

To the Final Frontiers

One mission's journey to become committed to a strong pioneering force in fulfilling Christ's commission among the final frontiers of the harvest.

by Scott Grandi

CBInternational is committed to being a pioneering force in fulfilling Christ's commission to the final frontiers of the harvest. In order to do this, we have had to rethink our basic strategies to enable us to reach out to the least evangelized in our world, and to modify our "corporate culture" to make it possible.

My Personal Odyssey

To understand how CBInternational has mobilized for Frontier Missions, it is helpful to see how my life has evolved over the past few years and then compare my story with the larger CBI transformation to a mission with a renewed commitment to mobilize all its resources to help reach the least evangelized.

For fourteen years I worked as a church planting missionary in Taiwan, firmly convinced that Taiwan was part of the least evangelized world. I would see missionaries who came to Taiwan to learn Chinese with the goal of going to Mainland China as people who were neglecting an open and least evangelized people they were studying among. When I would read articles calling for missionaries to go to the least evangelized Chinese, Hindu or Muslim peoples, I would think, missionaries would go to those places. They ought to be going to places like Taiwan!

About three years ago, I began to network with CBI's leaders in Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, and the Philippines about how CBI could minister in the greater Chinese world outside our traditional limits. Through these discus-

sions the Lord began to raise my eyes to the great opportunities and need beyond Taiwan. I began to realize that while a small percentage of the Taiwan population are converted, it nevertheless is an evangelized nation. I saw with new eyes that there were many not only unreached, but totally unevangelized nations and people groups. At first this new awareness was only toward China and the unreached peoples there... but it was a start!

New Leadership

While I was beginning to see the need for raising my eyes to the possibilities beyond Taiwan, CBInternational was going through a change in its leadership. Our general director and several of our overseas directors retired and new leaders came unto the administrative staff.

These new leaders, building on the foundation of CBI's 50 years of church planting ministry around the world, developed a mission statement to guide CBI into the 21st Century. In vital partnership with churches at home and abroad, the mission of CBI is to be a pioneering force in fulfilling Christ's commission to the final frontiers of the harvest.

In this new mission statement one can see the influences of our current and past executive directors. Warren Webster had worked as a pioneer evangelist among the least evangelized Muslims of Pakistan. Our new executive director, Hans Finzel, had worked in Eastern Europe when it was a "restricted access" area:

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Growing out of this mission statement came nine strategic priorities which were to guide the ministry of CBI. It is important to notice that these strategic priorities take the concepts of "pioneering force" and "to the final frontiers" seriously.

1. Evangelizing the unreached peoples of the world.
2. Discipling a new generation of national leadership.
3. Mobilizing national Christians for effective ministry.
4. Planting vibrant local churches
5. Offering help to the poor and suffering.
6. Penetrating restricted access nations.
7. Evangelizing the great urban centers of the world.
8. Anticipating the open doors of tomorrow.
9. Applying innovation to the mission strategies of tomorrow.

Drawing upon the imperatives in the new mission statement and the strategic priorities, CBI's new leadership then developed a "Commitment to Frontier Missions."

1. CBI has an underlying commitment to maintain 50% of its work force involved in direct church planting and church development ministry.

2. CBI also has an underlying commitment to frontier missions, based on Matt. 24:14 and Rev.7:9. As a result, 50% of its work force should be involved in ministries targeting the unreached peoples of the world.

Frontier Task Force

In order to see that these goals and priorities would be fulfilled, CBI's

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administrative staff decided to form a “Frontier Task Force” whose responsibility would include “discovering, researching and developing new frontier mission opportunities, especially in the 10/40 Window.”

In August of 1994 Hans Finzel talked to me about becoming the Coordinator of Frontier Missions for CBI. I had just gotten to the point in my life where I was excited about partnering in ministry among the greater Chinese world, and reaching out to new harvest fields. Now I was being asked to work with the entire least evangelized world!

Once again, I had to raise up my eyes and look at the harvest before me.

After much prayer, I accepted the challenge and began my new job on January 1, 1995. My responsibilities includes:

1) Being informed of the philosophy and strategies of frontier missions.

2) To convene the Frontier Missions Task Force, and work with the Task Force to develop a strategy and philosophy of frontier missions for CBI. The Frontier Task Force is made up of missionaries working in North Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, and China, along with our field leader from the Philippines (to help represent a potentially sending area) and a pastor from the US who is involved in frontier missions.

3) To act as the Regional Coordinator for frontier missions. To communicate regularly with missionaries working in frontier situations and visit them regularly.

4) To explore new opportunities and research these personally.

5) To work with the Personnel Department to recruit workers for frontier mission opportunities.

6) To work with the Missionary Development Department to design

needed training programs for frontier missions.

7) To work with the Communications Department in developing materials for education and prayer support.

Frontier Mission Principles

I will continue to live in Taiwan as we are committed to a field based coordinator. I will travel a lot in order to find new opportunities for our missionaries as well as to provide support for our frontier workers. As we develop our philosophy of Frontier Missions, some of our principles will be:

1. Building on our strengths: CBI is a church planting mission, which has throughout its history pioneered into frontier areas of the world. Fifty years ago when our missionaries first went to China, they went to Southern Sichuan Province to work among the least evangelized Nosu people. For years we have been involved in pioneer evangelistic work among the least evangelized peoples in Senegal, Ivory Coast, Pakistan, and the Middle East. Our frontier task force has discovered that CBI is already working among 17 of the 211 least evangelized mega-peoples (people groups larger than 1 million people.)

2. Field based: Our Frontier Task Force is made up of people directly involved (out on the field and among the people) in Frontier Missions. Our strategies, our decisions about which people to target, our policies about security, our profile for missionary recruits will come from those working on the frontiers. As one of our missionaries told me “I want to hear it from people out there, not from someone working in an air conditioned office with a Coke machine down the hall!”

In vital partnership with churches at home and abroad: Our hope and prayer is to mobilize our US churches to a serious and deep commitment to frontier

missions. I am presently working with three churches that hope to send out church planting teams to frontier people groups. Our mutual goal is to see these men and women become appointed with CBI. As a mission we can bring all our resources to help in mobilizing these local churches do the job they believe God is calling them to do.

We also are devising ways to work in partnership with the national missionary societies that are coming into existence in some of the countries we have missionaries working. Our vision is not for CBI to appoint these non-western missionaries, but to work in a dynamic partnership with these missionaries as they are appointed and supported by their national churches.

3. Building on the strengths of our existing fields and directing them to frontier missions: Several of our fields are already making plans to work among the least evangelized. Last week I asked one of our missionaries involved in research what people group we should highlight in our new publication about the unreached. He suggested a people group from the horn of Africa. I then asked our Africa Director what he thought of this, who said it was a great idea, and did I know that our missionaries in a nearby country were praying about how to reach the long distant truck drivers from this people group that drive their trucks through their country regularly! Many of our existing fields are poised for ministry to the least evangelized. By encouraging this strategic thinking we can see the numbers of our missionaries engaged in frontier missions greatly increase.

4. Broaden our geographic base: Traditionally, CBI has been an “open country” type mission. If you wanted to work with the Muslims, you went to Pakistan. If you wanted to evangelize the Chinese, you went to Taiwan or Hong

Kong. Today we are committed to sending workers anywhere in the world to reach out to the least evangelized. We are also committed to taking our resources in missionary member care out to them wherever they might go.

5. Network with any and all involved with the task: Our goal is to see the Church of Jesus Christ established where it has not yet been established. We are committed to work in partnership with all like-minded Christian workers to see this task accomplished. I have been

encouraged by the support other missions have given us and the kind of mentoring that has been freely given to me personally.

Involving at least 50% of CBI's missionaries in frontier ministries is a tremendous challenge. Making this dramatic change in a mission as large as CBI is not an easy task. We feel we have made a good beginning, and in the power of the Lord, we prayerfully and optimistically, look to the future!

Scott Grandi has worked with CBInternational since 1979. For fifteen years he was a church planter and field leader in Taiwan. He has been appointed CBI's first Coordinator of Frontier Missions in 1995. He and his wife Donna and their two boys live in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.