 percent of the country’s export earnings or 6.2 percent of Gross National Product (GNP) (Baldoz 2004:47).

Another good reason why Filipinos can keep on flowing abroad is their good reputation, especially in “people skills.” They have been appreciated for their technical skills, adaptability, creativity and cheerfulness, their high level of productivity and quality in production and management, as well as their English proficiency and pleasant voice and disposition (Baldoz 2004:43-48). The flow of land-based and sea-based overseas Filipino contract workers continue unabated, and their remittances continue to prop up the Philippine economy to this day (2010).

The top eight (8) countries of destination in 2003 were (in numerical order): Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Japan, UAE, Taiwan, Kuwait, Singapore, and Qatar (that’s 50% in the Buddhist-majority nations!). These continue to be the dominant recipient nations to this today.

Though they contribute much to the Philippine economy through their remittances and donations, as well as gaining skills, know-how and capital for the country, almost eighty percent of them suffer from the *social costs* of marital break-ups and juvenile delinquency, with hardly any help from government and society at large (Wehrfritz and Vitug 2004:33; and Remigio 2004:22). The percentage of women has increased persistently: twelve percent in 1975, forty-seven percent in 1985, sixty-one percent in 1998, seventy percent in 2000, and seventy-three percent in 2003 (Baldoz 2004:41) and today. This is bad news

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for the social and moral fiber of Philippine society which has traditionally been quite matriarchal.

## PHILIPPINE RELIGIOUS PROFILE

The Philippines is the one major Asian nation with a Christian majority: eighty-four percent Roman Catholic, eight percent Protestant (including Aglipayans or Filipino/Independent Catholics), three percent Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC), three percent Muslim, and two percent others. Evangelicals (a subset of Protestants) are about seven percent, about six million in an estimated population of ninety-two million. The most visible Evangelical group, with perhaps the most diasporal churches, the Jesus is Lord Church (JIL), whose influence extends far beyond its membership, has 500,000 members, 0.3 percent of the population.[3]

The first Protestant missionaries arrived with the American occupation forces in 1898. The churches they planted eventually became the mainline Protestant churches that constituted the National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP) in 1965. In that same year, the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) was formed by the churches that were established through Christian and Missionary Alliance (entered 1928) and many post-World War II Evangelical missionaries, many of whom were re-assigned to the Philippines when China turned Communist in 1949. With the charismatic revival of the late 1970s and the 1980s, the leading Full Gospel church called Jesus is Lord (JIL) gathered the others together to form the Philippines for Jesus Movement (PJM). DAWN 2001 Survey reports that Protestant churches are categorized thus: PCEC = 28%, NCCP = 13%, Baptist = 16%, Independent = 19%, and Full Gospel = 24%. The same survey shows there were 5.5 million Protestants who make up 7.2% of the population (2001: 35).

## FILIPINO MISSIONS

The main coordinating body for Filipino tentmaker missions is the "Philippine Missions Mobilization Movement (PM3)," which was formally formed in March 17-19, 2005 at a Mission Consultation with about forty church and mission leaders coming together for a historic strategic planning workshop. Its mission statement states, "As a global movement of the Filipino church and partners, we shall seek to mobilize, train and send 200,000 tentmakers and career missionaries to reach the unreached people groups for Christ by 2010." The Philippine Missions Association (PMA, founded in 1983) through its new National Director, Bob Lopez,[4] volunteered to serve as its secretariat.

As of October 10, 2006, the last "Status of Philippine Missions" Research Report covered 1,900 missionaries in seventy countries, with 1,055 working overseas and 143 not indicating the nations they are working in. 338 are listed as "career missionaries," only sixty-five as tentmakers and nine as short-termers (both very under-counted!), and 117 as missionary mobilizers and trainers. It has also found 360 mission agencies, seventy-two missionary-sending churches, 188 Global Filipino churches, and nineteen OFW pastors. Most of Filipino mission leaders believe that these statistics cover only less than twenty

percent of the actual situation, but these can serve as a reliable data-base and sample for this article.

So far, the top twenty countries of *documented* Filipino missionaries are (Buddhist nations in italics): *China* (159), *Thailand* (126), USA (106), *Cambodia* (81), Indonesia (67), Malaysia (39), *Japan* (24), *Singapore* (24), *Vietnam* (20), Afghanistan (15), Canada (15), Austria (14), Bangladesh (14), Nepal (11), *Hongkong* (11), Kuwait (10), United Kingdom (10), *Mongolia* (9), UAE (8), and India (7).

These are joined and often supported by perhaps 50,000 *Christian* Filipinos overseas contract workers (OCWs) who are members in the various Diaspora Filipino Evangelical congregations (and international fellowships) in the major cities in the world. They are part of the global labor-export industry of the Philippines, which consists mainly of medical professionals (like nurses, doctors, medical technologists, physical therapists, etc.), various professionals (executives, engineers, teachers, etc.), skilled workers (entertainers, seamen, care-givers) and domestic helpers. This article considers only 2,500 from among them as tentmaker-missionaries in the Buddhist world, as those who have actually made conscious cross-cultural efforts to reach their Buddhist hosts, neighbors and/or colleagues for Christ.

The concept of tentmakers is new for most church leaders, so PM3 has to exert much effort to inform and persuade them to work towards mobilizing their members to go as OCWs and serve as "lay missionaries" in their host countries. Almost every church would have members who have relatives or friends working overseas. And given the poverty and unemployment situation in the Philippines, tentmaking is almost the only option for the local churches to play any significant role in world missions. According to a PCEC survey (2003), about 80% of the pastors in Luzon received less than \$20 per month from their churches![5]

## MISSION STRATEGY: INTEGRATION OF FOUR STREAMS

The Philippine mission movement has benefited from the integration of three main strategies, represented by four theological streams: Evangelical, Charismatic/Full Gospel, Transformational, and Diasporal.

**Evangelical.** The first stream is the mainline Evangelical groups who have traditionally used the Western Evangelical model of "evangelism and church-planting" in mission. They (and many still use the fundamentalist and pietistic lingo of "saving souls") constitute the majority of the membership of Philippine Mission Association (PMA), which includes the mission committees of local churches and denominations, as well as all kinds of mission groups: indigenous missions, foreign missions (especially American and Korean), missionary training institutes, and campus/youth ministries.

Among the mission agencies, the most prominent in the 1990s was the Philippine Home Council (PHC) of Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF), which was formed in 1966. By 1988, they had twelve missionaries serving in Japan, Thai-

land, Taiwan, Indonesia and Malaysia (Pate 1989:221), and 50 by 2001 (Manzano 2001:31). Together with two other west-based agencies, SEND International and World Team (formerly Regions Beyond Missionary Union, RBMU) and their partner church, the Alliance of Bible Christian Communities of the Philippines (ABCCOP), they formed Global Alliance Philippines Ministries (GAP) in order to field international missionary teams (Smith et al 2000:753).

PMA member churches with significant members of (partially) supported overseas missionaries are: Diliman Bible Church, Faith Baptist Church, Greenhills Christian Fellowship and Shekinah Christian Church. PMA also benefits from the presence of the major Western agencies, which often have their base for Asian or Asia-Pacific operations in Metro-Manila. The regular fellowship and interaction among these leaders have enhanced the healthy cross-fertilization of ideas and strategies as well as effected partnerships in the sharing of personnel and resources. Almost all of these missions operate with the typical evangelical paradigm of doing “evangelism and church-planting,” and in recent years moved towards “church multiplication movements” (CMM), which is an approach slightly different from that used by the next stream.

### **Charismatic/Full Gospel.**

The second stream, which has been growing the fastest, may be labeled “Charismatic/Full Gospel.”[6] It has a similar church-planting emphasis but has a different strategic approach: they not only emphasize power evangelism through healing and deliverance ministries, they also adopt a more short-term approach to empowering local believers for ministry, thereby effecting a more “insider approach” to church multiplication.

The most prominent organizations in this stream are Tribes and Nations Outreach (TNO) and Asian Center for Missions (ACM). TNO was founded in 1985 by Brother Joseph, after he left Open Doors with whom he orchestrated the “smuggling” of one million Bibles at one time into China (Zaide 1998:32). He developed a CMM strategy that became a thirteen-session training manual in their School of Workers (SOW) program. This has been implemented successfully in Mindanao, Indonesia, Myanmar and Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia and recently in Laos). In recent years they have developed an Asia Strike Force program to bring relief and the gospel to disaster-hit areas, as well as agricultural development programs to help make barren plants productive through organic farming methods.

Some of TNO’s related ministries have developed “Project END,” to “Empower Nationals for Disciple-making,” by sending church leaders in short-term mission teams to train local church leaders in their effective ministries for contextual in-

sider approach in their own milieu (Lim 2003a:205). For instance, Torch Ministry was organized to evangelize Myanmar. It has raised funds to support some Burmese partners in their ministries. Its most successful venture has been in medical missions, led by its Executive Director, Kara Dimacali, a dentist, who rejoiced to see the Burmese forming their own medical teams and resourcing medicine and funds from their local sources in 2005. Similarly working from its three bases in Thailand, Ethnos-Asia led by Sonny Largado has been mobilizing Filipino and other Christians to do both short-term and long-term missions in the South-East Asian region, China, Myanmar and Nepal.

The other major group is ACM, which has become the training ground of those who have determined to go into career missions from the Charismatic stream, including not a few from the Evangelical stream.[7] ACM has trained over 1,100 missionaries with over 600 deployed to over 40 countries since 1995. These missionaries have undergone a five-month practical training at almost no cost to the trainee if they make a clear commitment to serve as career missionaries. But the scheme of fully supported workers did not work out well, for

most churches just could not follow through on the pledged support for their missionaries and the expected church resources could not cover the budget. Thus most of their graduates became tentmakers and some of ACM’s training centers were phased out. With the appointment of a new National Director recently, their new thrust will be to focus on tentmaker training

### **Transformational.**

The third stream may be labeled “transformational,” which has emphasized contextualization (culture-sensitivity) and community development approaches in missions. Using the Lausanne Covenant as their theological basis, these “radical Evangelicals” have advocated for the integrity and quality of mission.

In many ways, they have served as the thinkers and friendly critics of the Evangelical and Charismatic mission movements, and since 1998, as co-leaders of Evangelicalism (including its cross-cultural missions) in the country.

The beginnings of the transformational stream may be traced to the third IVCF-Phil. triennial missions conference in December 1970, which tackled national and social issues. It was held amidst the brewing activism in the college campuses nationwide which culminated in the declaration of Martial Law in September 1972. Out of the desire to stir the church out of its conservative stance of acquiescent submission to authoritarianism and to highlight contextualization issues, Melba Maggay, an IVCF staff, set up the Institution for Studies in Asian Church and Culture (ISACC) in 1978. In the same year, the Asian Theological Seminary (ATS) started to offer “Church and Culture” as a required course in its Master

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of Divinity (M.Div.) program, perhaps the first among Evangelical seminaries. Soon, the PCEC General Secretary Jun Vencer, using the resources of World Vision, tried to train Bible school faculty for the introduction of “Community Development” as a required course in evangelical Bible schools nationwide. Sadly this important attempt lasted for only two years.

The ‘80s saw the birth of several indigenous Christian development organizations (CDOs), esp. Mission Ministries Philippines (MMP, 1983), Penuel School of Theology (1986), and most prominently the Center for Community Transformation (CCT, 1992). The latter has grown to be one of the most successful CDOs in the nation, enhancing the lives of more than 250,000 families in over a hundred urban poor communities, including Muslim ones, nationwide.

Two networks of CDOs have been formed since: the main Evangelical one called Alliance of Christian Development Agencies (ACDA, 1995), and the Ecumenical one that works in partnership with Roman Catholics called the National Coalition for Urban Transformation (NCUT, 1996). Besides holding Consultations on Urban Ministries, the latter has been promoting indigenous models of Transformational Development (TD) for ministries in the cities, as they also contribute to the global urban ministry networks of Ray Bakke (International Urban Associates) and Viv Grigg (Servants Among the Urban Poor). Then in late 1999, a training consortium called Asian School for Development and Cross-Cultural Studies (ASDECS) was formed. It became the first major official link of PMA and some key leaders of PM3 (like OMF and Grace Communion International) to the transformational stream. It also brought the missions department of the major evangelical seminaries [8] together to offer four Masters programs (in Community Development, Development Management, Transformational Leadership and Business Administration) for their students. It started to hold extension programs in 2004 in Cambodia and Laos to empower church leaders and missionaries in those countries in doing transformational missions (TM, actually IM) in their contexts. It is looking for local partners to host its extension centers in each Asian nation to equip nationals for TM or IM locally and globally.

All these three streams are represented in the leadership of PM3. Thus, Filipino missions promises to be an integration and mixture of these three types of mission strategies (cf. Tizon 1999:12-21). This paradigm shift is most welcomed by the transformationists fed mainly by the writings of Maggay and the author.[9] In this paradigm there’s no need for a cross-cultural missionary to stay long-term in an area. Their mission is to simply make a few converts and then disciple those converts to become able evangelists and disciple-makers like themselves. Then they can move on to another place to multiply disciples and “house churches” (or “simple churches” or “small Bible communities”) to do IM (= CMM + contextualization + community transformation) from town to town almost naturally without having to build complex church structures.

This integration has been working since the 1990s in actual mission work. Prominent Evangelical church leaders, especially from Assemblies of God and CAMACOP got involved

in short-term pastoral leadership training modules in Indochina, sponsored mainly by Open Doors and also facilitated later by TNO and Ethnos-Asia (cf. Javier 2002:81). Since 1994, the author and his mission, Chinese Ministries International-Philippines (CMI-Phil) trained house church leaders in China to do IM in China. Since 2001, he focused on missionary training and mobilization of tentmakers, in which 104 tentmakers have been sent to China by November 2010. CMI-Phil even includes Roman Catholics who have led group Bible studies in Charismatic renewal communities in their mission team.

Interestingly, the Southern Baptists produced three important ingredients in doing IM: (1) their western missionaries (like Robert Clark and Paul Stevens) have led in advocating for and training in CMMs (cf. Claro 2004); (2) an ex-OFW couple, Art and Linda Elbinias through their “OFW Care” structure has provided a model for integrated missionary care; and (3) a Korean missiologist teaching at their seminary in Baguio City has spearheaded an ambitious short term mission program called “Asia Vision –STM 2015,” which aims “to send 300 short-termers annually between 2006-2015 from Asia (especially the Philippines) to Asia,” that is a total of 3,000 to be mobilized by 2015 (Kim 2004:196). The program was pilot tested in summer 2003 when thirty-seven were sent to Indo-China (all raised their own funds), and repeated in summer 2004 when ninety-nine went to China, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh and the Burmese Karen refugee camp and Chinese Muslims in northern Thailand (:205-206); about 20 from the 2004 batch decided to become long-term missionaries in Laos, China, Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia (:200).

Moreover this confidence has also been built through actual ministry in using the IM approach to reach out to local UPGs especially Muslims in Mindanao, Metro Manila and other key cities where Muslims have relocated in recent years. [10] The more prominent ones are: (1) Love Your Neighbor founded by Florentino de Jesus, Sr. in 1980, which started as a department of Open Doors (Guillermo 1983:542); its movement is called “Project ISLAM” (= I Sincerely Love All Muslims); (2) SERVE-Philippines of the OMF-PHC, which was founded in 1997 to mobilize Filipino missionaries to reach out mainly to Muslim UPGs; and (3) the Bridge of Love Foundation that has effectively used the transformational development approach to reach Muslims without leaving their cultures and communities. Others can not be mentioned due to security reasons.

### ***Diasporal***

Though sharing in the same vision and mission, yet there is a fourth major stream that has yet to be fully integrated into PM3.[11] The diasporal or OFW churches have been interacting with churches in the Philippine and their theological ethos and missional paradigm are akin to the Evangelical and Charismatic/Full Gospel streams. While they have strong links (usually on the giving end) with their “denominational affiliations” in their motherland, most of them have been connected loosely (and conscientized to go into cross-cultural missions) through the Filipino International Network (FIN). These churches have half-consciously ministered cross-culturally

wherever they exist, but have been slowly moving to a more intentional stance in cross-cultural missions.

The person most active, in promoting this is Rev. Joy Tira, a Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA)-Canada pastor, who was able to move his church, First Filipino Alliance Church (FFAC) to give him the time and resources to organize and manage the Filipino International Network (FIN). He considers in his participation in April 1994 in a conference on mobilizing the diaspora (not only of Filipinos, but also Koreans, South Asians and Africans) of CCC leaders from USA, Europe and Philippines, as the start of his call to this ministry (Tira 2004:104). As he went on to survey the needs in the Middle East, he found that Filipinos were among the “most aggressive” and effective evangelists to Arab Muslims through “Operation Trojan House” (Manze 2004:240). This motivated him to meet the leaders and attend the conferences of the European Filipino Christian Workers Network, Filipino Japanese Network and those in Singapore and Hong Kong.

FIN held its first mission consultation on the “Filipino OCW Churches” in Cyprus in May 1995, which ended with the signing of the “Larnaca Covenant” which committed the participants “to recruit, train and mobilize Filipino believers as tent-makers and career missionaries to the 10/40 window and the world...” (:156-157). The second one was held in the Philippines in September 1996, with the participation of Evangelical church leaders and Philippine government officials, and issued the “Puerto Azul Declaration.” Tira was present at the PMA-sponsored 2<sup>nd</sup> National Tent-maker Conference in December 1996, where the greater role of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) was affirmed (:158-159, 169-170). The then administrator of POEA (now Secretary of the government’s Department of Labor and Employment), Atty. Linda Baldoz, is an Evangelical Christian who sees herself as a key partner in PM3.

In 1997 FIN held a Filipino North American Prayer Advance in Midland, Texas, and in 1988, three Consultations in Singapore, Bahrain, and Alberta, Canada; the last was for International Diaspora leaders which included South Asians, Chinese, Vietnam, Blacks, Persians, Japanese, Koreans and Spanish/Latins (:160). FIN held another consultation in Singapore in July 24-26, 2002, with Thomas Wang of AD2000 Movement and founding General-Secretary of Chinese Coordinating Center for World Evangelization (CCCOWE, founded 1976) as main speaker. He congratulated the Filipinos as the second Diaspora group strategically organized for world missions (:160).

Since its start, FIN has aimed to mobilize the Christian Filipino Diaspora as “peace-makers” and “gatherers” trained to “multiply disciples” among the nations (:164-165). It has five

main ministries: Prayer *Advances* (a new spin on *Retreats*), Family Life Conferences, New Life Training Curriculum (forty training units on how to multiply disciples using CCC materials, in Tan 2004:184-195), Jesus Film distribution (over 50,000 in video and DVD formats distributed), and regional and international mission consultations (Tira 2004:161-163).

In anticipation of the Lausanne International Forum held in Pattaya in 2004, FIN held the “Seoul Consultation” on “The Filipino Diaspora and Missions,” hosted by the Network of Filipino Evangelical Ministries in Korea (NFEMK) and some Korean partners. All the major papers were compiled and edited into a book entitled *Scattered*; this was given as a free gift to each participant at the Lausanne Forum. Although FIN started mainly with the traditional Evangelical mission paradigm of a Western Evangelical denomination (CMA) and a Western campus ministry (CCC), it has learned from the developments of “Diaspora Missiology,”[12] as well as from the positive and negative experiences in evangelism of their constituents, so it will hardly have difficulty in working with the IM paradigm of their Philippine-based partners.

The success of PM3 will depend a lot on its ability to

quickly mobilize and train these churches into cross-cultural missions in partnership with FIN. On the whole, mission awareness (much less proper missionary training) is still relatively low in most of the OFW churches. So the PM3 vision and goal to mobilize and train Christian OFWs already there would still require some efforts.

Perhaps half of these OFW congregations are intentional church-plants of forward-looking denominations in the Philippines as they followed the migration of their members and leaders. By 1998, Jesus Is Lord (JIL) had seventy-two churches abroad (plus

476 in the country) and Jesus Christ Saves Global Outreach had five abroad (plus seventy-eight in the country).[13] Victory Christian Fellowship had twenty-four churches, including Bangladesh, Guam, Russia, Taiwan, Cambodia and Dubai, with plans to plant churches in thirty-four more nations in the next ten years (1994-2004) (Perry 1992:97-98). Others include Free Believers, Take the Nations for Jesus, Bread of Life, Love of Christ, etc.

Yet the other half came to birth almost naturally through the gathering and growth of cell groups and fellowships started by ordinary witnessing believers at their residence or workplace, as shown below in the following depictions of their ministries country-by-country in the major destinations of OFWs. Filipino congregations globally started with effective ministries to reach out to their fellow OCWs. Not a few of their members have also been sharing their faith with their neighbors and colleagues from other nationalities, including those from among their host countries, “naturally” with hardly any cross-cultural training at all! They would have been much

*Yet the other half came to birth almost naturally through the gathering and growth of cell groups and fellowships started by ordinary witnessing believers at their residence or workplace, as shown below in the following depictions of their ministries country-by-country in the major destinations of OFWs.*

more effective if they received PM3's tentmaker training. This is now being remedied through the training teams sent out by PM3 and the new yet fast-growing Philippine House Church Movement.

## FILIPINO INSIDER MISSIONS BY COUNTRY

### *Hong Kong*

The second largest number of OFWs (after Saudi Arabia) is in Hong Kong, mostly working as domestic helpers (DH). In 2002 those were about 143,000 registered out of the 237,000 from all nationalities, and in 2004, there were only 126,500 left, yet still constituting the largest expatriate community in Hong Kong (Felomino 2004:210-212).

The first Filipino Protestant church there was born in 1978, and by 2004, there were more than 100 (including Roman Catholics). In a 2004 survey of sixty of these churches, there were about 150 services and fellowship times with a total membership of about 5,000. About a quarter of them are led by tentmakers (DHs or professionals who lead their congregations), because many of these DHs are from the teaching professions since Hong Kong employees want them to also be tutors to their children (:209, 214).

Almost all major churches there are supporting church planters and also donating towards land purchase and building construction of churches in the Philippines (:218, 221-222). Some have ministries to non-Filipinos: His Sanctuary Services has ministries to Indonesians and Sri Lankans. Ixthus sends tentmakers into China, and C&MA, too, had plans to send to Taiwan, Korea and Japan in 2004. Free Believers, JIL, Grace of Jesus Fellowship and His Sanctuary, Revival Christian Church have already extended to Macau, while the first two have also established churches in Taiwan (:219).

### *Japan*

The third largest OFW community is in Japan, where about 240,548 were documented in 2001. 95 percent of them are female entertainers earning \$800 per month, and these 185,000 send home a total of \$200 million per year (Galvez 2004:255).

Most of the thirty Filipino churches belong to the Network of Filipino Ministries Japan (NFMJ) and work closely with Japanese churches. Most of them provide holistic care that seek to transform oppressed entertainers into servant-leaders in establishing churches in Japan and beyond (:264-266). A significant number eventually marry Japanese nationals, bear Filipino-Japanese children and reach out to the families and business networks of their husbands (:259-262, 266). One night club singer became a lady minister in a Japanese church, and another entertainer became a prayer mobilizer for Intercessors for Japan (IFJ)!

### *Taiwan*

Taiwan had about 91,000 OFWs by December 2004, mostly as factory workers in electronics, computers and ma-

chineries (55,000), caregivers (33,000), DH (1,000), fishermen (600) and construction workers (400) (*Philippine Star*, April 12, 2005:9). They are the second largest expat community (next to the Thais) and are preferred because of their skills and diligence.

There were about 7,000 church-going Roman Catholics and 4,000 Protestants with about 100 meeting points on Sunday by early 2004 (Adhikari 2004:28). The three largest groups are Jesus Is Lord (JIL, with twenty-four fellowship groups), Word for the World and Free Believers Fellowship.

One Filipino missionary team has planted a Chinese church in Taichung, and many have won their Chinese spouses to Christ. But most found difficulty reaching out to local Chinese, because of the language barrier, miscommunication and ignorance of Chinese culture and religion. The lively Filipino worship services and Sunday Schools are good mainly for Taiwanese youth who are trying to learn English and some old people in wheel chairs brought by their caregivers (:281, 284). Many of them have determined to play an important role in cross-cultural missions when they learned in 2004 that two pastors have been tried, sentenced and heads shaved in preparation for execution in Riyadh (:282).

### *Singapore*

The fifth largest concentration of OFWs is in Singapore, with over 50,000 as of 2003, mostly medical personnel, Information Technology professionals, DH and construction workers. Though informally meeting since the late 1980s, the KSPS was formally organized in July 1998. Five are led by Hawaiian-Japanese, eight by Singaporeans, and only one has been accredited by the government. Three large churches have Filipino fellowships (Solano and Ysip 2004:273-274). Their main goals are to evangelize Filipinos through prayer gatherings, evangelistic meetings and sports festivals, raise funds for Philippine calamities (like the 1990 earthquake and 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruption), help the Philippine embassy take care of OFW needs, and organize the Filipinos through the United Council of Leaders in Singapore (:274-276; Dimangondayao 2004:308). They have also planned to become a "strong mission base in Far East Asia" (Solano and Yap 2004:278), but need IM training soon.

### *South Korea*

And the sixth largest OFW community is in South Korea, where in 1994 the Philippine ambassador to the 30,000 OFWs there was also a pastor of a Filipino church there (Dumapias 2004:318-319). Ambassador Rodolfo Dumapias helped in organizing the Evangelical Ministers Fellowship in Korea (EMFK) with the support of partner Korean churches which had Filipino congregants (:319-320). It has since been an active member of FIN and hosted the 2004 Consultation that produced the book *Scattered*.

The life and ministry of these diaspora churches will surely continue to influence the Philippine churches and PM3, since there is a lot of travel and communication back and forth as well as the financial capacity of OFWs and rising dependency

of the homeland churches on their remittances. With these four streams coming together, Filipino missions will consist of a three-pronged approach, which constitutes effective IM: (a) “CMM by tentmakers” of PMA & FIN; (b) power evangelism and short-term training seminars of the Charismatics; and (c) contextualized holistic approach of the transformationists.

## SPECIFIC CASES PER PEOPLE GROUP

Here are six “snapshots” of Filipino missionaries in the Buddhist world. Because of the sensitive nature of some contexts, names of persons and places are not revealed, and not all details can be given.

### *Singapore & Hong Kong*

In these two predominantly Chinese (folk Buddhist) societies, Filipino OCWs have brought their non-Filipino “bosses” and colleagues to the Lord and to join their churches. Many of their non-Filipino converts have joined other churches where they could feel more comfortable in worship and fellowship.

Though several Filipinos work as professionals (mainly in middle management positions), the majority went in as domestic helpers in these two cities. They, esp. the latter, have done excellently. Many have been converted through the Filipino churches there, and these new believers have been trained to use the “Jesus” film to reach entire households for Christ. One who worked in the household of a Christian expatriate in Hong Kong shared her burden to reach the mainland Chinese with her “masters.” They supported her to learn Mandarin in Beijing for two years, and so she has ministered in a city in central China for more than three years!

### *Thailand*

Thailand is a Buddhist country where it is almost unthinkable for their citizens to convert from Buddhism: “*To be Thai is to be Buddhist.*” It is with this major unreached people in mind that Dr. H left his prestigious work in one of the top universities in the Philippines to teach in an equally prestigious university in a major Thai city some years ago. He had developed his campus evangelism skills during his student days. So one of his favorite ministries in Bangkok is to serve as an adviser and mentor to the campus ministries there.

Meanwhile, his main witness is to share his expertise in his field of study, and share Christ with his professorial colleagues, most of whom are scholars in their own fields. He sees himself as a Christian serving a Buddhist nation to help train its next generation of leaders and help develop its potentials as a people. At the very least, he has helped encouraged and train the future leaders of the nation to have a positive view of Christianity.

### *Cambodia*

Many short-term mission trips have been made into Cambodia since 1900s. Not a few Filipinos, esp. medical and educational personnel have stayed on for longer term ministries. Perhaps

the most effective one has been that of Mr. and Mrs. R who arrived in Cambodia with their two children with minimal provisions for their stay and without any supporting group. They went just because of a clear call to minister in that land. The husband was mainly trained as a church-planting pastor while the wife is trained in community development.

They proved that God’s resources are found in the harvest. In just five years, their holistic approach has produced forty-seven churches in the villages surrounding their town. These churches had social impact in their respective communities; thus they have gained connections to top leaders in their province. Signs and wonders added to the rapid evangelization of their area. Most of their leaders have been trained in their simple yet effective missionary training institute.

During one of the great floods that devastated their region a few years back, their exemplary relief and rehabilitation efforts were noticed by the government and secular media. In 2005 they received a donation of a huge property from a prominent Cambodian believer for them to develop into a model farm or the like. This has served as a good training center for Khmer missionaries to go to other unreached peoples in Indo-China and beyond!

### *Japan*

Filipinos have gone into Japan to work mainly as factory workers, entertainers and English teachers. Most of them went in as non-Evangelicals and were “born again” through the witness of several Filipino churches and fellowships there. One of the major ministries is Filipino Christian Ministry Network (FCMN) led by Ms. Hannah Galvez. They have specialized ministries to first-timers, returnees, those married to Japanese and mothers of Filipino-Japanese children (Japinos).

Most significant may be their ministries among Filipina entertainers, many of whom were converted after they had become wives to their Japanese customers. Galvez sees this as God’s plan to raise missionaries from among the lowly, semi-educated women (cf. 1 Cor. 1:27-28). These singers, dancers and bar girls have become evangelists inside the closely-knit, homogeneous Japanese families!

For instance, a certain Shirley was a former model and nightclub worker who is now managing a construction business. She was instrumental in planting two Filipino-Japanese churches in Saitama and Kanagawa Prefectures. She is married to an Okinawan who now supports the Filipino ministry by offering their house for worship and outreaches.

### *China*

Miss N is one of the hundreds of Filipino English teachers in China, where about 1.2 billion (out of 1.35 billion) are still unevangelized, in spite of the revival of the past thirty years. She felt God’s call to China about nine years back, and went before making her decision to do it in a more permanent basis. She was able to recruit three other churchmates to go in with her, and they intentionally planned to work in different schools, particularly in Tibetan Buddhist areas.

Since she went in only nine years ago, she had the benefit of being trained to be an effective cross-cultural discipler-maker (esp. to lead IM). Within a year, she had fifteen baptized disciples; actually ten are disciples of three of her five disciples! Her teammate had another six direct disciples. When they returned to that city two years later, they found that their disciples have grown to nine known house churches, not counting those that may have been born in the cities where their other disciples may have gone as teachers.

In 2007, through one of her disciples who has graduated and was teaching in a rural school, she was invited to teach English in that school, two hours by car, one day in each weekend. The government officials in the village told her that she is the first foreigner to ever step into that area! Meanwhile, she has met a Chinese house church leader in her area, and introduced six of her disciples to him for absorption into the house church networks there. All her six disciples like attending the meetings of the unregistered house church, and are therefore learning the Word more deeply in their own language and in fellowship with their own people!

## CONCLUSION

We believe that as Filipinos continue to go abroad for work, more Filipino Christians will join them as tentmaker-missionaries, like the above cases, among the Buddhist peoples and cities. The Philippine Mission Mobilization Movement (PM3) is aiming to recruit at least 1,000,000 such tentmakers by 2020; and hopefully 250,000 will target the Buddhist world! May they be fully equipped to make disciples using the IM approach as they evangelize among the Buddhist cities and nations. May Christians worldwide support us in prayer as we seek to fulfill our role in world evangelization!

(AFMI/ASFM)

## ENDNOTES

- [1] The National Statistics Office estimates a population growth of 1.95 percent, from 85.3 million in 2005 to 94 million in 2010. Even with reduced growth rate, the population is still expected to double to 141.7 million by 2040 (Philippine Daily Inquirer, April 5, 2006: A3).
- [2] Cf. Baldoz 2004:41-42; which also quotes the Pulse Asia, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2002 poll that shows almost 20 percent of Filipinos want to leave the country and stay abroad.

- [3] This is higher than Harper's (2000:249) conservative estimate of 150,000, but lower than JIL's claim of two million internationally (:262).
- [4] Lopez came from the corporate world, a self-supporting pastor and one of the first ACM trainees, who sought to win the Sikhs, and was appointed Administrative Director of ACM (1999-2003). As he was moving to transfer his base to the Middle East in 2004, and he served up to 2008 to move to do frontier missions.
- [5] Kim 2004: 195, fn.1 also mentions the average attendance per church is about 35 adults.
- [6] The Pentecostal denominations especially Assemblies of God, Foursquare and Church of God (Pentecostal) have followed the main evangelical paradigm, but their newer churches are adopting the Full Gospel approach.
- [7] It was founded in 1995 by Atty. Gordon Robertson, founder and CEO of CBN-Asia and son of televangelist Pat Robertson. His burden for missions was kindled when he witnessed first-hand India's great need for the gospel in spring 1994. He found a kindred spirit in Miguel Alvarez, the then president of the Asian Seminary for Christian Ministries (ASCM) of the Church of God Cleveland; they gathered the key leaders of PCEC and PJM to establish ACM.
- [8] These are Alliance Graduate School (Quezon City), Asia-Pacific Theological Seminary (Baguio City), and Koinonia Theological Seminary (Davao City). Asian Theological Seminary is informally involved through Corrie DeBoer who heads its Masters and D.Min. in Urban Ministry. The IRM Bible College has adopted the MDM to be the graduate training program for its denomination.
- [9] The author labeled the traditional paradigm as "a third world church trying hard to do first world missions" (Lim 2003: 200, n. 26.), and considers the tentmaking paradigm to be "the only way to disciple nations" (ibid: 196-197, 200-201).
- [10] Due to security reasons, instances of work among Communists and Muslims, especially in Mindanao and the Middle East have been given minimal mention in this work.
- [11] By "full integration" is meant the inclusion of the OFW church leadership in the Facilitation Team of PM3.
- [12] "Diaspora Missiology" is best summarized in Enoch Wan and Joy Tira's joint article in Wan & Tira 2009:2754
- [13] Directory in *Evangelicals Today* Centennial Issue 1998:

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# Life-long Learning!

*Alice Choi*

On one of the first nights of AFMI training, I asked some of my fellow trainees what brought them to this training and what expectations they had. I listened eagerly to what they shared and when they asked the same questions of me, I really had to stop and think.

I understood that the theme of AFMI training was to catalyze a paradigm shift in the missions thinking and practice of its participants, many of whom have been working on the field for a substantial period of time. By the time I arrived at the AFMI training last October, I can say that my paradigm had already been shifting quite radically. In terms of the content of AFMI training, I felt that I was well acquainted with insider principles and was continuing to process what it means for my work and even my whole outlook on life.

So, how did I answer the question of why I was at AFMI training and what were my expectations?

"You. You are why I am here." My fellow trainees looked back at me quizzically, particularly since I had just met them about a half hour earlier.

I went on to explain that I have been involved in missions (as a mobilizer, a field worker, a home office staff member) for about 18 years, and one thing that I was coming to realize more and more is that I really love missions training! I'm energized to come alongside folks who are in learning mode, who are being exposed to new ideas, who are processing those new ideas.

One of my personal highlights of AFMI training came out of one of the training sessions that focused on the idea of convergence. To be more exact, the trainer asked us to think about our personal passions, our gifts and talents, and the world's needs. As

we discover where these three things converge, we can pinpoint the areas where we can serve God's kingdom.

I realized that at AFMI training I was experiencing an area of convergence in my life—my passion for helping others, my gift of helps and listening to others without judgment, and the need for missions training.

My fellow trainees were **Korean, Chinese Malaysian, Korean-Uzbek, Korean-American (me), Filipino, Indonesian, and Indian**. Quite a mix of cultures and personalities! Being with such a multicultural group had its share of misunderstandings, miscommunications, and downright uncomfortable moments.

During the training it was my joy to ask the other trainees what they thought about what we were learning, to ask questions that would spur them to process even further, to listen without feeling I needed to provide an answer to the questions that were brewing in their minds and hearts.

As AFMI training came to a close, as our missions paradigm had been given a major tweak, I realized that this was just the beginning. What we had learned during AFMI training only surfaced more questions and it was going to be a lifetime of processing through to answers which would only lead to new questions. In other words, an attitude of life-long learning would always need to be imprinted on my heart. **(AFMI/ASFM)**



AFMI Training

YOU DON'T MISS THIS INDISPENSABLE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY !

# AFMI Training

## 28 SEP – 21 OCT 2011



### You will go through Mission Paradigm Shift!

- **Who should apply?** Any Asians and Western (new) workers desiring to work with Asians for the remaining task.
- **When?** 28 Sep - 21 Oct 2011
- **Where?** Vision Centre—KL
- **For more information:**  
Contact at <hy4god@nate.com>  
(Dr. Young Kim; Dean of the AFMI Institute).
- **All the trainees will be given the privilege to attend ASFM conference.**

This training course is endorsed by and cooperated with the US Centre for World Mission (USCWM) and the Korea World Missions Association (KWMA). You may attend the training by module.

### GOALS

- **Synchronizing the Frontier Mission (FM) mobilization/training/field allocation**
- **Confirming the Attitude/the Calling of God for the FM**
- **Maximizing the Understanding of the Last/Remaining Task and Preparation for the FM with Insider Perspectives**
- **Preparing for the Integrated Ministry with Kingdom Perspective**
- **Providing a Global Network to result in Synergistic Cooperation in FM**

### CONTENTS

- **You will take part in relation building work and self-retrospection process to confirm the Calling of God.**
- **You will be involved in the Inductive Bible study (CATALYST).**
- **You will deal with the mission paradigm issues, frontier mission and insider movements stuffs and the Kingdom perspectives.**
- **You will understand how to start a Business as Mission & Transformation.**



## My name is Anna

God gave me a heart for mission long time ago and I started to look for the chance to know more about it, but I come from the country where mission work is very new thing. Following His calling and vision I came out of my country and headed to Middle East without training.

It's been already 2 years since I'm in the Middle East. I was praying and asking God to give me chance to get training. In the end of my second year I heard about AFMI and got a chance to go to KL, Malaysia to get training there.

Coming to KL I was pleasantly surprised to meet many workers from Asia. ***I was happy to realize that God is opening hearts of people in Asia to go to mission.***

I can say that it was very meaningful and helpful training for me. This training made my brain work hard and listen very carefully what Holy Spirit was telling me. The very important question I was pondering all the time during training: How can I apply this to my ministry in Middle East? How can I be helpful and effective in that area?

I heard about 'Insider movement' before and got interested in it, but this ministry was very new to me and I desired to listen more about it from people who are involved in this ministry. In KL I met and talked personally to people who are doing this movement. I seemed to understand those people because they are Muslims and I myself live in Muslim country. But at the same time I realized that the area where they are doing their ministry is different from the area where I am ministering. Of course new questions arose.

We made bunch of mind maps which made me think and analyze my life and it made me feel even more thankful to God for giving me happy life in the past and wonderful family. I believe that family background affects your ministry a lot. We had very creative class where we were playing games, watching movies and doing a lot of activities not only in the class, but also outdoors. It was just fun and I enjoyed it! But after every game or movie we got to do mind map and what we learned from this activity. I learned to watch movie not just for the movie itself, but to dig out very valuable principles.

"Form is not important, but function" – that is what I learned. We used to follow mission standards of the West. I thought that I had to do the way they did, because they did it successfully and I needed to follow their example to be effective worker. Sometimes it really stressed me out and made me feel very frustrated when things didn't work well. But in the long run our final goal is to bring them to the Kingdom through Jesus Christ, isn't it?

Love is what guides my ministry. Love to people. People is the treasure God entrusted to me.

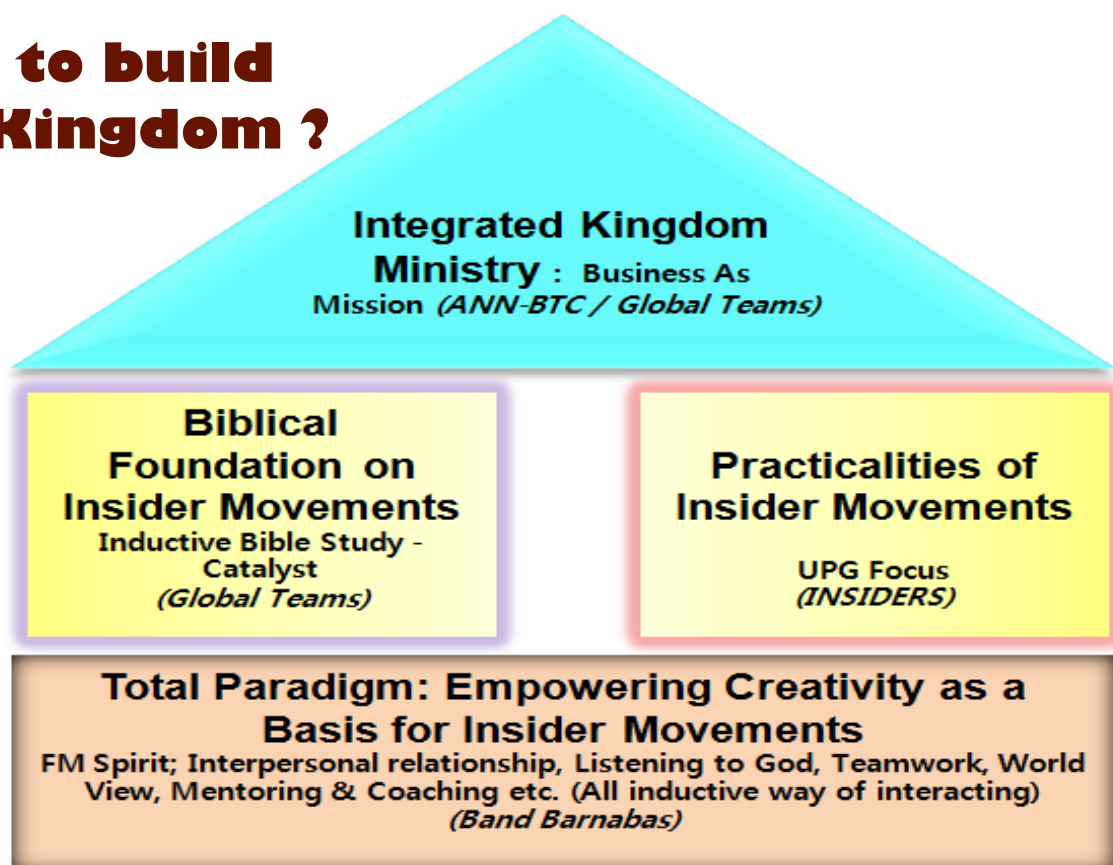
I had a chance to participate in AMLF conference. Many people came to participate and they were sharing their experiences. I can admit that in the first days of the conference I was totally unaware what the people were talking about. They were talking about Global mission which I had no idea about. Later I realized the reason why. I am very concentrated on only one area where I minister. But I believe God gave me a chance to meet new people during the conference that expanded my outlook and vision.

I am so thankful to God and people who gave me chance to participate in AFMI training. It was great time of learning. I met people who shared their experiences from their places which encouraged me a lot. I am so happy that we all are doing the work for His Kingdom. I still have a lot of room to learn. I still have questions which I got during my time in KL, but I guess it's better to have questions than not to have them. A question is a sign that you learned something. It's just my idea. :-)

Thank you,  
Anna



# How to build His Kingdom ?



**H**ere, I'd like to propose that we start taking more seriously *how we deliver* than teaching the right content. It is not *what* the nationals or young believers learn from us, but rather *how* they learn that's going to impact their culture and society in the long run. Modern day evangelical workers have focused too much on having the right content (mainly right theological content derived from the western form of Christianity) and assumed wrongly that we know how to deliver best. The main method of delivery was done through one way preaching and teaching. We assumed that the nationals don't know any better, thus we needed to teach them the right content, our way. This assumption begot the ill fruits of dependency all around the world. The ways that we deliver forced dependency from the very people we have been trying to empower. Speaking of the right content, we didn't even have the right content because the answers we brought with us derived from our cultural context.

Going with the questions and not with answers is how we at BB need to train ourselves. This is a set of skill that requires counter cultural intuition, actions and convictions. *I believe we can move from the pioneering stage to the partnering stage without going through the parental stage.* The problem of insisting on the right content (as good as they may be from our perspective) is that it produces unhealthy dependency issues where the nationals and/or young believers are unable to climb out of the parental stage.

We have to learn to teach in a way that empowers the people. The key to how we deliver must be related to how we come along side of the people and empower them to develop their own content that is right for their context. Coming along side of them requires an attitude of humble learning on the part of the workers from the outside. Without first learning from the people (more on this in ethos of lifelong learning), we cannot effectively empower and equip them to make right decisions. Even if they don't make the right decisions or develop the right content from our cultural and theological point of view (or even our personal preference), we allow them to learn from their mistakes by giving them the necessary room and space. We trust that the Holy Spirit will guide and correct them as they interact with the Scripture. (Related article: See "Empowering Creativity", *AFMI Bulletin No. 2, Jan-Mar 2010, Chong Kim, Band Barnabas*)

# CATALYST

A way to see the heart of Christ in the skin of every culture

**T**he author of CATALYST, **Kevin Higgins**, says about CATALYST as follows:

- Imagine an insider movement to Jesus begins to emerge in your area. Your first response will probably be to praise God. But now what to do? How do we train people? How do we help new followers of Jesus become learn to use the scriptures in order to keep their new movement under His guidance? How do we help facilitate a movement in which scripture really is the leader, and not us, the outsider?
- CATALYST was developed in order to help outsiders to accomplish these things. CATALYST began as a way of studying the Bible with insiders, and now has been adapted to help outsiders be good helpers for insiders. How does it work?
- CATALYST is built upon the foundations of Luke/Acts and several of Paul's letters. These books were selected carefully because they give us windows into how the 1st Century movement to Jesus grew and developed. In CATALYST participants read whole books, not just selected verses, from the Bible and apply them by asking questions about how a movement grows, how leaders are selected and trained, how problems are dealt with, how "church" forms develop and adapt, etc.
- Specifically, you will study Luke and Acts no less than 5 times! Each time we read Luke/Acts from a different perspective, asking different questions. Then we turn to Ephesians. Next comes three studies of Paul's two Corinthian letters in which we seek to learn how to address pastoral problems, do contextualization, and also understand what worship is and how it takes shape in a movement. Finally we look at Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus (leadership) and Philippians (partnership).
- Along the way we will certainly learn much for our own practice and ministry. But more importantly, we will learn how to help insiders apply these texts in their own lives and leadership.
- CATALYST has a core value: the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to correct and teach the People of God. We believe you will experience that in a powerful way!

(Kevin Higgins will help you go through this special experience of INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY at the upcoming training course of AFMI INSTITUTE at KL on Oct 2011)

**You will understand what must be realized?**

**Insider Movements: The Biblical Jesus Movements in other socio-religious traditions.**

**AFMI Training : 28 Sep - 21 Oct 2011**

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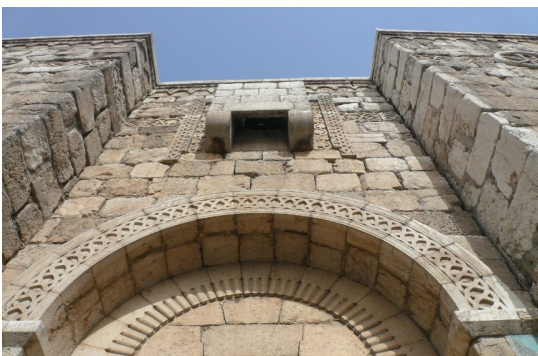
**ASFM (Asia Society for Frontier Mission)**

**The purpose of ASFM**

*To promote cutting edge thinking and sharing on an international level with a specific focus on Asia and/or Asians in the area of frontier missiology*

**The six main objectives:**

1. To promote within the global Christ-following community the cause of the Asian peoples who have the least access to the gospel.
2. To encourage and empower Asians to be more effective reflective practitioners and take greater responsibility toward reaching the UPGs of Asia through cooperation and sharing of resources.
3. To promote, though not exclusively, thinking and focus on insider perspectives and to support insiders who have heart and faith allegiance to Jesus and the Bible.
4. To promote intergenerational dialogue between senior and junior mission leaders and to cultivate an Asian as well as an international fraternity of thought in the development of frontier missiology.
5. To catalyze frontier mission initiatives and promote societies for frontier mission across Asia including the Asian diaspora worldwide.
6. To publish the Asian Journal of Frontier Missiology as a means toward these other objectives



Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ. ... Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. (Acts 9: 22-25)

**We surely need “Global Cooperation” at this mission era.**

If you have any feedback on this bulletin, you may contact John Kim at <yahya\_kim@hanmail.net>. We will try to be a channel through which you can have consultation with the authors of the articles and any other contributions in the bulletin.