



So what are we really trying to do?

Ralph D. Winter



In this issue you will find a brief but truly masterful summary of the mysterious strategy of promoting cross-cultural faith movements, that is, movements that may or may not look like church-planting movements.

Yes, we are accepting the durable possibility of genuine personal faith despite a wide diversity of social structures within which that faith is nurtured and expressed. To illustrate this, Bob Goldmann not only proposes *what ought to be done* but gives specific descriptions of *what will happen* if these proposals are not followed.

Warning: at first glance you may think some of these guidelines are crazy. Everything you have heard and everything within you may cry out, "That won't work, don't do that, that's wrong."

However, an immense amount of experience (centuries, really) stands behind Goldmann's marvelous list of guidelines. Bob not only draws on his own considerable experience in the field, but his points also derive from the hard-won insights of many others. I will say it again: this is a very unusual and truly significant article. I have never seen so much crackling wisdom in so few and efficient words.

Explosive Growth

Of course, these insights could have and should have come 200 years ago. In any case, today such strange thoughts are popping up all over the world as the momentum of the gospel itself gains speed in dozens of fields.



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

As I have often reported in this column, the Bible itself is now clearly "out of control" in many parts of the world. Wycliffe Bible Translators are right: once people get the Bible in their own language, you can readily expect what in many cases will be explosive growth of "faith movements to Christ."

What Is The Goal?

One friend has said that we basically want to see genuine personal and family faith spread throughout a society. This might happen somewhat like the Biblical parable of yeast working its way through a lump of dough.

Others want to see at least families gathering weekly to worship.

Others want church buildings to be built, and, I suppose Bible schools and seminaries.

Others are scared to death that these strange movements will not follow their own denominational and theological standards. I know of several missionaries (I can think of three within ten seconds) who were asked to leave their mission agencies when it became clear that they were not producing the expected church movements the home boards had in mind.

So what *are* we really trying to do?

I recently had a serious (and friendly) e-mail exchange with a young person who had at first been captured by my own often misunderstood emphasis that there are times in history when mobilization for missions is more strategic than for potential mobilizers to go to the field. He rightly pointed out that we cannot simply go on

forever mobilizing young people to mobilize young people for more mission mobilization! Someone must go. Of course – I will grant that.

However, there is an interesting and little-discussed parallel. When people are won to Christ and we set them to win people to Christ, to win other people to Christ, to win still other people to Christ ... isn't that somewhat the same?

My young friend explained that in India he is still essentially mobilizing: he is winning Hindus to Christ and urging them to set out to win more Hindus for Christ. Is there no other job for a new believer but to recruit other new believers? But around the world today millions of new believers have problems with which "the new creature in Christ" does not directly deal.

Jobs need to be created, or starvation will continue. Diseases need to be fought, or two-thirds of the workforce will be disabled. Laws need to be changed and enforced, and order achieved. Honest new believers are an essential ingredient in God's answer to these problems, but just becoming a new believer is not the full answer.

It is crucial to get people regularly and faithfully to worship a God who will

pardon their sins, whether they worship in a church building or at the family level (which is more important in some ways). But in addition, how about worshipping a God who hates dishonesty, who hates to see wives and children beaten by the man of the house,

who hates to see impurity or selfishness or the lack of generosity of spirit?

"Wait a minute," you may say, "What *do* you want these new believers to do besides behave well and win others to Christ?"

Curiously, "what to do" is a prominent, unnoticed problem within the USA. Churches don't seem to care much about *what kind* of a job a member has: just get a job and support the church! Also, here in the USA we don't usually

Yes, we are accepting the durable possibility of genuine personal faith despite a wide diversity of social structures within which that faith is nurtured and expressed.

Our greater problem is that we can't see clearly how we can give to effectively fight the most serious types of evil.

need to find jobs for new members, or get them off drugs, or solve their physical problems.

In his unique little book, *Revolution*, George Barna says that millions of Evangelical believers in America today are so sold on Jesus and the faith that they are not attracted to church anymore.

They are much more concerned to be out doing the will of God than to be content with easygoing, safe church life. Really?

If in fact Barna is right, what nevertheless comes to my attention is the strong impression that these millions of "revolutionaries" are mostly *lone warriors* for Christ.

What do you want these new believers to do besides behave well and win others to Christ?

Nowhere in his book do I see the necessity of these revolutionaries joining or forming *teams* to fight pervasive social, medical and spiritual evil. The idea is mainly to spread the faith to more and more individuals, and do deeds of kindness here and there. But that won't deal with the roots of

nationwide gangs or defeat malaria, poverty and disease in general.

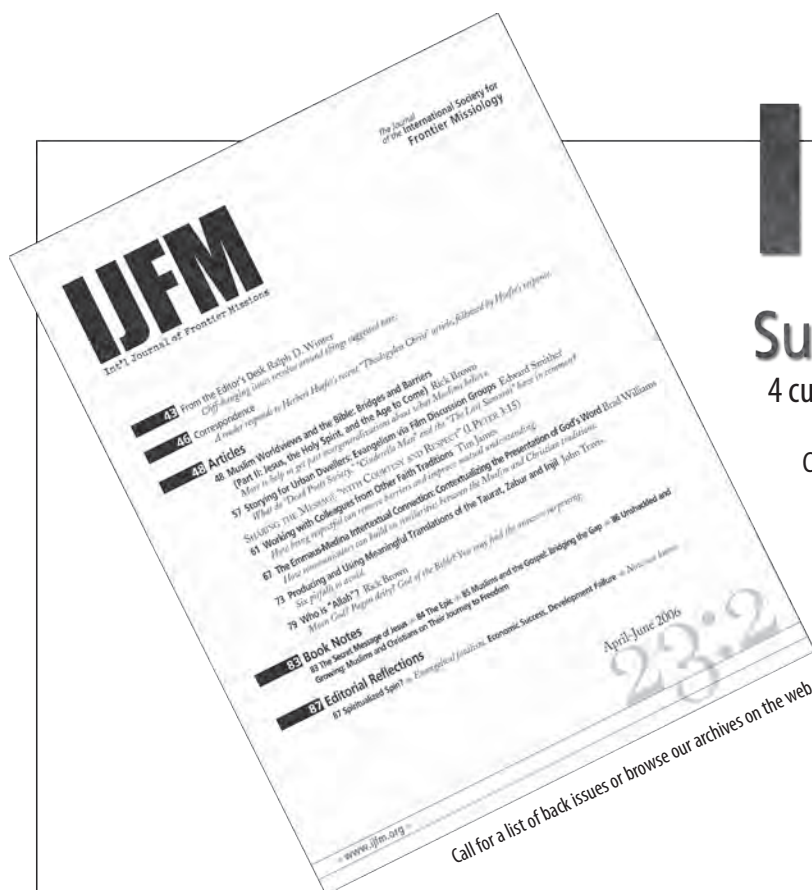
Okay, no hand-wringing about how little Evangelicals give, for our greater problem is that we can't see

clearly *how* we can give to effectively fight the most serious types of evil. We need our eyes opened. Getting more and

more people to believe in a God of love and heaven is not all that is necessary for His "will to be done on earth."

Here is a poignant parallel from World War 2: when American soldiers invaded Europe and finally began to push into Germany, they ran into German death camps and saw stacks of corpses six feet high in 400-foot rows. General Eisenhower then remarked, "We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting *against*."

We tend to flee evil, to seek security, safety, ease, sweetness and light, even "holy lives." Spreading hope is basic. Personal integrity is essential, but it is not enough. Can't we deliberately find, face and fight evil, and in the name of Christ? 🌐



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In response to "Compass, Telescope & Tour Guide: Lessons Learned in Student Mobilization," by Claude Hickman (May-June 2006):

While Mr. Hickman's intent may have been good, his comments regarding InterVarsity's Urbana Student Mission Convention (May-June 2006 issue) were both misinformed and circular.

Mr. Hickman overstates the number of exhibiting agencies at Urbana (200-300, as opposed to the 800 he claims); he furthermore conflates Urbana and the Urbana exhibits area. Correctly observing that true mobilization occurs in a context of teaching, community and follow-up, he closes his eyes to the bulk of Urbana's program – the teaching, the small-groups, and the in-depth follow-up programs. If Urbana were no more than a missions bazaar, he would be fair in his critique, and fair in describing his ministry's alternative approach. As it is, however, his argument seems less than charitable.

Furthermore, Mr. Hickman's critique hinges on a rhetorical distinction between "maps" and "compasses," which he defines as "plastic bags of options," and principles for discernment, respectively. Never mind that Urbana's program assumes the same pedagogy as Mr. Hickman – that spiritual transformation drives mobilization.

After a few more negative comments in general about hype, agendas, and "cool" advertising, along with an implied claim to special insider knowledge about this generation, Mr. Hickman returns to advocating choices, advising principled students to explore several options among mission agencies before heading overseas.

Praise God that he continues to call students into missions. Let us watch and be amazed at what

he will do through this generation of students, and through this year's Urbana 06 convention.

Jim Tebbe
Vice President for Missions and
Director, Urbana 06
InterVarsity Christian
Fellowship/USA

In response to "The Uncertain Future of Missions?" (March-April 2006):

Dear Dr. Winter,

After recognizing the plight of the "saved" Wadani, in the editorial comment article of your March-April issue of *Missions Frontiers* you asked, "To what extent can mission agencies be of help at this stage? To what extent is mission strategy supposed to deal with questions like this?"

The answer is simply part of the Great Commission, "training them to do all that I commanded you." One of the things Jesus commanded His apostles to do was to bring *shalom* to every house that received them. In the Older Testament, *shalom* means welfare and prosperity more often than it does tranquility and contentment. The Abrahamic covenant, which includes material blessings, now belongs to all who believe in Jesus (Gal 3:14), including the Wadani. Any believer of the Proverbs knows that putting into practice the wisdom and fear of the Lord brings health, wealth, and strong extended families, *shalom*, in other words....

In other words, the gospel we are charged to carry includes more than the message of eternal salvation. It includes how to be more than conquerors in this life. It is what wise old Gikita asked Steve Saint to do on page 22 of *The End of The Spear*, "...come and teach the young people how to live well."

Dr. Steve Kobernik, Founder
Schools of Ministry International
Association



Reply from Ralph Winter:

Perhaps my point will be clearer in my editorial in this issue, namely, that it is not enough for individuals to be saved, or "to come into material blessings," "to be more than conquerors," "to live well," etc.. The Great Commission means a lot more: "to be taught to obey what Jesus commanded." This is what is meant in the Lord's prayer for "His Kingdom to come and His will be done *on earth*." Individual salvation in the fullest sense is basic but merely basic to conducting His war to "destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jn 3:8)." For example, did Satan push the Wadani into a virtually uninhabitable wilderness?

In response to September-October 2005 and January-February 2006 emphases on insider movements, including John and Anna Travis' "Maximizing the Bible: Glimpses From Our Context"

Greg Parsons,

I wanted to thank you and Dr. Winter for your accurate analysis of the intent of the discussions on "insider movements" and "churchless Christianity" in the January-February issue of *MF*. These are not movements that we invented or promoted. They sprung up from among the people themselves. We of the "Jerusalem church," then, must do all we can to prevent the "Judaizers" from our midst to go out and – in mistaken sincerity – "[quench] the Spirit" among these new believers. We need to serve as "Pauls" who adamantly defend and affirm what God is doing among them,

thereby having the credibility among the new believers also when we seek to guide and correct them in the Lord.

Herbert Hoefer, Mission Director for India and Sri Lanka, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

John Travis comments further:

After the recent publishing of the article “Maximizing the Bible”, I met with a group of colleagues on [my field of service] to discuss recent and forthcoming articles on contextualized ministry. One outcome of our meeting was the suggestion that I write a letter to [*Mission Frontiers*] adding and clarifying several points related to the “Maximizing the Bible” article which was written by my wife and me. The aim of this letter is to address three issues: the growing non-C5 ministry happening in the people group where I work, the use of the term “insider”, and my article’s closing comment in which I referred to “the largest movement to Christ among Muslims in the world today.”

In the people group mentioned in the article, there is a steady number of people coming to faith who are joining or forming congregations which would be C1-C4 on the continuum. (Note: this C1-C6 nomenclature is simply a heuristic device used to describe types of “Christ-centered communities” in terms of language, culture and religious identity). One of my colleagues is a consultant for C3 work, and he reported that while none of us has yet seen a people movement among this people group, the C3 and C4 groups are seeing a remarkable 8-12% numerical growth rate per year, something which is truly wonderful!

These C3-type congregations emphasize the non-Islamic cultural and social elements found in the context. Even though an attempt is generally made in Islam to fuse religion and culture, in this context (and many others), there are cultural and social forms which can continue to be used by followers of Jesus who want to identify with the local culture (C3), and use even Islamic terminology (C4), but not identify with Islam itself. These cultural forms include

certain types of local ethnic music, dance, art, fashion, folklore, and social customs, as well as certain modes of leadership, inheritance, kinship structure and economic activity.

The C3 groups in question have done a very excellent job of trying to build congregations using as many of these cultural and social patterns as possible. They have taken seriously the goal of contextualizing the Gospel to as many arenas of life as possible (e.g. leadership patterns, art and music, language). This type of work is happening both among Protestant and Catholic groups. Some of the music forms they have developed have even been presented on national television. They also enjoy the support of many local churches.

The contextualized nature of these C3 groups raises the second point I wish to address, that being the use of the term “insider.” For several years, as far as I know, this term has been used interchangeably with C5. This has been due to the perception that to really be seen as “one of us” in cultures that are close to 100% Muslim, one would need to be a Muslim.

For the past two years, however, I have begun to see people use the term “insider” in a broader sense. In this broader sense, one may change religions, but through a concerted effort to remain culturally and socially a part of the predominant Islamic culture, one can still remain a part of the community from which one heralds. This is usually not easy for a convert from Islam, and would involve the maintaining of close ties with family networks, efforts to live (as much as possible) a non-offensive lifestyle (e.g., dressing modestly, not eating pork, not keeping a dog, etc.) as well as participating in community work and play. I have known Christians of Muslim background who have done this.

By definition, C3 and C4 Christ-centered communities are attempts to stay and witness within one’s community of birth: in other words, to remain an “insider.” Therefore,

perhaps we need to find a better term like “cultural insider” (for C3 and C4) and “religious” or “socio-religious” insider to describe C5. Whatever the case, since “outsider” sounds negative and dismissing and may not in many cases reflect the reality of a Christian of Muslim background still living in his community, perhaps it is time we look for a new set of terms.

The final point concerns my statement that the largest movement to Christ today among Muslims is C5 in nature, occurring in a particular Asian country. I was referring to a movement of God that I have tried to follow over the past ten years. However, for two reasons I wish to withdraw my statements concerning its size. The first reason is that counting new followers of Christ (especially if findings are published!), could endanger lives by bringing undue attention from people who would oppose it.

Secondly, a C5 movement by its very nature is very difficult to count. When many come to faith in numerous locations at the same time, only the Lord knows the real size of the movement. In addition, in a C5 situation, new believers dress, speak, and appear culturally similar to the surrounding pre-Jesus Muslims, further making any form of “counting” quite difficult. (Note: in contrast to this, in our context, C3, and even C4 congregations, can often be more easily counted, especially if they have contact with supporting local churches who could reasonably ask their church planters to keep records.)

Therefore, please let me revise my statement and say that at least there is a significant turning to Christ in a C5 way in one part of Asia, and there are a number of other movements happening as well (that are more C3 and C4 in character) in other parts of the world. 🌐

Letters to the editor should be addressed to mission.frontiers@uscwm.org

Are We

Accelerating or Inhibiting

Movements to Christ?

Bob Goodmann

Those with a heart for unreached peoples have the choice to pursue certain behaviors that have the potential to accelerate the spread of the gospel. These “accelerators” may help a new fellowship in an unreached people group become a large-scale movement to Christ. By contrast, we may consciously or inadvertently deploy “inhibitors” that may make it difficult for that fellowship to ever become a movement.

A Word about Movements

The term “movement” implies rapid growth in the number of believers, beyond the influence or control of the ones who introduced the gospel. “Church-planting movements”, such as the

Jesus expected dramatic growth in his Kingdom.

ones discussed in David Garrison’s *Church Planting Movements*, generally refer to Christians, whereas “insider movements” generally refer to Jesus followers who remain within their

ethno-religious identity (e.g. Muslim or Hindu insider movements).

In this article my focus is on “movements” in general, whether church-planting movements or insider movements. My interest is in behaviors that tend to accelerate the spread of the gospel, regardless of the ethno-religious identity that is chosen by the new disciples of Jesus.

Expectations of Kingdom Growth

Jesus told three parables that predicted the rapid spread of the kingdom of heaven: the Parables of the Yeast, the Mustard Seed, and the Sower. The first conclusion that we can draw from these three parables is that Jesus expected dramatic growth in his Kingdom.

In the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32), Jesus says, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree.”

In the Parable of the Yeast (Matthew 13:33), Jesus says, “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

And in the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:20), Jesus says, “Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop – thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times what was sown.”

A Strategy for Kingdom Growth

The second conclusion that we can draw from these three parables is that Jesus had a specific strategy in mind for spreading the gospel in order to achieve dramatic growth. He recommended implanting the gospel like yeast so that it leavens, and planting it like a seed so that it grows in the new soil.

The common theme of these parables is that the gospel is something very small that is introduced into another culture and transforms it. Yet we

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often introduce the gospel into another culture with significant amounts of cultural and religious traditions associated with it. This “baggage” makes it harder for a new people to embrace the gospel because they see it as a foreign cultural and religious system, rather than a relationship with the person of Jesus that they can pursue within their own cultural and religious traditions.

Contextualizing the Gospel

Contextualization has become well-established as essential to successfully implanting the gospel in another culture. But while contextualization is indeed an *excellent* strategy, is it a *sufficient* strategy to lead to movements to Christ? Missionaries have been applying the principles of contextualization, even radical contextualization, for generations. Yet in most instances, these principles have not led to movements to Christ. What could be missing?

I believe that contextualization is insufficient on its own to lead to movements, because two other factors need to be taken into account – *identity* and *community*. While the gospel may be introduced in a highly contextualized manner, the *identity* that new believers choose and the way they interact with their *community* will have a great effect on whether others from their culture will make a similar choice to follow Jesus.

Theory vs. Practice of Contextualization

Before I elaborate further, let me say that I believe many of the authors on contextualization intended contextualization to include both identity and community when they wrote of a contextualized approach to spreading the gospel. Therefore, it is not the *theory* of contextualization which is lacking, but the way it is *practiced* by many.

For many, the practice of contextualizing the gospel has been primarily cultural: the attempt to present the gospel consistent with local cultural forms, using local language, wearing local dress, using contextualized translations of the Bible, etc. However, these attempts to culturally contextualize the gospel are often practiced along with behaviors that are at odds with full contextualization.

Foreign Identities and Extracted Communities

A culturally-contextualized gospel can be presented in a way that leads new believers 1) to adopt a new identity that other locals perceive as foreign, and 2) to associate with other new believers that other locals perceive as extracted communities. Thus, a new fellowship of believers may express a culturally

contextualized gospel, yet have a foreign identity and be considered an extracted community.

To the extent that new believers are perceived by others as having chosen foreign identities and joined a foreign religious community, then the opportunity for the gospel to rapidly spread in that people group is dramatically diminished. This will be true even if they are highly contextualized culturally; their foreign religious identity and membership in a foreign community counteracts the benefits of their cultural contextualization.

Inhibitors vs. Accelerators of Movements

If we are to establish fellowships that have the potential to lead to movements to Christ, we need to recognize the “inhibitors” and “accelerators” of movements. “Inhibitors” are actions that may bring short-term results, but are likely to inhibit fellowships from becoming movements to Christ. “Accelerators” are actions that may take a little longer, but are likely to encourage fellowships to become movements to Christ.

Accelerators for Individualistic vs. Communal Cultures

“Individualistic cultures” are highly individualized with fractured families that don’t live in extended community (i.e., the majority of Western cultures). “Communal cultures” are community-oriented with tight-knit families that live in extended community (i.e., the majority of Muslim and Hindu peoples). Gospel-spreading strategies that are most effective for individualistic cultures will tend to be less effective for communal cultures, and vice versa.

For example, a communal culture places a high value on keeping its members part of the community, and will tend to resist any religious invitation that will lead its members to become “separate” or “foreign.” Individualistic cultures are more fragmented, and its members have greater freedom to separate from those around them into a separate sub-culture.

Therefore, a gospel-spreading strategy that leads to foreign identities and extracted communities will face higher resistance in a communal culture. Family members and community members will tend to exert great pressure on new believers to “return to the fold,” and if they don’t do so, they will tend to expel them from the community and have nothing further to do with them. Thus, the new

Attempts at cultural contextualization are often practiced along with behaviors that are at odds with full contextualization.

fellowship of believers may seem successful from an outside perspective, yet they may have limited ability to reach back into their community with the gospel of Jesus.

Spreading the gospel in a communal culture should be done in a way that is more likely to lead to movements to Christ. It should lead to communities of believers that are not seen as “foreign,” but “still part of our community,” so that the gospel can spread more easily.

Workers from Individualistic Cultures

One challenge is that many cross-cultural workers spreading the gospel in communal cultures

(e.g., Muslims or Hindus) are themselves from individualistic cultures (e.g., North America or Europe). Therefore, they may unwittingly pursue gospel-spreading strategies that are better suited for individualistic cultures than communal cultures. They may even be *expected* to do so if they are sent by Western mega-churches

that have experienced great success by pursuing strategies well suited for their individualistic cultures.

Sending churches from individualistic cultures should consider whether their church-planting

strategies may actually *inhibit* movements to Christ in communal cultures. A concern frequently expressed by cross-cultural workers is that their sending churches may reject them if they pursue “insider” strategies for communal cultures.

Seven Accelerators for Communal Cultures

I suggest seven dimensions where certain actions may accelerate or inhibit movements to Christ in communal cultures: Identities, Communities, Leadership, Fellowship, Practices, Doctrine, and Independence. Tables 1 through 7 suggest examples of actions in each dimension that will tend to accelerate or inhibit movements. Missionary teams and their support networks may find these tables useful in prayerful planning and evaluation. Any one action in isolation is unlikely to significantly influence a movement. But – taken in whole – consistent use of accelerators in communal cultures is more likely to result in movements to Christ than consistent use of inhibitors.

For instance, consistent use of inhibitor actions will tend to result in extracted communities of believers with foreign identities and foreign religious practices. These extracted communities will have difficulty reaching the communities from which they’ve been extracted. Conversely, consistent use of accelerator actions will lead to transformed communities of believers with insider identities and contextualized religious practices that are far more likely to spread the gospel like yeast through the dough of existing communities (Matt. 13:33).

(text continued on page 12)

Dimension #1: Identity	
Accelerating	Inhibiting
Accelerator #1 <i>Preserve an Insider Identity as Believers</i>	Inhibitor #1 <i>Establish a Foreign Identity as Believers</i>
- Gospel is perceived as “inside”, “natural” to their culture. - New believers are encouraged to preserve an identity that will allow them to reach their families and communities with the gospel (rather than being expelled because they converted to a foreign religion). - New believers remain in their culture. If that culture is strongly intertwined with religion, then believers are free to follow Jesus while remaining “inside” their ethno-religious identity. (E.g. “I’m a Muslim who follows Jesus”, rather than “I’ve converted to Christianity in order to follow Jesus.”)	- Gospel is perceived as “foreign”, “outside” their culture. - New believers identify themselves as Christians, and are understood to have left their ethno-religious identity. - New believers are expelled by their family or community, or are coerced into abandoning their new faith, because they’ve chosen to convert to a foreign religion.

Accelerating**Dimension #2: Communities****Inhibiting**

<i>Accelerator #2</i> <i>Penetrate Existing Communities with the Gospel</i>	<i>Inhibitor #2</i> <i>Extract Believers into New Communities</i>
• New believers remain in and cultivate their families, even if fellowship with believers is temporarily curtailed. • Believers start new fellowships in their existing families and communities. • Women play a vital role in reaching existing families and communities, and in discipling the next generation. • The gospel spreads into new communities as believers witness through existing relationships or new relationships, then those new believers reach their own families and communities. • Arranged marriages may result in the spread of the gospel into new families and communities.	• New believers are often shunned by their families, breaking them apart. • Believers create new communities with other believers, and have limited ability to witness to their former communities. • Women play a vital role in connecting new communities of faith together. • The gospel has difficulty spreading into new communities, because believers are perceived as converts to a foreign religion. • Arranged marriages are used as a means of coercing new believers to abandon their faith and return to their traditional ethno-religious identity.

Accelerating**Dimension #3: Leadership****Inhibiting**

<i>Accelerator #3</i> <i>Cultivate Local Leadership</i>	<i>Inhibitor #3</i> <i>Start with Foreign Leadership</i>
• New believers can lead other new believers, with appropriate mentoring and discipling. • Local believers provide leadership right away for the emerging fellowship in their family or community (rather than having foreigners provide “temporary” leadership). • Leaders pursue biblical training appropriate for lay leaders (rather than formal seminary training appropriate for professional pastors). • Local fellowships have natural leaders who may or may not meet the Biblical criteria for elders (e.g., patriarch who has multiple wives, matriarch of the family, single man or woman). • Elders are selected to connect local fellowships together in larger kingdom community (not to supplant natural leadership in each local fellowship). • If persecution is high, each community fellowship meets separately and leaders travel between fellowships teaching and encouraging. • If persecution is low, community fellowships may occasionally meet with others in larger meetings.	• Foreigners provide leadership in new fellowships because believers don’t know each other. • Foreigners provide leadership for the new network “until they are ready.” • Church leadership is for mature believers, often professional pastors who have had seminary training. • Elders must be appointed in each new fellowship, since there are no natural leaders when believers don’t know each other. • Professional pastors sometimes work together to connect their churches into larger kingdom community. • If persecution is high, believers meet in house churches and await the freedom to meet in church buildings. • If persecution is low, believers meet in church buildings and typically seek to grow the size of their churches.

Accelerating

Dimension #4: Fellowship

Inhibiting

<i>Accelerator #4</i> <i>Emphasize Community-Oriented Fellowship</i>	<i>Inhibitor #4</i> <i>Emphasize Meeting-Oriented Church</i>
- Fellowships emphasize relationships and community (rather than meetings and structure). - Existing patterns of community are redeemed for Jesus-oriented fellowship, though believers also meet on other occasions (rather than treating Sunday morning worship as the only time “church” takes place). - Fellowships meet in homes, or if necessary in buildings that local fellowships can build themselves (without referring to the building as “church” or describing the meeting as “going to church”). Fellowships avoid buildings built or funded by outsiders, because they aren’t reproducible across many local fellowships as the gospel spreads. - Fellowships remain informal gatherings led by lay leaders so that the gospel can spread through their community and into others, rather than trending toward formal organization, buildings, and professional pastors. Emphasis is on spreading the gospel to the unreached, rather than organizing the reached.	- Fellowships are built around meetings and structure. - Church meetings are on Sundays and feel similar to foreign ways of “doing church”. - Churches meet in buildings, often that foreigners pay for when they can’t afford to build themselves. - Churches often begin by focusing on outreach, but organizational matters often consume much of their time (e.g., planning worship services, preparing sermons, administering programs, paying for buildings).

Accelerating

Dimension #5: Practices

Inhibiting

<i>Accelerator #5</i> <i>Develop Contextualized Church Practices for Gatherings, Worship, and the Sacraments</i>	<i>Inhibitor #5</i> <i>Adopt Foreign Church Practices for Gatherings, Worship, and the Sacraments</i>
- The Bible is the only authority for the fellowship’s forms/customs (not foreign church traditions), and any other practices that are developed are consistent with local culture. - Fellowships develop their own practices for gatherings and worship that are normal for their culture. - Fellowships develop Biblically-based practices for baptism and the Lord’s Supper that fit their local context and culture (rather than adopting foreign practices). - Fellowships use contextualized terms and concepts in their own language, including a contextualized translation of the Bible.	- Churches gravitate toward foreign forms/customs because they are shown how to fellowship and worship by foreigners. - Foreign church traditions often carry as much weight as Scripture in determining “how to do church.” - Churches may use foreign terms and concepts, including a non-contextualized Bible translation.

(text continued from page 10)

Conclusion: Comprehensive Self-Contextualization

The unifying theme to all these movement accelerators is “comprehensive self-contextualization.” It’s “comprehensive” because it goes beyond cultural contextualization to encompass identity, commu-

nity and various aspects of church. It’s “self-contextualization” because foreigners are unreliable guides for what is appropriate for believers in a particular ethno-religious situation.

We have to be willing to allow local believers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the

Dimension #6: Doctrine	
Accelerating	Inhibiting
<i>Accelerator #6</i> <i>Develop Contextualized Doctrine</i>	<i>Inhibitor #6</i> <i>Accept Traditional Doctrine</i>
• The Bible is the only authority for doctrine, and believers are free to develop their own contextualized perspectives on controversial doctrines. • The Holy Spirit is the primary guide “into all truth” (John 16:13), not church traditions or people. • Believers develop the habit of seeking answers in Scripture for themselves, rather than relying on seminary-trained professionals. • If believers are pursuing “insider” ethno-religious identities (e.g., as Muslim Jesus-followers), they are given the freedom by Christians to do so. • Other Christians give the “insider” believers freedom to develop their own contextualized Biblical doctrines, without passing judgment. This follows the Acts 15 pattern where the Jews did not “make it difficult” or “burden” the Gentiles unnecessarily (Acts 15:19, 28), and the Romans admonition to “accept...without passing judgment on disputable matters” (Rom 14:1).	• Church traditions are combined with the Bible in determining appropriate doctrine. • Believers develop the habit of relying on seminary-trained professionals in addressing doctrinal questions. • Other Christians often pass judgment on what an emerging church should believe. Theology that conflicts with Judeo-Christian traditions may be considered heresy, even if it has Biblical merit and even when Western denominations disagree about the same matters.

Dimension #7: Independence	
Accelerating	Inhibiting
<i>Accelerator #7</i> <i>Preserve Local Independence</i>	<i>Inhibitor #7</i> <i>Accept Foreign Dependence</i>
• Fellowships pursue approaches that are locally reproducible and sustainable, preserving long-term independence. • Fellowships avoid or minimize foreign funding (e.g., for buildings, seminary training) because it is not locally sustainable and frequently leads to foreign control. • When fellowships send cross-cultural workers to unreached peoples, they do so using minimal or no external funding (e.g., as tentmakers).	• Fellowships accept short-term approaches that are likely to lead to long-term dependence on outside resources. • Fellowships frequently accept foreign funding instead of pursuing locally sustainable strategies. • Cross-cultural workers are typically sent using partial or full foreign funding.

discipline of Scripture, to discern what is most appropriate for their context. We have to be willing to echo the early church leaders in Acts 15:28 – “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following...” The early Jewish leaders released the Gentile believers to comprehensively contextualize their identity, doctrines and ways of “doing church.” The Gentile

The unifying theme to these accelerators is “comprehensive self-contextualization.”

believers then penetrated existing communities throughout the Roman Empire and beyond with this contextualized gospel. The result was the most dramatic movement to faith in the history of Christianity!

May God bring about similar movements among all the peoples of the earth. May we be granted the wisdom to accelerate, rather than inhibit, these movements. 🌐

Not Just Churches

The Great Commission involves both evangelization and discipleship: both preaching and church planting. Finishing the task is more than “a church for every people.” Closure requires “a mission for every people” as well.

Justin Long

In the 1980s and 1990s, the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement had a great slogan: *A Church for every people and the Gospel for every person by the year 2000 and beyond.* This was a masterful way of both stating the goal while keeping the rallying point somewhat flexible. The problem was, most workers rarely stopped to think deeply about either the goal or what was required to reach it. We just gave a cursory glance at the goal and thought we understood it by our “first impression” – much as we give a cursory glance at Bible scriptures and think we understand them.

If we are going to finish the Great Commission, churches will be a natural part of the process, however, we are going to need more than just a church for every people. Here are some other things that are needed:

We are going to need more than a church for every people.

A prayer for every people. Prayer is the foundation for mission. Yet we lack organized prayer for most of the least reached peoples. There are global

prayer strategies – *Operation World*, *Praying through the Window*, Ethne’s Global Prayer campaign, and so forth – but each people group needs a small, globalized core of consistent intercessors praying for God to raise up workers and resources for the group. We don’t know all prayer does in Heaven, but we know those who pray for specific people groups are more likely to become involved in specific ways.

A strategy coordinator for every people group. The term may be somewhat dated, and the role may be filled now more by a network than a single individual person. Yet the fact remains that we need to have at least one point person for each unreached people group: someone who is passionate about the people and is actively seeking ways to bring the blessing of the Good News to the group.

A gateway for every people. There is a “route” to every people group: a path that can be walked. Perhaps it is another people group, or perhaps it is a city or an industry. Some good work has already been done in the past (*Praying through the Window II: Gateway Cities*), but these focused on larger urban areas. We need to do more to identify specific gateway peoples and cities for each unreached people group.

A preacher for every people. Many groups, even to this

day, have little or no Gospel proclamation amongst them. In [recent] issues of *Mission Frontiers*, different research teams have printed their list of “priority peoples” – many of these have no one among them proclaiming the Good News. This is substantially different from peoples in, say, Latin America or Europe, who have a significant amount of proclamation effort. An important thing to remember: although the preacher has to cross cultural boundaries, he or she doesn’t necessarily need to come from the West. More on this in a moment.

A church for every people. We certainly don’t want to minimize this goal. A congregation in which believers fellowship together is a key part of Christian life. At the same time, we also want to be careful that when we say “church” we don’t carry our own baggage with us. It might be better to say “a fellowship for every people” or some other phrase that makes us really think about what we mean.

A business for every people. The unreached peoples of the world are among the poorest of the poor. By helping establish businesses we make it possible for a newly reached group to improve their quality of life, sustain local churches and reach out in turn to other cultures nearby. Helping groups develop economic resources can lead to the proclamation of the Gospel.

A school for every people. Teaching new believers about their missionary responsibility will lead to the formation of new mission agencies and the deployment of new workers. I have recently learned of several small, quick schools for believers and leaders that specifically mobilize workers who will focus on unreached peoples. For 5,000 unreached peoples, perhaps we need 5,000 such schools.

A mission for every people. The final goal is for each people group, as it is reached, to join in the task. This will open up new resources and spread the remaining task among more workers. At this stage we see new intercessors, researchers, preachers, church planters, businessmen and teachers *for every people*. 🌐

Justin Long was an associate editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia, manages the website www.strategicnetwork.org and is senior editor for Momentum (www.momentum-mag.org), where this article first appeared.

What's Happening At (and

Darrell Dorr

Events at the Pasadena Campus



The USCWM hosted a variety of conferences during summer 2006: a *Perspectives* intensive course in which lectures were videotaped; *Perspectives* coordinator training; The Traveling Team of student mobilizers; and various groups of overseas teachers in training. Members of the Frontier Mission Fellowship (the mission agency behind the USCWM) also enjoyed their annual staff retreat on our own campus.

PERSPECTIVES



Preparations are also underway for future conferences at the USCWM, including next year's "Selecting, Sending and Caring: A Training Seminar for Churches and Agencies," slated for September 27-29, 2007. Co-sponsored by Member Care International and Frontiers, this conference will ask, "Who is prepared to go as a cross cultural worker? How will we care for those we send? Is God honored in our sending and caring?" Models and tools presented will include the Frontiers Church-Based Team Initiative, the Intercultural Readiness Assessment, and the CernySmith Adjustment Index. (For further information on this event, contact Dr. Gerald Reddix at ssc9.28.07@gmail.com.)

Darrell Dorr is the managing editor of Mission Frontiers.

d Around) the USCWM?

On June 29 faculty of William Carey International University (the USCWM's sister organization) introduced and critiqued the award-winning documentary film, *Darwin's Nightmare* (www.darwinsnightmare.com). To read some of those critiques and other commentary on issues in international development, see www.wciu.edu.

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DARWIN'S NIGHTMARE
Hubert Sauper
www.hubertsaufer.com



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Our campus now has a café offering a variety of snacks, wireless Internet access, and a good place for reading and conversation. When you next visit us, take a look at Common Ground: a Place for Global Connections.



Believers in Latin America play a key role in prayer for world evangelization, yet until now have lacked a key resource – a Spanish version of the *Operation World* prayer handbook.

Finally – despite many obstacles – the translation into Spanish is underway, with completion anticipated in the next few months. The USCWM has arranged with a publisher in Colombia to print the book there and then to ship copies throughout Latin America and to the U.S. Several churches and mission agencies have committed funds toward the translation costs; the USCWM will not make one cent on this book and is contributing staff to help with project coordination. If you would like to contribute a gift or obtain a case of books when they're available, please e-mail greg.parsons@uscwm.org for more details.



What's Happening At (and

September Conferences in Atlanta and Orlando

A gathering of friends

Global Prayer
Express

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COME EXPLORE WITH US WHAT GOD IS DOING AT THE FRONTIERS OF HIS KINGDOM.

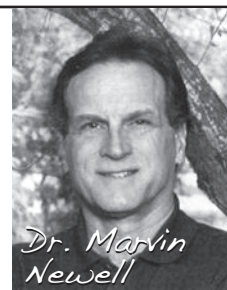
USCWM leaders are also preparing to participate in a variety of mission conferences elsewhere in North America this September. Leading off on Sunday, September 17 is a gathering of USCWM friends and supporters in the Atlanta area. Come hear an update on what's happening at the frontiers of God's Kingdom and at the USCWM! Ralph Winter, Greg Parsons and Tim Lewis will be speaking at North Avenue Presbyterian Church (607 Peachtree St. NW) 3:00-5:00 p.m. To RSVP for this event, e-mail betty.leung@uscwm.org, and see www.uscwm.org for a map and directions.



Two other conferences slated that same week in Atlanta are the September 17-18 annual meeting of the North American branch of the International Society for Frontier Missiology (see the ad on page 21) and the September 18-20 leadership retreat of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA). The EFMA (www.efmamissions.org) recently announced the appointment of Steve Moore as its new president.



Rounding out this collection of September mission conferences in North America are the annual meetings of the Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS) and the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA), this year meeting jointly in Orlando September 28-30. The IFMA, too, has appointed a new executive director, Dr. Marvin Newell. To learn more about the Orlando events, see www.ifmamissions.org.



d Around) the USCWM?

Projects in Process

INNOVATIVE NEW COURSE

Coming soon: a new and innovative course, developed by the USCWM with workers from the Global South in mind! This short course provides a Biblical basis for understanding God's heart for the nations, as well as up-to-date training and insight for those serving in today's changing world. Emphasis is given to issues facing believers from the Global South. Useful both for mobilizing church members to join God's global cause and for preparing those who are anticipating missionary service. Features key missiology concepts in simple English, written for easy translation. Includes helpful illustrations, meaningful reflective questions, and assignments. Free for download via the Internet. Stay tuned for more details on this course, with an anticipated release date in autumn 2006.

An "unedited" glimpse of China's past history



Today, the largest number of foreign students coming to the USA is from the People's Republic of China. We have an unprecedented opportunity to reach and bless these students with something that is utterly unheard of in China today – an “unedited” glimpse of its past history. This resource will be a beautifully printed, two-volume book, which is not only objective but friendly and at the

same time the story of missions in China. Soon in two readable volumes, producible in quantity for students at a very reasonable price, it will offer an engaging history of China starting in the 1860s and written by a friendly, pro-China Christian! A foundation has given \$20,000 to this project, and we are seeking to double that amount. For further information, or to help sponsor this project for a campus, contact greg.parsons@uscwm.org. (To purchase the book, please contact William Carey Library at www.missionbooks.org.)

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Location

Atlanta, Georgia

Date & Time

Sept. 17-18

Registration begins Sunday,
Sept. 17 @ 6:30pm

Followed by EFMA

Sept. 18-20

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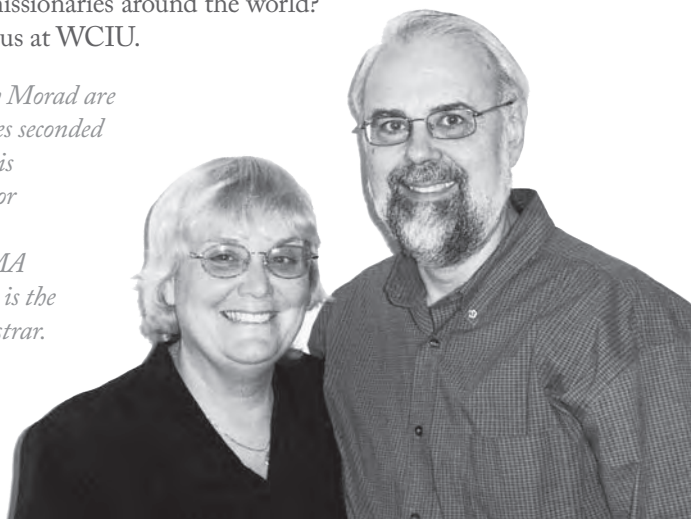
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Steve and Sandy Morad are AIM missionaries seconded to WCIU. Steve is Associate Professor of History and Director of the MA Program; Sandy is the University Registrar.



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Take Two: Feedback on “Churches and Agencies – Learning Together”

Greg H. Parsons



After reading this column in the last issue of *MF*, several people wrote back with their reflections on the issues I raised for churches and agencies. Below you'll see a few of the questions one field leader with a U.S. agency (working in Africa) asked, as well as my replies. (See our previous issue for background.)

Agency leader: ...we need to be careful not to take the attitude, “We’re the professionals here; why are churches trying to get into our business?”

Greg: Yes, but we should also be able to say, with humility, “We’re good at this”, without being unwilling to say, “We are servants, and are still learning and growing and are open to new ideas or methods.”

Agency leader: Missions has always been the business of local churches. The local church has strong biblical precedent and warrant for sending missionaries directly to the field: Antioch and Philippi and Jerusalem did it. Agencies are not found in the NT...

Greg: Though the apostle Paul might not recognize much of what we do today in either church or mission, are you sure that “agencies” are not in the NT? While “organizations” or structures as we know them today are not in the NT (even the church looks different!), there *was* a structure that Paul utilized (in Acts 13 and elsewhere) to do his mission work.

Agency leader: Para-church organizations (like mission agencies) should come along side of, support, and serve local churches – not the other way around. We exist to serve churches in their responsibility to send workers into the harvest. Churches don’t exist to send staff to agencies so that we can carry out the Great Commission for them.

Greg: Agencies exist to serve God, to be apostolic, and take the gospel to places it has not gone, with churches that share or generate that vision. Many agencies have moved away from that. Many churches are gifted in other ways. Paul was clearly sent out *from* the church to do something *in* a different location, which others in the church couldn’t practically do.

Agency leader: Parsons asks how accountability can be managed by churches that send workers directly. I believe this is a significant issue for both churches and agencies,... but I don’t think that it’s more significant than [our agency] faces with its team leaders or many missionaries working alone in their various fields.

Greg: The problem is that the churches don’t have experience working in the region, country, or area mission agencies serve. Furthermore, churches often try to do overseas ministry in the way they have excelled at home – but the models usually don’t transfer. As noted in the July-August *Mission Frontiers*, the “DNA” many churches are duplicating is not conducive to establishing the church in pioneer areas.

Agency leader: Parsons asks why churches might be reluctant to send workers through agencies. One [reason] has to do with whether the agency is really “value-added.” If we think of the missions process as a chain, with the local church, the mission agency, and the field leadership being links to the missionary, we could ask what the “value” of each link in the chain adds.

Greg: I like the “link” idea. And, certainly the dollar cost of agencies prompts churches to think they could do it cheaper. Perhaps agencies can flex a little more for certain situations, but most of these situations are logistical or tactical, not strategic, and issues get much more complicated in pioneering areas. So while a given church can do more than it did in the past, agency experience is a great help. Perhaps churches should focus on their strengths: instilling and maintaining vision in the whole church (with the help of the missionaries), member care (with help from agencies as necessary), and raising up the next generation of missionaries. Let’s keep working at improved relationship and understanding between agencies and local churches. 



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