

From the Editor's Desk



With this issue we endeavor to “prime the pump” with regard to the various frontiers of mission we ought to address in these pages. To do that we present the first six frontiers of perspective from a personal paper dealing with eleven, the last five being in the next issue, 20:4.

There is no question that the IJFM-adopted definition of frontiers (see “Who We Are” on the next page) carries us into more directions than that of planting an initial movement within the unreached peoples. That was a major rallying cry in the early days of IJFM.

But all of these directions are actually related and in one sense are an elaboration of the same unreached peoples challenge. It is not as though any of these additional frontiers of mission are tangential or centrifugal. Rightly understood they reflect on one or another aspect of dealing with unreached peoples and are therefore determinedly centripetal to that overall goal.

Whatever the advance of the Kingdom entails (when we pray “Thy Kingdom come on earth”) it clearly involves the rights or the duties or the blessing of the unreached peoples of the world. This is what the Bible means when it says, “The earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord.”

However in this particular issue we introduce a huge and amazing challenge, something with which missions are struggling to understand. The problem is found from Moscow (in Mark Harris’ article) to the ends of the earth.

It turns out that there are now two quite different kinds of schools in the so-called mission lands that are both the direct result of missions. Neither is fully adequate, or perhaps even barely adequate.

The most visible pattern is that which relates to church leadership—the some 4,000 theological schools around the world. These seriously fall short because by and large they are dealing with the wrong students, the wrong curriculum and the wrong packaging.

The “invisible” schools, described here in a report of 41 “new” universities founded by overseas Evangelicals are not primarily attempting to

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meet the needs of church leadership, so they can't be accused of having the wrong students, but they too, have a defective curriculum.

However, they do clothe themselves with the right "packaging," that is, they employ the culturally approved pattern of the university, giving their graduates sturdy degrees.

You can read about the wrong students in the theological schools in my article updated from an ACCESS presentation.

But in this issue of IJFM we do not deal adequately with the matter of the wrong curriculum. Suffice it to say that both theological schools and universities represented by the articles here pursue a somewhat lopsided curriculum that either emphasizes the Book of Creation or the Book of Scripture, but not both.

This latter comment would move us into a very large subject, indeed, which we are going to address in succeeding issues of IJFM, beginning with 20:4. It is the question of what God may expect us to employ in glorifying His Name in our evangelism. Doesn't that need to draw on up-to-date information about what He had made? Thus, can we forever be praising God "for the things He has made" while paying little attention to the last hundred years of scientific insights into both the heavens and microbiology?

Yet our thousands of theological colleges around the world don't for the



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most part teach science and the new universities Dr. Carpenter highlights for the most part don't teach scripture. Is this parting of the ways the future of Evangelical missions?

One other thing. It is no secret that by the time the editorship of this journal securely passed to Pasadena we were one year or so behind.

It is thus a matter of satisfaction that we are now caught up—you'll note that we are sending the last remaining "missing" issue (19:3) along with this one, 20:3.

A problem that will endure a little longer is the matter of verifying our records so that we can be sure who was sent which issue during this period of catching up.

And here is where we need your help. Your label will indicate what issue our records show to be your last. If there is any error here we will take your word for it. Please do speak up if our records seem to be wrong.

Also speak up if you have comments on articles you read here! We plan to run letters to the editor.

By all means try to get to the meeting of our parent society, the ISFM, which is described right on this page.

In the pursuit of His frontiers,

Ralph D. Winter

Ralph D. Winter
Editor

This Year's Theme:
Missions at the Edge of the Edge

The IJFM is published in the name of the International Student Leaders Coalition for Frontier Missions, a fellowship of younger leaders committed to the purposes of the twin consultations of Edinburgh 1980: *The World Consultation on Frontier Missions* and the *International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions*. As an expression of the ongoing concerns of Edinburgh 1980, the IJFM seeks to:

- ☞ promote intergenerational dialogue between senior and junior mission leaders;
- ☞ cultivate an international fraternity of thought in the development of frontier missiology;
- ☞ highlight the need to maintain, renew, and create mission agencies as vehicles for frontier missions;
- ☞ encourage multidimensional and interdisciplinary studies;
- ☞ foster spiritual devotion as well as intellectual growth; and
- ☞ advocate "A Church for Every People."

Mission frontiers, like other frontiers, represent boundaries or barriers beyond which we must go yet beyond which we may not be able to see clearly and boundaries which may even be disputed or denied. Their study involves the discovery and evaluation of the unknown or even the reevaluation of the known. But unlike other frontiers, mission frontiers is a subject specifically concerned to explore and exposit areas and ideas and insights related to the glorification of God in all the nations (peoples) of the world, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.

Subscribers and other readers of the IJFM (due to ongoing promotion) come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Mission professors, field missionaries, young adult mission mobilizers, college librarians, mission executives, and mission researchers all look to the IJFM for the latest thinking in frontier missiology.