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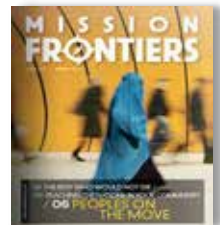
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From the Editor's Desk

The Shifting Paradigm of World Evangelization

Research can eventually upset our paradigms. We usually welcome the way it sophisticates and refines our theories, but it might gradually erode the ground under our rock-solid assumptions. It was Thomas Kuhn who helped the academy to admit their *faith* in scientific theories, and their general reluctance to accept new theoretical models—read "paradigm shifts." This same kind of shift was evident in 1974 at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization when Ralph Winter overturned conventional notions of evangelization held by leaders at that Congress.[1] Research demanded a new paradigm, and a remapping of world evangelization.

In an insightful exegesis of Winter's speech at Lausanne '74 (p. 5), Greg Parsons ushers us back into the antecedent research which led to Winter's paradigmatic overhaul. Winter had leaned heavily on the research of Donald McGavran and the socio-religious nature of a caste system in India. McGavran and his colleagues at Fuller Seminary's School of World Mission had been busy compiling research on "the bridges of God" from all corners of the globe. Parsons detects how Winter synthesized all this research into a new demographic of unreached peoples that then recast evangelization for a new era of mission.

This idea of "recasting evangelization" was the theme of the ISFM meetings on the 40th anniversary of Lausanne '74. Admittedly, the term evangelization has been shelved in recent missional vernacular—possible evidence that a broad *missio dei* is swinging back to correct any reductionism in evangelical witness. But the ISFM 2014 pulled the terms "world evangelization" out of retirement with a robust reflection on an unreached peoples paradigm which has fueled global outreach over four decades. We'll offer up articles from those meetings in the next few issues, but in this issue we want to sample some perspectives on the actual criteria that Winter used to map a new global demography of evangelization.

Just as in '74, there's a focus on Hindu India and that same complex caste system which shaped research criteria (a subject we've been tracking in previous issues).[2] Particularly in India we can see three new influences which are shaping and refining Winter's criteria.

The Rise of Local Demographers. At the ISFM 2014 we heard a stunning presentation on the remaining unreached "Other Backward Castes." I must admit my incredulity at the scope of this huge demographic, but we reprint it here in its

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The views expressed in **IJFM** are those of the various authors and not necessarily those of the journal's editors, the International Society for Frontier Missiology or the society's executive committee.

simplicity (p. 21). It seems to confirm much of McGavran's paradigm from the previous century, but the difference lies in who's saying it. This assessment comes from a local demographer, Yashwant Koli. He represents the fresh streams of qualitative research coming from a constellation of national research initiatives across India. These demographers don't just count, but they walk the villages of India and sense the street level "barriers of acceptance" to the gospel. They feel the ambiguities of modern India, they see the warping impact of globalization, and they perceive how any new church phenomenon might effectively bridge across castes.

New Social Theory. After years of ministry in South Asia, Mark Pickett suspected that the traditional theories of caste hierarchy weren't sufficient for identifying the peoples of Nepal, so he sophisticates those cruder anthropological lenses (p. 23). And don't miss the book review, where Herb Hoefer reviews Darren Duerksen's research on the *Yesu Satsungs* (Jesus Gatherings) of Northwest India. Hoefer weighs in on how Duerksen advances the ecclesiology of his own

(Hoefer's) research from two decades ago, an advance made possible by new social theory. Duerksen utilizes the "analytic dualism" of Archer and other social theorists to unpack how a contextually-sensitive ecclesial identity ("church") is forming behind socio-religious barriers in South Asia (p. 52). The special thing about this kind of social theory is that once applied to one religious world (Hindu), it can travel to another (Muslim, Buddhist) with the potential for reaping new insights.

The Voice of the Oppressed. We would be remiss to ignore Vishal Mangalwadi's perspective on the social repercussions of a growing Dalit revolt against "untouchability" and the Hindu social order.[3] While there are no reliable statistics on the "churchless" Christian faith of this mushrooming movement, the revolt is certainly provoking reaction from the Hindu Nationalist BJP Party, especially with the recent election of Prime Minister Modi (see p. 54). His government is encouraging aggressive reconversion of Muslims and Christians to Hinduism, and this politicization of religion is sure to have implications for how peoples identify

themselves. This journal forecasted some of these realities fifteen years ago,[4] but the fallout from the present tensions between Hindu fundamentalism and the Dalit revolt remains unpredictable. It's unclear what it will mean for traditional barriers to evangelization.

New realities like these in India will certainly influence our missiology, but as Daniels (p. 37) and Howell (p. 43) demonstrate in separate but complementary studies of Muslim Africa, research should result in "fruitful practices." That was the spirit of Lausanne '74, and it should guide any recasting of world evangelization.

In Him,

Brad Gill
Senior Editor, *IJFM*

Endnotes

[1] See Harold Fickett on Winter's speech, *IJFM* 31:2, ijfm.org.

[2] Dyanand Bharati *(IJFM* 24:3), p. 151; N. J. Gnaniah *(IJFM* 28:4), p. 161.

[3] Vishal Mangalwadi, "Can Churchless Christianity Transform India?" Unpublished manuscript.

[4] *IJFM* 18:1 Spring 2001, ijfm.org.

Recasting Evangelization
Will the Earth Hear His Voice?
Is Ralph D. Winter's Idea Still Valid?

by Greg H. Parsons

Greg H. Parsons has served with Frontier Ventures (formerly US Center for World Mission) since 1982, twenty-seven of those years while Dr. Ralph D. Winter was alive. In 2012 he completed his PhD dissertation (University of Wales Trinity Saint David) on Winter's life up to 1976—the year the USCWM was founded. Greg currently serves as the Director of Global Connections at Frontier Ventures, Chancellor of William Carey International University and the Director of the Ralph D. Winter Research Center.

Editor's note: This article was first presented at the International Society for Frontier Missiology meetings in 2014 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization.

Ralph D. Winter was forty nine years old when he walked onto the platform and gave a plenary talk at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. It was July 1974. 2,430 participants with 570 observers from 150 countries had descended on Lausanne Switzerland. The Congress theme, "Let the Earth Hear His Voice," is the title of the 1,471 page compendium (Douglas, 1975) that records every major presentation and response before and during the event.

We should remember a bit about the world situation at the time. The Vietnam War had ended the year before and the hippie movement was largely past—though its residual effect still colored North American culture and impacted national progress. A film made after the Congress included hippie-looking young people with guitars singing about their desire to spread peace and the gospel. It is a vivid reminder that we are all products of the times in which we live.

I want to focus my presentation on Ralph Winter's speech at Lausanne '74, an address that was actually the product of his more gradual reconceptualization of an unevangelized world. The years that led into Lausanne '74 were for Winter a gestational period in which he was perceiving, discussing and testing a new grid through which we could understand the challenge of reaching a lost world.

Ralph Winter's Preparation for the Event

It was not until the fifth day into the conference, on Saturday morning, July 21, 1974, that Winter presented his paper. What would later become a watershed moment in evangelical missions,[1] had been formulated in Winter's thinking long before the presentation in Lausanne. He actually had previously presented his thoughts on the frontier missionary task in several articles and forums. Up until 1971, while a professor at the School of World Mission (SWM) at Fuller Seminary, Winter had primarily been known for his

involvement in the development of Theological Education by Extension. Having been asked by McGavran to teach courses on missions history, his unique perspective was increasingly being heard on issues related to church history; church growth; the expansion of the church into vast, different cultural regions in different historical eras; and the nature and function of what he called "sodalities and modalities." Nevertheless, beginning in the early seventies, he began to think more and more about the absence of the church around the world—as did other colleagues at the SWM (Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission).[2]

One of those colleagues writing about those populations without a gospel witness was Donald McGavran. One example was his article in the *Church Growth Book Club (CGB)*, "Will Green Lake Betray the Two Billion?"[3] (McGavran, 1971) Of course, McGavran's Lausanne pre-Congress paper and plenary presentation were full of references to ideas the SWM team had been processing together.[4] While Winter would later step away from his tenured position at the SWM to found the US Center for World Mission, the ideas were not pioneered by him alone. This is something he often repeated in conversations about his 1974 presentation. In fact, in an email dated June 8, 2002, he wrote this to a worker in Brazil:

> At Lausanne in 1974 I did not introduce anything so new as Townsend and McGavran, I just tried to clarify the statistical implication of what they did.... Buried in the insights of both McGavran and Townsend were, respectively, the reality of the vertical and horizontal "segmentation" of humanity, in vertically deployed castes and horizontally deployed tribes and other societies.[5]

Early Processing
One of Winter's distinct contributions to this collaboration was his support of church growth principles with statistics—hard data. In different forums he

seemed to be mentally processing ideas related to the unreached as he tracked the historical and statistical factors in the growth of the church. In January 1972, he published one page in the *CGB* called "The Quantitative Case for Continuing Missions Today." (Winter, 1972b, 202) In it, Winter included an early chart that gave a breakdown of the number of Christians around the world and the large number of non-Christians in Asia (see Figure 1, below).[6] Winter's focus was the fact that (1) there are Christians around the world that need to grow and reach out to their neighbors and, (2) that there are massive regions without any Christians whatsoever where billions need to be reached. He noted:

> The most urgent task in the world today must continue to be the proclamation of the gospel in these areas and the bringing of their peoples to faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ (Winter, 1972b, 202).

In a subsequent article in the following issue of the *CGB* (March,1972), Winter made clear that he was not arguing that US missionaries should be the only or even the main missionaries to reach all these non-Christians. This was, in part, in recognition of the debate in the WCC and elsewhere that the day of mission was over.[7] There were calls for a moratorium on the

sending of missionaries. Furthermore, the suggestion that the national church could do the job in each country of the world was gaining momentum.

By contrast (and of significance for us today), Winter saw the need for a new, different kind of mission work. Referring to the Indian context, he observed that

> not even the Indian Christians can do this job unless (1) they understand it to be a task of full-blown *missionary*[8] complexity, and (2) they set up the proper *mission* machinery to do the job. That is to say, what is most needed in India today is the development of liberating fellowships of Christian faith among the hundreds of millions of Indian people who live in the hundreds of unreached subcultures. But the point is that these essential, crucial new fellowships in the unreached subcultures will not be planted by existing *churches* as much as by *mission* structures that can effectively express the true Christian obedience of the existing churches. It is impressively clear that the two thousand million non-Christian Asians will not be reached unless it can become fashionable for the younger churches to establish younger missions. (Winter, 1972a, 212)

Key 73
Early in 1973, Winter and four colleagues from the SWM, were asked to write for a special issue of *Christianity*

Figure 1. Christian Populations Needing Mobilization (1972, 202)

Westerners	400 Million European Christians	200 Million North-American Christians	50 M Russ Chr.	220 Million Latin American Christians	*Non-Christian Westerners*		10 Year Increase of Non-Christians
	100 Million African Christians	*250 Million Non-Christian Africans*					75 Million Increase
Non-Westerners / 70 Million Asian Christians		*2,150 Million Non-Christian Asians*					650 Million Increase

Today (CT) entitled "Key 73." The program was focused on making the gospel available to everyone in America. After CT had pushed this idea in editorials for several years, the editor Harold Lindsell[9] announced that

> the next issue of *Christianity Today* will feature Key 73, whose evangelistic thrust we hope will result in the conversion of many unbelievers this year. (Lindsell, 1973, 3)

Winter focused his submission on the need to plant new churches. His article, "Existing Churches: Ends or Means?" (1973, 10) suggested that in order for the leaders of the program to attract churches and denominations, they had to describe their goals in ways that would encourage participants, especially churches, to expect that the consequence of a successful Key 73 was that they would grow bigger. Winter pointed out, however, that it was *new* churches that were multiplying and growing globally, not necessarily existing churches.[10]

In the summer of 1973, Winter also presented his thinking about Sodalities and Modalities.[11] While his paper—now entitled, "Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission" (Winter, 1974b)—was a central idea growing out of the All-Asia Mission Consultation, it was during a question and answer session at that event that Winter touched on the issue of the unfinished task and its connection to sodalities:

> There are at least 2,150 million non-Christians in the world (400 million Hindus, 500 million Muslims, 800 million Chinese[12]) as compared to 100 million Western Christians and 70 million Asian Christians. In order to reach these millions, we need to mobilize missionary forces which are not from the usual church-oriented modality type of missionary outreach. (Chun, 1975, 80)

The writer documenting this event continued his description of the discussion:

> Dr. Winter finally spoke to the confusion of "mission" and "evangelism." He

explained that mission involved cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and cross-racial evangelizing while evangelism refers to taking the Gospel to one's own people whether inside or outside the homeland. (Chun, 1975, 80)

By the fall of 1973, Winter and McGavran had been contacted by the leadership of the upcoming Lausanne Congress to each present a plenary the next summer. Winter circulated drafts of his thinking toward the end of 1973 and beginning of 1974.[13]

It may be helpful to pause here to explain the unique and helpful process for the presenting of papers at the '74 Congress. Each plenary presenter wrote his paper and submitted it long before the event. Then it was circulated to all the invited participants for feedback. Both Winter and McGavran expressed appreciation for the hundreds of responses they received. The significance of this process is that by the time of the actual Congress, a substantial portion of those in the audience had read the papers. It also gave the presenters the opportunity to adjust their papers from the "pre-conference" version—which both Winter and McGavran did. In Winter's case, it allowed him to focus on key areas with which readers had struggled.

"A Disturbing New Fact": A Fuller Seminary Board Presentation

Another group that heard an earlier articulation of Winter's thinking was Fuller Seminary's Board of Trustees.[14] Several of the SWM faculty presented at that meeting of the board, and Winter was listed first under the title, "Is the Task Too Big to Grasp?" He said that the

> ultimate focus of our [whole] school…is not less than the salvation of all mankind, [and] the renovation of the whole earth.[15] (Hubbard, 1974)

There were 1,000 mission societies, but no significant research on the overall picture, as though the world missionary enterprise had no research department.

While Winter realized how pretentious this might sound, he was more concerned that a thousand mission societies and one hundred thousand missionaries had produced no

> significant research *on the overall picture.…*It is as though the world missionary enterprise has no research department to draw on. (Hubbard, 1974, 2)

Winter then summarized a small booklet that the board had for reference, which included global level statistics comparing Christians and non-Christians in major regions of the world. After explaining statistically the remaining task, Winter pointed out

> a very disturbing new fact, that ninety-five percent of the missionaries working in the non-Christian world were working among those whom we have lumped together in the category called "other," and that the vast majority of the non-Christians–that is, the Hindus, Muslims, and Chinese–are receiving very little attention proportionately.[16] (Hubbard, 1974, 2)

Winter focused on some interesting concepts that clarified the need for a PhD program at the SWM that could train teachers in other schools and, thereby, help "deepen the bench" of those who could equip others to reach out to the unreached effectively.

> Many of the middle caste Hindus are in effect gathering around the Christian faith as interested onlookers, but for monumental social reasons, they cannot become members of any existing church. And the only hope seems to be to begin a brand new beach-head in their midst deliberately so as to make unnecessary this massive societal dislocation which is involved at the present time in moving into the Christian faith. (Hubbard, 1974, 3)

He continues by asking how many would become Christians, if the social barriers were not there? His answer: One hundred million!

> The task of world evangelization is so great that training a handful of missionaries each year to do a better job is somewhat like bailing the ocean out with a teaspoon. You can understand therefore why we feel the only realistic approach to the problem is to try to expand the function of the school itself. (Hubbard, 1974, 4)

EMQ 10th Anniversary Article

In late October 1973, after additional submitted drafts of his pre-Lausanne Congress presentation, Winter wrote an article for the tenth anniversary of the *Evangelical Mission Quarterly (EMQ)* called "The Decade Past and the Decade to Come: Seeing the Task Graphically" (Winter, 1974a). While I will not give a detailed summary of this article here, I encourage you to access the article online if you feel you need a better understanding of the early conception of unreached peoples. While this idea itself may have been the most novel and perhaps the most enduring of the Lausanne Congress, I'd like to turn to elements in Winter's *EMQ* article and both of his Lausanne papers (the pre-Congress and the actual one presented) which are more often overlooked.

Increasingly, Winter's writing shifted from supporting church growth and effective missionary practices to what he would present at Lausanne. More and more, it was driven by what he was seeing in his research and what he was hearing from the SWM students.[17] The lengthy lead article included global statistics and interpretation. Winter addressed the mission leaders and professors who subscribed to *EMQ* to argue there was a massive need among cultures without a gospel witness.

Similar to his presentation to the Fuller Board, his opening statement clarified his perspective on the SWM at Fuller.

Without apology, we see the entire world as the legitimate target of Christian expansion. This does not mean we envision forcing anyone to be a Christian, nor forcing anyone to change his language or his culture in order to become a Christian. This is not an institutional "triumphalism." We simply believe everyone has an equal right to knowledge of, and faith in, Jesus Christ. But if this is our goal, how are we doing? (Winter, 1974a, 11)

Under a section of the *EMQ* article called, "How 'Far Away' Are They?" Winter demonstrated the disparity in the cultural distance between existing Christians and the major unevangelized blocs. Christians could actually be within or near a particular unreached

More and more, Winter's research was driven by what he was hearing from the SWM students.
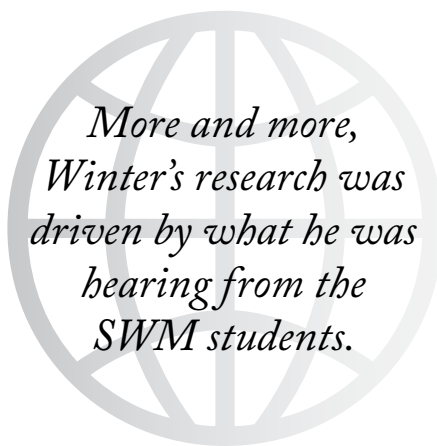
culture, though separated from them by a large cultural gulf. He illustrated with two examples, one from a typical village in India and one from the New Testament period. He notes that although there might have been thousands of villages with churches in India at that time, there were

> still over 500,000 villages without any worshipping Christian group! Worse still, even where there is a church—note the cross—it is in most cases located in the ghetto of former "untouchables," in Telegu called *Palem.*[18] The distance from this ghetto to the center of the village may be only half-a-mile *geographically,* but it is like 25,000 miles *culturally.* In this same sense, at least *80 percent of the*

> *non-Christians in the world today are beyond the reach of existing churches!* (Winter, 1974a, 17)

He made reference to the barriers to evangelism which are cultural, noting that the last phrase in Acts 1:8, "ends of the earth," described

> where you don't expect any linguistic head start at all, no cultural affinity whatsoever. This is E-3 evangelism,[19] and is, humanly speaking, the hardest kind. (Winter, 1974a, 18)

He did comment on the need for mission agencies to pick up on this need to go "beyond" with the gospel.

> Most missionaries and most mission boards may hope that someone else will worry about the special problem of winning Muslims, Hindus, and Chinese, since these have historically been the most resistant to the gospel. But let's face it—these groups are by far the larger part of the task we face. There are now new insights regarding the reaching of these particular "resistant" peoples. (Winter, 1974a, 15)

He also reflected on the current push (not unlike today) that says the nationals can finish the remaining task.

> Current gloating over the emergence of the overseas "national churches" could easily lead us to suppose that we at least have a beachhead of Christians within each of these major non-Christian blocks. This is not exactly true. All of a sudden we have a reappearance of Jewish Christians among the Jews. But there are very few "Muslim Christians" or "Muslim churches" today. (Winter, 1974a, 15)

And,

> thus, the…three mammoth fastgrowing blocks, Hindus, Muslims, Chinese, that are *mainly beyond the reach of the ordinary evangelism of Christians reaching their cultural near-neighbors.* This horrifying fact means specifically that "native missionaries using their own language" can hardly begin to do this job. (Winter, 1974a, 15)

Please do not suppose that too many missionaries are devoted to the 403 million! The major lesson here is that we need to exert more effort on behalf of the bigger problem: if it is reasonable (and we believe it is) to send 38,000 missionaries (from all Protestant sources) to 403 million people, then it is unreasonable to send only 2,000 to reach 1993 million. If we were to give the larger group equal effort per million, it would require 212,000 missionaries—more than 100 times as many as the 2,000 we are now sending! (Winter, 1974a, 16-17)

Winter continually brought his engineering aptitude to this huge statistical reality and thought of mission structures which might accomplish this uniquely missionary work.

The tendency in some quarters is to phase out the older mission apparatus in favor of the church-to-church relationship. This is a profound mistake, since (as we have seen) the non-Christian world is not dwindling. Far better: encourage the national church to sponsor its own E-2 and E-3 outreach by means of its own mission initiative. This then allows the two mission structures to continue on, in relationship with each other, to complete the task of world evangelization. (Winter, 1974a, 23)

Still, Winter sought to encourage his reader that since we had made progress in the past, we had reason to believe that with the right change of perspective, we could see continued progress towards the unreached.

Can we now "see" the task ahead? A relatively tiny trickle of missionaries from the Western world has, under God, produced over 200 million Christians in the non-Western world. Roughly half of these are in Africa, the other half in Asia. This is a significant achievement. It proves that Christianity, unlike any other religion, is truly universal. It provides an unprecedented base for what must, in the days ahead, be an unprecedentedly strong new push forward. (Winter, 1974a, 23)

I will now turn to some of Winter's insights that may have been lost on his listeners and on those of us who focus on the UPG vision.

Congress Reflections: Select Lesser-Known Elements

I will now turn to some of his insights that may have been lost on his listeners and on those of us who focus on the UPG vision.

Pre-Congress Circulation Paper

Winter first dealt with scriptural issues, before he readdressed the global data. He was clearly focused on the issue of how different E-3 evangelism really was. He sought to make people think more deeply about the assumptions underlying their biblical interpretations, instead of always asserting or proving his own. He did this first with Acts 1:8:

Jesus is referring primarily neither to geography nor walls of prejudice when he lists Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Had he been talking about prejudice, Samaria would have come last. He would have said, "in Judea, in all the world, and even in Samaria." It seems likely he is taking into account cultural distance as the primary factor. (Douglas, 1975, 218)

He also argues that the cross-cultural "missions" job is different from the job of evangelism.

E-1 evangelism is literally *impossible* where there are no witnesses within a given language or cultural group. Jesus, as a Jew, would not have had to witness directly to that Samaritan woman had there been a local Samaritan Christian who had already reached her. In the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, we can conjecture that it might have been better for an Ethiopian Christian than for Philip to do the witnessing, but there had to be an initial contact by a non-Ethiopian in order for the E-1 process to be set in motion. (Douglas, 1975, 220)

A perennial debate—one that is intensifying in our day—concerns intercultural fellowship. In situations where people from different cultures live side by side, just how intimately should new believers (from one culture) relate to an existing local church (from another)?[20]

People from these other cultures are won, sometimes only one at a time, sometimes in small groups. The problem is not in winning them; it is in the cultural obstacles to proper follow-up. Existing churches may cooperate up to a point with evangelistic campaigns, but they do not contemplate allowing the evangelistic organizations to stay long enough to gather these people together in churches of their own. They [existing churches] mistakenly think that being joined to Christ ought to include joining existing churches. Yet if proper E-2 methods were employed, these few converts, who would merely be considered somewhat odd additions to existing congregations, could be infusions of new life into whole new pockets of society where the church does not now exist at all![21] (Douglas, 1975, 223)

Winter does not address how to solve that problem. He does note that it is very complex and argues for the continued need for mission agencies.

A discussion of the best ways to organize for cross-cultural evangelism is beyond the scope of this paper. It would entail a great deal of space to chart the successes and failures of different approaches by churches and by para-church organizations. It may well be that E-2 and E-3 methods are best launched by specialized agencies and societies working loyally and harmoniously with the churches. (Douglas, 1975, 224)

One of the arguments you hear in current debate over "insider movements" and related missiological issues is that following Christ is not a Western construct. This was seminal to Winter's earlier thinking:

It is ironic that national Christians all over the non-Western world are

increasingly aware that they do not need to be Westernized to be Christian, yet they may in some cases be slow to sense that the challenge of cross-cultural evangelism requires them to allow other people in their own areas to have the same liberty of self-determination in establishing culturally divergent churches of their own. (Douglas, 1975, 224–5)

The unfortunate fact is that many churches today seem to be more and more Westernized. Many of us have often observed that national churches around the world are more Western than many US churches. They often stand strongly opposed to any of the "old practices" from their past.

But to return to the pre-Congress paper: the last paragraph included a wistful vision of what might happen should we take seriously what Winter was saying.

> 100 million middle-class Hindus await the opportunity to become Christians—but there are no churches for them to join which respect their dietary habits and customs. Is the kingdom of God meat and drink? To go to the special efforts required by E-2 and E-3 evangelism is not to let down the standards and make the Gospel easy—it is to disentangle the irrelevant elements and to make the Gospel clear. (Douglas, 1975, 225)

Lausanne Plenary Presentation
Introductory Comments
As we turn to what Winter said at the Lausanne event itself, his focus seems clear from the particular questions he had decided to summarize and answer. With this presentation, it becomes even more apparent that what drove Winter's life and calling was the solving of problems and the removal of barriers that either drive people away from Christ or prevent their being drawn closer to Christ. Like a good engineer, he was compelled to work slavishly to solve problems and remove barriers.

Winter was not afraid of presenting complex information, perhaps because

he did not fully understand how the average person thinks. He expected those with a passion for world evangelization to be equally as interested in understanding the numerical and statistical data so they could be informed about the big picture.

Based on the questions he had received from the official responders to his pre-Congress paper, Winter divided his talk into two sections.

Questions about the statistical scope of the task
I will not take time here to review Winter's statistical arguments, except to note what is somewhat parallel with the situation today. His major chart on the world situation pointed out that,

Like a good engineer, he was compelled to work slavishly to remove barriers.

"87 percent of the non-Christians are in the cross-cultural category." Describing the situation in 2007, Johnson and Tieszen stated that

> Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims have relatively little contact with Christians. In each case, over 86% of all these religionists do not personally know a Christian. (Johnson and Tieszen, 2007, 495)

I have heard Todd Johnson mention that these numbers are roughly parallel.

The Need
These 87% (in Winter's numbers) are those who

> are beyond a significant cultural frontier, *whom we can only reach*

by cross-cultural evangelism, that is who may wish to exercise their biblical right to self-determination in establishing a separate cultural tradition of regular worship…. In a word, they are people at sufficient cultural distance that we cannot necessarily expect them to join existing Christian churches. Their existence calls for special cross-cultural evangelism, and constitutes the major technical obstacle to world evangelization. (Douglas, 1975, 230)

The Task Force
Winter often thought of creative illustrations to bring home a point. He considered those who had been sitting at the Congress for five days already and he devised a helpful illustration. Total attendance at the Congress (2,430 participants with 570 observers) roughly paralleled a ratio of 1 delegate to 1 million non-Christians. If those at the Congress were gifted and called to reach these Hindus, Muslims and Chinese (later Buddhists),

> we would have to have 502 people here specializing on reaching the 502 million non-Christian Hindus. These would have to be cross-cultural specialists on the whole. We would also have to have 664 people here specializing on reaching the 664 million Muslims. They too would have to be almost entirely cross-cultural specialists since only tiny numbers of Muslims can be won by local Christians living in their areas who try to reach them by ordinary evangelism…. Moving on to the Chinese… (Douglas, 1975, 233)

The Approach
Of course they did not have that many "experts" back then. Perhaps we should evaluate how many "experts" we really have now. Winter went on to illustrate from Pakistan how differences in their (religious) language can trip up Christians (mostly from a Hindu background) when relating to Muslims—despite both speaking Urdu. He noted:

> They don't speak exactly the same kind of Urdu. A Muslim can tell either by listening or by reading that the religious language of the Christians

comes from the originally Hindu minority in his country, and he has monumental prejudices about this difference. The Christians…while they don't hate the Muslims, don't feel it is necessary to make a special translation of the New Testament into the religious language of the Urdu-speaking Muslims, even though there are more than 30 million Urdu-speaking Muslims alone! (Douglas, 1975, 235)

Syncretism and Unity: Concern for the theological nature of the task

Winter summarized the many responses he received into two major headings.

First, he sorted them under the question, "Will not the allowance of indigenous life ways lead us into syncretism" (Douglas, 1975, 235)? While discussing this briefly, Winter defers the issue by saying that "Michael Green has already answered this for us in his excellent discussion of flexibility without syncretism" (Douglas, 1975, 235–6).

Green was a respected British theologian who focused on evangelism and apologetics. A prolific writer and college headmaster, he wrote a masterful pre-Congress paper and presented his plenary at the Congress prior to Winter, entitled "Methods and Strategy in the Evangelism of the Early Church." Green detailed both New Testament and early church perspectives on evangelism. He was not quite sure the spread of the gospel was based on a thought-through strategy. In fact, he was quite sure that it was not. He mentioned syncretism briefly in the pre-Congress paper, noting that

> the early church was very flexible in its preaching of the Good News, but utterly opposed to syncretism (mixing other elements with the Gospel) of any sort. (Douglas, 1975, 159)

Early believers focused on Christ but were willing to arrive at the message of Christ with many different illustrations or "roads." The modern church, Green argued, can get stuck with one method or approach.

*W*inter spent almost as much time on the question of unity as he did on the statistical realities. He began with a startling personal admission.

Green must have been asked about it in the responses to his pre-Congress paper. As he noted:

> There was fear in some of your responses that I was opening the door to syncretism. Not at all. I simply mean that there are hundreds of roads to Jesus Christ. Don't confine yourself to one. The New Testament writers used masses of pictures…as avenues to Jesus. (Douglas, 1975, 176–177)

Winter was then able to briefly discuss how Americans use pagan references in our Christian ceremonies (e.g., Easter from the Teutonic spring goddess of fertility called Eostre).

Winter categorized other significant responses under a second question:

> Will not our unity in Christ be destroyed if we follow a concept of cross-cultural evangelization which is willing to set up separate churches for different cultural groups within the same geographical area? (Douglas, 1975, 236)

This was part of the debate that the SWM and the Church Growth Movement had previously responded to many times. After the Lausanne Congress, the new Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism would hold a meeting on the "homogeneous unit principle" (HUP). Fuller Seminary hosted the gathering and John R. W. Stott chaired it.[22]

At Lausanne, Winter spent almost as much time on the question of unity as he did on the statistical realities. He started with a startling personal admission:

> It is only with humble dependence upon the Holy Spirit to honor the Word of God above the secular influences to which we all are subject that I dare to proceed with a perspective which I myself could not understand nor accept until several years ago. (Douglas, 1975, 236)

Winter continued to describe his struggle to grapple with these ideas:

> I realize now that Christian unity cannot be healthy if it infringes upon Christian liberty. In terms of evangelism, we must ask whether the attempt to extend, for example in Pakistan, an external form into the Muslim culture is more important than making the gospel clear to such people within their own culture. Can we not condition our desire for uniformity by an even greater desire for effective preaching of the gospel? I personally have come to believe that unity does not have to require uniformity, and I believe that there must be such a thing as healthy diversity in human society *and in the Christian world church.* I see the world church as the gathering of a great symphony orchestra where we don't make every new person coming in play a violin in order to fit in with the rest. We invite the people to come in to play the same score—the Word of God—but to play their own instruments, and in this way there will issue forth a heavenly sound that will grow in the splendor and glory of God as each new instrument is added. (Douglas, 1975, 237)

Next he turned to Paul and the NT examples. Did Paul set up separate churches? Winter says probably not, but we do not know. But he did not prohibit them. He referred to Paul Minear's monograph *The Obedience of Faith,* where Minear pens a masterful section on the background of Paul's core purposes in writing Romans.[23] Minear suggests that there were five separate congregations in the city of Rome with perhaps 3,000 members. Paul wrote to this cluster of churches in Rome which, Minear believes, were very different from each other. Winter quotes Minear when he speaks of this context:

> …[some] being composed almost entirely of Jewish Christians, and others

(the majority) almost entirely of Gentile Christians. "Instead of visualizing a single Christian congregation, therefore, we should constantly reckon with the probability that within the urban area were to be found forms of Christian community which were as diverse and probably also as alien, as the churches of Galatia and those of Judea." (Minear, 1971, 8; Douglas, 1975, 237)

Winter includes other NT illustrations such as the difference between Peter in his Jewish focus of ministry and Paul with his Greek or Gentile focus (and background, to some extent). Significant to Winter's illustrations were observations from the Brahmin ways of life in India. Addressing what had been a pattern in the church in India in some circles, he says:

> We would envision Brahmin Christians finding it hard to allow the less restrictive meat-eating groups to become Christian; but the actual situation is very nearly the reverse. In India today it is those who eat meat who are Christians, and the problem is how to apply Paul's missionary strategy to this situation. In regard to food restrictions, it is as though the Brahmins are "under the law," not the present Christians. In this situation can we imagine Paul saying, "To those under the law I will go as under the law if by all means I may win some?" Can we hear him say as an E-2 or E-3 evangelist, "If meat makes my brother offended, I will eat no meat?" Can we hear him defending worshiping groups among the Brahmins against the suggestion or expectation that they should change their diet or join congregations of very different life-style in order to be accepted as Christians? Against the accusation that he was dividing the church of Christ, can we hear Paul insist that "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, low caste nor high caste?" (Douglas, 1975, 238–239)

Winter is quick to add that

> this perspective does not enforce (nor even allow) a policy of segregation, nor any kind of ranking of Christians in first-and second-class categories.

It rather guarantees equal acceptability of different traditions. It is a clear-cut apostolic policy against forcing Christians of one life-style to be proselytized to the cultural patterns of another. This is not a peripheral matter in the New Testament. True circumcision is of the heart. True baptism is of the heart. It is a matter of faith, not works, or customs, or rites. In Christ there is freedom and liberty in this regard—people must be free either to retain or abandon their native language and lifestyle. (Douglas, 1975, 239)

And then he returns to the illustration of the Brahmin situation:[24]

> If a cross-cultural evangelist encourage members of a Brahmin family to begin worship services in their own

Significant to Winter's illustrations were observations from the Brahmin ways of life in India.
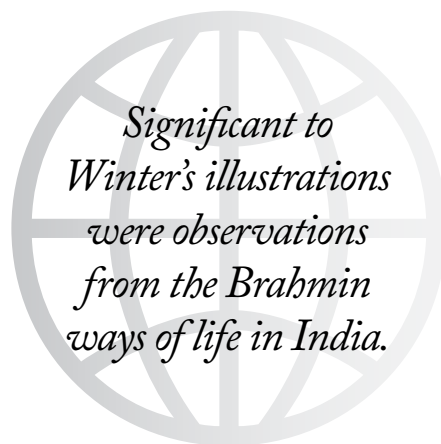
home, does he insist that they invite people from across town to their very first meeting? On the other hand, any Brahmin who becomes a Christian and who begins to understand the Bible will soon realize, whether it was entirely clear before or not, that he now belongs to a world family within which there are many tribes and tongues—indeed according to the Book of Revelation (Rev. 7:9), this kind of diversity will continue right down to the end of time. (Douglas, 1975, 239)

Winter acknowledges that some allow for separate congregations when people speak a different language. But he argues that cultural distinctions should *also* be taken into account. Wouldn't we expect a Muslim who is being drawn

to Christ to be offended by some of our scantily clad women in church in America on Sundays? Or by the fact that we put our Bibles on the ground when we don't have an extra seat next to us in church? Do we *want* them to get used to these things when they follow Christ? Winter argues, near the end of his talk, that diversity is a part of the beauty of God's mosaic. He would not have had any trouble with the "multi-ethnic" churches in America, so long as one did not argue that this was the only path people could take. (I will return to this in a moment.)

Finally, Winter closes with an impassioned plea:

> Jesus *died* for these people around the world. He did not die to preserve our Western way of life. He did not die to make Muslims stop praying five times a day. He did not die to make Brahmins eat meat. Can't you hear Paul the Evangelist saying we must go to these people within the systems in which they operate? True, this is the cry of a cross-cultural evangelist, not a pastor. We can't make every local church fit the pattern of every other local church. But we must have radically new efforts of cross-cultural evangelism in order to effectively witness to 2387 million people, and we cannot believe that we can continue virtually to ignore this highest priority.

Reflections on the Impact of Lausanne '74

So how did Winter's contribution impact evangelization? As I've noted, not all of these concepts were original with Winter, yet he combined them into a uniquely coherent and compelling framework for understanding the overall unfinished mission task. Here are seventeen different ways the missions world has changed, I believe, because of coming to grips with the data and the thesis Winter presented at Lausanne:

1. His contribution was a correction to the "missionary go home" mentality from the 1960s, which

had been misinterpreted to mean that because foreign missionaries were not needed or wanted in some places in the developing world, they were not needed or wanted anywhere.

2. In it, he highlighted large portions of the world's population that were unreached but which were being overlooked by the global church. Though the remaining task was large, he emphasized that it should not seem overwhelming.

3. He hinted at the idea that sodalities (mission structures or agencies) could be created to reach people who were beyond existing church or mission efforts. Asians in particular were challenged in this way.

4. Providentially, all of this occurred at a time that was ripe for change, when social upheaval and unrest in the west left a new generation of young people eager for something worth giving their lives to. Many embraced the vision that Winter articulated and it shaped their lives and vocations to a significant degree.

5. Winter challenged the Lausanne '74 audience to see the unreached world in a new cross-cultural perspective and to think about whole new ways to effectively present the gospel so that it could more readily cross cultural borders.

6. He raised the issue of cultural distance between the missionary and the least-reached peoples and pointed out that cultural distance can be large despite Christian and non-Christian people groups living in close geographical proximity.

7. He emphasized Christian liberty within cultures new to the gospel over unity of Christians across cultures with respect to initial evangelism strategies.

8. His challenge was not to merely send more missionaries, but to consider more carefully *where*

This occurred at a time that was ripe for change, when social upheaval left a new generation eager for something worth giving their lives to.

they were sent, and to set that vision high so as to meet the large needs that existed.

9. His compelling statistics quickly became a rallying point. With data newly available and accessible because of computers and information systems, new categories were created that helped increase the awareness and understanding of the unreached and helped in guiding prayer and outreach for them.

10. He highlighted the pressing need for new expressions of church through cross-cultural evangelism. These churches would need to be appropriate for believers from cultures newly reached with the gospel.

11. He sought to recognize the need for strategic planning and cultural learning on the part of the missionary, done in the power and work of the Holy Spirit.

12. He demonstrated dramatically the need for more missionaries to be sent from non-Western cultures.

13. He recognized that syncretism is a problem in both new and established churches. Christians should look very carefully at their own practices and what they expect new believers in another culture to embrace, based on Scripture.

14. He distinguished between "going overseas" to do church or evangelism ministry with people from one's own culture in another country versus working cross-culturally wherever an unreached culture happens to be located.

15. His address was a part of what helped to impel the Lausanne Movement and further global networking and cooperation among Christians.[25]

16. It helped launch new agencies focused on frontiers in mission, including the US Center for World Mission, and many other mission agencies or departments within existing missions. (Frontiers, Pioneers, Mission to Unreached Peoples, now Act Beyond, etc.)

17. It raised the issue of how existing Christians in established churches—the "stronger" brothers and sisters—are to treat "weaker" brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.[26] This raised, and continues to raise, additional issues related to how Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists are viewed and approached by Christians, and how they might express faith in Christ in their context.

There were also significant critiques voiced regarding Winter's ideas during and after the Congress:

1. His formulation was too obscure or technical for the average Christian and could easily be ignored, misunderstood or be seen as overcomplicating the task.

2. The focus on specific people groups could become an oversimplification of what needed to be done, cultures being distinct and highly nuanced.

3. For some, unity is always more important than evangelism strategies. Or to put it less strongly, the unity of the body of Christ should always be paramount as strategies are developed and implemented. Many of those who believe unity is a higher value, do not hold it merely as a matter of preference, but as a mandate.

4. Some, especially from South Asia, see an emphasis on culturally specific mission work among unreached people groups or
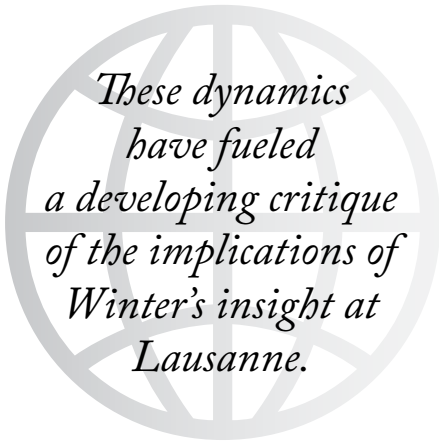
castes as having the potential to condone a form of racism.[27]

5. Many, especially in areas with strong Christian populations, have struggled to understand Winter's reasoning for using different approaches in reaching out to Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.

6. Many mission leaders got the message, as did, over time, the missionaries they serve, but there are many churches and missionaries who have yet to hear or understand the task remaining as articulated by Winter.

7. For some, Lausanne did not go far enough in response to Winter and others' calls for the taking seriously of these untouched cultures. Many tended to confuse evangelism and cross-cultural evangelism with Christian cooperation or church nurture.[28]

8. Some people responded to the unreached focus by becoming defensive and felt the need to defend the legitimacy of their work. Usually these were missionaries who were working where the church already existed.[29]

9. It would be easy to forget the need for regular evangelism among "christianized" people groups in places like Western Europe.

10. Finally, many cultures have now been reached and have either believers in Christ or missionaries on site. But many people in the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist blocs are still largely unaffected by evangelical Christianity.[30]

Even today, within evangelicalism, debates on these issues continue, especially over how much of one's culture or society a new follower of Christ can retain and what must be rejected, the balance between unity and liberty, and the complexity and changing nature of the task remaining in a globalized world. There is no clear approach that is applicable in every situation, which certainly fuels the debate.

The Current Debate

Various cultural issues over forty years are prodding people to reexamine the validity of Winter's speech at Lausanne. Allow me to restrict my observations primarily to certain spokesmen here in North America. It is here in the US context that we have seen the particular emphasis on the multi-ethnic church as the goal. And we are all well aware of how forces of globalization (among other things) are causing cultural boundaries to blur, especially with the increasing rates of immigration. These dynamics have fueled a developing critique of the implications of Winter's insight at Lausanne, and that critique should be given serious consideration.

These dynamics have fueled a developing critique of the implications of Winter's insight at Lausanne.

In a recent *EMQ* article, Eric Hyatt highlighted one such critique. A former mission pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church (John Piper's former church), Hyatt was sent by the church to begin a church plant in the same city of Minneapolis. Hyatt describes his pilgrimage from that of hoping that their large church could reach and enfold people from many more cultures to realizing that wasn't going to happen. He expected the missionary candidates he worked with to help fulfill that dream. But, although he admits the requirement to reach out cross-culturally in Minneapolis may have helped prepare the missionaries, it was not effective in getting those from other cultures to join the Bethlehem Baptist Church.

My aim with this requirement was twofold: (1) to help the aspiring missionary practice the same language and culture learning skills that he or she would use abroad, and (2) that the result of this relational language and culture learning approach would strengthen the church's reputation as a caring and welcoming fellowship for all peoples. My hope was that this would eventually translate into more ethnically diverse people attending and becoming members of our Anglo-dominant church. However, ten years and over two hundred missionary candidates later, the church remained ninety-five percent Anglo. The conclusion I draw from this is that a church which simply plans to have a mission department (even a strongly supported one!) and sends/supports many missionaries (even local and short-termers) will not automatically become a church for all peoples. (Hyatt, 2014, 228)

This prodded him into his current role—blessed by Bethlehem—to plant a new multi-ethnic church. Hyatt notes that the homogeneous unit principle (HUP) was what we all learned was "the best way to start and grow a church" (p. 229) and acknowledges its application in some church planting efforts. Is that how those churches will remain?

Their goal from the start has been heterogeneity, and he and the church worked hard to help people feel connected, even if they were from many different cultures. To date, they have grown to 100 members from 20 different countries.

Gary Corwin continued the discussion by mentioning Eric's article in his editorial in the following issue of *EMQ:* "Is it a Heterogeneous or Homogeneous Unit Principle" (Corwin, 2104)? Like Hyatt, Corwin notes that minority cultures in the United States

share the common bond of being aliens in the land where they were not born. . . . They are a heterogeneous amalgam of people who share a significant common characteristic—they see themselves as internationals—people who have experienced and

understand the culture and ways of a globalized modernity. They are in effect a homogenous unity of ethnically heterogeneous peoples.[31] (Corwin, 2104, 262–263)

The lingering question for me is not if heterogeneity is a good idea. It may indeed be a better approach in many situations. It appears from Hyatt's article that it is. But, it may not work in other situations or with other people groups. Neither Hyatt nor Corwin seems to be suggesting that the HUP should be abandoned or is unnecessary.[32]

I affirm Hyatt's ministry and this church. Corwin has made some valuable observations about the cohesiveness of ethnic groups when they come to the US. But I have several questions that are not addressed by either Hyatt or Corwin:

1. How many of the multi-ethnic church members were Christians (of some sort) before they joined the church, or how many came from "christianized" backgrounds, either their own family or their own "christianized" culture in general?

2. Is English the common language of worship and teaching?

3. How many came to Christ and to this multi-ethnic church from non-Christian religious backgrounds, such as a Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist religious tradition?

My guess would be very few, if any. As great as the merging of worship, dress styles and language might be, only those familiar with or wanting to identify with these Christian forms (and the English language) are likely to feel at home in such a church. Where I live in Los Angeles, there are many different languages spoken in churches and most of those who go to services that are not in English simply cannot switch to English without a loss of understanding (connected with teaching) and relationships (connected with fellowship).[33] These are two key aspects of what the New Testament expects in a local church.[34]

I

It's unavoidable. As soon as you choose a language to preach in, you've contextualized. You are "closer" to some people and "farther" from others. (Keller)

Beyond that, I would argue that much of this comes from a lack of clarity over the purpose of the church. At the simplistic level, is the local church to focus on care and teaching or outreach and integration? While I don't believe we must choose between them, we've all seen examples where the balance seems to have been lost. Winter argued that as the church grows around the world, the local body's concerns grow up like a fast growing weed that obscure the need to reach out further.

I will close with two illustrations. My first example is an excerpt from a speech given by Tim Keller, who talked about contextualization of the gospel and the homogeneous unit principle at a conference in 2006 (Keller, 2006). Since Keller is one who successfully makes difficult concepts crystal clear, I'll let his words speak without any comment of my own.[35]

> "Contextualization" can unfortunately be used to mean that one interpretation of Scripture is as valid as any other. Or, it could mean that every interpretive community has a perspective that helps us see aspects of God's self-disclosure that other communities cannot in themselves see or hear. That's better, but if that is all that is said then we are on a road to some sort of relativism.
>
> I propose the following definition: Contextualization is not "giving people what they want" but rather it is giving God's answers (which they may not want!) to questions they are asking and in forms that they can comprehend. Contextualization "incarnates" the Christian faith in a particular culture.
>
> …Paul does not change the gospel—but he adapts it very heavily. Sure, this opens the door to abuses, but to fear and refuse to adapt to culture opens to abuses of the gospel just as much! The balance is to not, on one

hand [to] succumb to relativism nor, on the other hand, [to] think contextualization is really avoidable. Both are gospel-eroding errors.…

> This raises a huge issue—sometimes called the "homogeneous unit" principle. Are we going to "target" some groups of people over others? How do we justify that? Paul's example again helps. a) On one hand, Paul did focus on groups he thought strategic.…[36]
>
> Sum: I think the answer is this. Yes, we can "target." "Contextualization" is unavoidable. You yourself have "incarnated" Christianity into a culture. As soon as you choose a language to preach in and illustrations and humor—you've contextualized. You are "closer" to some people and "farther" from others. And it is also right to have a heart for a certain people group and seek to serve and win them over others, in an effort to make sure that the new church's leaders come from this group. But, we must also seek to make our churches as mixed income and multi-cultural as possible. That is the Biblical mandate.
>
> At "intake," as we initially seek to love and win people with the gospel, a certain amount of homogeneity is necessary. It would be nice if non-Christian people would not care about cultural differences, but people cannot be sanctified before they are justified! (Keller, 2006, 16–17)

Keller's last point is a key one that links with what Winter called "liberty" in how our expressions of faith are lived out.

Let's get practical with a second illustration from the September 1, 2014 issue of *Time Magazine*, which included an update on the Fukushima nuclear disaster. A panel of Japanese scientists, doctors and engineers, among others, were exceptionally candid about their own country, Japan:

> What must be admitted—very painfully—is that this was a disaster

"Made in Japan." Its fundamental causes are to be found in the ingrained conventions of Japanese culture: our reflexive obedience; our reluctance to question authority; our devotion to "sticking with the program"; our groupism; and our insularity….The consequences of negligence at Fukushima stand out as catastrophic, but the mind-set that supported it can be found across Japan. (Beech, 2014, 36)

Do we believe our Western church patterns will instantly work among people of this culturally-entrenched environment? I expect the assessment of this scientific group would be "No." So, when is the breakthrough to be in Japan? Or among high caste Hindus? Or among the bulk of adherents to Islam or Buddhism?

If we do not push forward—humanly speaking—to solve problems and remove barriers so the gospel *can* break through, we cannot expect to see progress among the hardest-to-reach peoples. Such was the conviction of Ralph Winter as he stood on that platform in Lausanne. Had Winter not taken seriously the validity of certain missiological concepts, he would have had no confidence to say "the earth *will* hear his voice." Winter knew much of the remaining task of winning the world to Christ would take us to some of the hardest places to live, and would challenge us to communicate the gospel among people in some of the most difficult-to-understand cultural and religious traditions. **IJFM**

Appendix
Consultation on the Homogenous Unit Principle
The first Occasional Paper produced by the Lausanne movement was on the homogeneous unit principle. That official document is only a few pages long, but it is based on a consultation held in Pasadena, May 31–June 2, 1977. The full compendium of messages from the event (and on which the Lausanne Occasional Paper is based) is in Fuller Theological Seminary's

library. A large, unpublished thesis-size volume, it includes a number of presentations primarily given by Fuller SWM faculty with other respondents (Stott and Group, 1977).

- Donald McGavran presented on "The Genesis and Strategy of the Homogeneous Unit Principle" and Harvie M. Conn was the "Discussant."
- Charles H. Kraft presented on "Anthropological Perspectives on the Homogeneous Unit Principle" with Robert L. Ramseyer responding.
- Winter presented "The Homogeneous Unity Principle in Historical Perspective" with Victor E. W. Hayward responding.
- Arthur F. Glasser presented "How Biblical Is the Homogeneous Unit Principle?" with C. Rene Padilla as the responder.
- Finally, C. Peter Wagner presented "How Ethical Is the Homogeneous Unit Principle?" with John H. Yoder giving the reply.

Endnotes
1 The actual event dates were July 16–25, 1974. It started on a Tuesday and ended the next Thursday, for a total of ten days.

2 Now called the School of Intercultural Studies.

3 In it McGavran said: "By 'the two billion' I mean those multitudes of men and women who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. They are found in all six continents, but by far the largest numbers are in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In these lands, blocks of humanity are found (numbering tens of thousands and sometimes millions in each block) in the midst of which can be found no church, no Bible and no Christian. In the whole world, only about one billion call themselves 'Christians.' Two billion have never heard His name effectively." (McGavran, 1971, 150)

4 In addition he insisted, before and during the 1974 Congress, that the Lausanne Covenant include evangelism as a priority. McGavran was from a World Council of Churches denomination, and was often seeking to prod them towards issues related to evangelism. However, his background may have limited his ability to influence solidly evangelical circles.

5 Email to John Mordomo from Ralph D. Winter, June 8, 2002. Later in the email Winter continued, "…concerning the phrase 'hidden peoples.' I was on the ground floor when the early thinking was developed for by-passed peoples, and felt that 'unreached' was a bad choice due to its previous and current use with the phrase 'unreached people' (meaning individuals unconverted) which is actually a distinctly different concept from the need of a group within which there is not yet a viable indigenous evangelizing church movement. Furthermore, and even more importantly, I felt that the World Vision office assisting with the Lausanne Congress unwisely defined what an unreached people was (in the early stages, 'less than 20% Christian')."

6 The descriptions in bold and italics in Figure 1 were added for clarity and are not original.

7 As one would have expected, Winter continued to argue for the need for sodalities or mission structures to be raised up from Christian populations worldwide to deal with various parts of this task.

8 All italics in sections quoted from Winter, throughout this article, are original to him except where noted.

9 Lindsell taught at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, then came to Pasadena, California, where he was a founding faculty member at Fuller Seminary in 1946. He was the editor at *CT* from 1968-1978.

10 For summaries of the other SWM faculty articles in the *CT* issue on "Key '73" and more of Winter's comments, see Appendix P in my dissertation page 396–397.

11 Like his work before the Lausanne paper and presentation—because his thinking was evolving—Winter presented these ideas in several different places. See Chapter 6 of my dissertation for a description of his progression of thought on Sodalities and Modalities. (Parsons, 2012, 231–262)

12 At this point, and for about two years, Winter used "Chinese." Later, as more information became known about the growth of the church in China, this was changed to "Buddhist" and the population numbers were greatly reduced.

13 Winter's E-File includes two large folders. The one numbered E-67 is the main Lausanne paper including correspondence and various drafts. The file labeled E-68 includes the *EMQ* article mentioned below. It is probable that he wrote the *EMQ* article after submitting his initial draft to Lausanne. Since Winter usually determined the E-File number based solely on the order in which he started the project, this would mean his

first work was on the Lausanne pre-Congress paper. But, naturally, because he worked on it for most of a year, much of what is in the file was produced or placed into the file after the *EMQ* paper was submitted. Unfortunately, we have yet to find any of the responses he received to the pre-Congress paper.

[14] According to documentation of this in Winter's writing file E-73, the Board of Trustees of Fuller Seminary (February 4, 1974 meeting) was one of the groups who heard this material. The papers were printed for the board in a packet, with a listing of each paper and presenter attached. The numbers to specific quotes are from this packet. The board also received a copy of Winter's *EMQ* paper, "Seeing the Task Graphically" (Winter, 1974a), which is summarized in my dissertation, Appendix R.

[15] This is from page 1 of Winter's persentation to the Fuller Trustees on Feb. 4, 1974, as are other page references in this paragraph.

[16] In a memo to David A. Hubbard (President of Fuller) Richard D. Curley (Fuller Administrator) gave his "general impressions" of the presentations by the SWM, School of Psychology, and School of Theology. The only negative reflection was with regard to the SWM. He noted there was, "Too much content, not geared to the audience, no question/answer period. Lacked a feature devised to generate interest. Went overtime."

[17] Fuller's SWM faculty actually called these mission field-experienced students "associates."

[18] Today, these are known as Dalits.

[19] This was more recently summarized in the 2009 edition of *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Winter and Hawthorne, 2009) as: "The E-Scale compares the cultural distances that Christians need to move in order to communicate the gospel. E0 refers to the evangelism of [nominal] church-going Christians. E1 is reaching one's own culture across the barrier of 'church culture.' E2 is cross-cultural evangelism into a similar, but different culture. E3 evangelism is taking the gospel to cultures very different from that of the messenger." (Winter and Koch, 2009, 532)

[20] Given that this was a Billy Graham initiated event, Winter used an illustration from evangelistic campaigns—realizing that many there would be thinking in terms of this kind of evangelism as at least one approach, if not a major strategy.

[21] This is similar to the ideas McGavran introduced almost twenty years before the publication of his "breakthrough book *The Bridges of God* (McGavran, 1955).

[22] See the appendix for more details on who presented during this Lausanne Consultation.

[23] Romans 1:5, 15:19–21.

[24] Winter also discusses the issue of "youth churches" by noting: "We are merely insisting, with what I pray is apostolic intuition, that young people have the freedom in Christ to meet together by themselves if they choose to, and *especially if this allows them to attract other young people who would likely* not come to Christ in an age-integrated service." (Douglas, 1975, 240)

[25] This point is not intended to ignore the earlier, long, and significant history of what is now called the World Evangelical Alliance (http://www.worldevangelicals. org), whose purpose is broader than the Lausanne Movement. (www.lausanne.org)

[26] This is related to passages in the Bible by the apostle Paul, especially in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 9.

[27] I believe this ignores a number of arguments Winter, McGavran and others made, as noted earlier in this thesis.

[28] As C. Peter Wagner pointed out. (Wagner, 1975, 7–8)

[29] Winter made a point not to push for the "redeployment" of missionaries from "reached" fields to "unreached" fields, as some had. They were arguing that we should put all our mission resources into the unreached groups, even if that meant moving people from one country or language group to another. Winter argued that a missionary working among an already reached group, or a group that has a solid church, was in the best position to mobilize that national church to begin its own work among unreached groups. While it cannot be attributed to Winter or any one person, there are now more than 12,000 missionaries from Latin America serving around the world. Such was not the case in 1974.

[30] And thus, by evangelical definitions, remain unreached or least reached.

[31] Gary Corwin gave me helpful feedback on this section and noted: "The point of my quote is that a form of HUP is still at play in what Eric is doing and describing, but it is a HUP built on common experience and self-identification rather than ethnicity. This is not to say that a HUP built on ethnicity is wrong in any way, but that it is not the only type of HUP that ought to be kept in mind and recognized as a strategic factor in outreach." (Email, May 17, 2015)

[32] For more on HUP, see Arthur Glasser's, "How Biblical is the Homogeneous Unity Principle?" as noted in the

appendix. It was a paper presented at a Lausanne gathering in 1977 which specifically focused on the HUP and is one example that argues from a different perspective.

[33] Just one block south of my fairly diverse church the signs are only in Chinese. They do not seem to need my business.

[34] Certainly, many want *out* of the major religions. This seems to increase as the more radical extremists exert influence. Where we do not need culturally sensitive approaches, why bother with them? They are a lot of hassle! For example, let the Iranians get out of Islam, if that is what they want. I certainly do not want to "keep" anyone inside systems that oppress or distract from the truth. Unfortunately, Christianity, or Christendom can do that also.

[35] I am not sure, but my guess is this is from a transcript that was not edited…it "sounds" like Keller. This is my selection from his, which is about twice as long as what I quote here.

[36] Keller further illustrates this from Paul's ministry as seen in several passages in Acts. I did not include the larger quote.

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Hinduism
A Brief Look at Theology, History, Scriptures, and Social System with Comments on the Gospel in India

H. L. Richard (Author)

Visitors to the world of Hinduism seldom probe its complex system of diverse beliefs and practices. If you want to better understand the 900 million Hindus of the world, H. L. Richard's brief but insightful *Hinduism* is a must-read. In it, he addresses both esoteric and practical issues. In this small book, Richard takes us on a quick tour of the Hindu scriptures, the basic Hindu philosophies, and includes a comprehensive glossary of Hindu terminology.

Rethinking Hindu Ministry
Papers from the Rethinking Forum

H. L. Richard (Editor)

Hindu traditions are diverse and complex. Simple summaries of Hindu beliefs and practices aren't adequate to explain their captivating allure for Hindus. This collection of papers from seasoned practitioners observes Hindu traditions and Hindu ministry from new angles, introducing new perspectives on ministry in Christ's name that are relevant far beyond the Hindu world. Broad conceptual pictures and detailed practical advice is presented. Also highlighted are some remarkable Hindus who surrendered to Christ—and wrestled with the meaning of following Him in their Hindu families.

The Missionary Family (EMS 22)
Witness, Concerns, Care

Dwight Baker and Robert Priest (Editors)

The title of this book points to a feature—the missionary family—often considered to be a distinctive of the Protestant missionary movement. Certainly the presence of missionary families in the field has been a central factor in enabling, configuring, and restricting Protestant missionary outreach. What special concerns does sending missionary families raise for the conduct of mission? What means are available for extending care and support to missionary families? These issues are the focus of the chapters in part 1 of this book. In recent years an increasing number of reports have surfaced of sexual abuse in mission settings. Part 2 serves the mission community by scrutinizing such matters, offering legal, historical, and psychological perspectives on the topic. Fourteen evangelical scholars participate in the discussion found in part 3.

Other Backward Castes (OBCs):
The World's Largest Megabloc of UPGs

by Yashwant Koli

This telescoped challenge in the evangelization of India was presented at the ISFM meetings in Atlanta, GA, September 2014, by R. W. Lewis on behalf of Yashwant Koli.

India is the elephant in the global room; every sixth person on the planet today is an Indian. The elephant in the Indian room is Hinduism—80% self-identify as such on the Census [2011]. The Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are the elephant in the Hindu room. It is time to talk about this elephant in the room.

To come to grips with Hindu OBCs, we first need to appreciate India's religious demographic and then Hinduism's caste demographics. In the last Indian Census (2011) of India's 1.21 billion population, 80 per cent self-identified as "Hindu."[1] The three upper ("forward") castes and the outcaste Dalits together account for only one-third of all Hindus. The remaining Hindus belong to the fourth Shudra or Backward Castes (BC). Two-thirds of Hindus add up to about half India's population. The Indian Constitution which guaranteed affirmative action programmes and reserved political seats for the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes, also acknowledged the needs of the much larger "other backward classes" (OBCs) which term covers mainly those of the Shudra or middle caste.[2]

The last time a Census of India counted people by their *jati* or sub-caste was 1931, under the British. It is too hot a political potato in independent India to repeat such a census.[3] Therefore all affirmative action programmes at the national level to this day work with extrapolations of the 1931 Census data. Based on that, the Mandal Commission (1980) reported OBCs as estimated to be 52% of the Indian population. No official estimate of the OBC population has set it lower than one-third. So, it is safe to say that between one-third and half of the Indian population are Hindu OBCs. The vast majority of India's growing Muslim population are also OBCs.

Yashwant Koli is a writer and researcher born in India who has been involved with Dalit issues since the early 1970's, with OBCs during the last decade, and who has been invited to address these concerns in their large gatherings all over India.

Shudras and therefore OBCs are made up largely of those traditional occupational groups that work with their hands, including farmers (the largest single group), herdsmen, artisans all the way from goldsmiths to potters. They are on the "right" side of the Hindu pollution line defined by the 3 Ds—dirt, disease, death. On the wrong side are the Dalits or Scheduled Castes (SC).

It gets far more complex when we realize that OBCs are an artificial constitutional construct.[4] In fact, people self-identify by their jati or traditional occupation sub-caste they are born into—regardless of their current occupation. Each jati is endogamous (you can only marry within the jati) but made up of many lineage clans called *gotras* that are exogamous, i.e. you have to marry outside the gotra.[5] Very few jatis are even called by the same name across the state and language boundaries. Each jati is therefore an ethno-linguistic endogamous people group.[6]

A 2002 compilation of both the central and state lists ("schedules") of OBCs show totals of 2,176 and 2,551. These numbers can rightly be interpreted to say that the bloc of Hindu OBCs is made up of between 2,176 and 2,551 people groups. Furthermore, the majority of these people groups and particularly those with the larger populations would be concentrated in North India—the Hindi-speaking "cow" belt.

Switching over to the demographics of Christians who make up 2.3% of the Indian population, we note that around 70% are from Dalit (SC) and about 25% from tribal (ST) backgrounds. Though there are a few known Christians from upper caste backgrounds, until this past decade there were even fewer known Christians from OBC backgrounds, except for some from South India.

That makes the OBCs one of the largest single blocs of unreached people groups in the world. Yet the church and mission in India (and internationally) is ignorant of or have ignored the OBC's. Work among them, particularly in North India, has only begun in the last decade (See inset on p. 21). No wonder there are very few followers of Christ from among the OBCs. **IJFM**

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Challenges to Reaching OBCs

Regardless of approach—contextualised or otherwise—any attempt to present the gospel to OBCs has been historically fraught with challenges, with some listed here:

Spiritual "strong man:" There is massive resistance from spiritual realms, and therefore such work should not be undertaken without sufficient intercessory prayer.

Casteism: Casteism is such a pervasive discriminatory system that even the lowered castes discriminate among themselves, and there is always the risk that Christians from a Dalit background will be rejected outright, or vice-versa (Christian Dalits rejecting OBC brothers and sisters because of fear and/or resentment).

Strong authority structures: Most OBC jatis have extremely strong, almost dictatorial clan (gotra) authority structures, making outreach to the whole gotra more appropriate.

Patriotism and apparent "foreignness" of Christianity: OBCs tend to be extremely patriotic, even jingoistic, and the Hindutva (fundamentalist) propaganda that Christianity is a "foreign" religion seems to make them leery of even listening to anything that seems foreign.

Social life around Brahmanised "Hindu" festivals: Most OBCs live in very tight-knit rural communities with Brahmanised Hindu festivals, and Christians need to decide how to respond when they are drawn in.

Marriage: Since endogamy is so tightly a part of the OBC social fabric, those disciples of marriageable age (females particularly) will come under tremendous pressure to marry unbelievers of their own jati.

Syncretism: Contextualisation and "bridges" in communication always carry risks, and can often create confusion.

Church resistance: Finally, when the huge OBC harvests are brought in, will the existing churches allow this different crop into their churches? Rejection will force the growth of jati-specific denominations, in reverse, an OBC corporate apostasy.

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Endnotes and Commentary

[1] *Koli comments:* One useful way to exegete Hindu cultures is to sort out religious elements of the "great tradition" from the more popular religion of the "little tradition." The great Sanskritic tradition, sometimes called Brahmanism, developed under the leadership of the Brahmans, and preserves a refined and abstract set of philosophical concepts that exhibit very little regional variation. At this level, there is emphasis on unity in diversity and a pervasive attitude of relativism. However, the overwhelming majority of OBCs live more according to their own parochial "little traditions." Each family will in addition to the local village deity have their own *kul devta* or clan god. OBCs tend to be traditionally worshippers of the Hindu god Shiva called Mahadev (or Almighty God). OBCs are particularly given to going on pilgrimages to regional temples and shrines. Also, *bhakti* (devotional) movements that began in different regions from the sixth to seventh centuries AD most often arose from within the OBCs and impacted them more than other castes. These movements tended to be highly emotional, even ecstatic, with a personal focus on a single deity. The bhakti poet-saints came from various backgrounds including Shudra. These movements were at least non-caste (if not anti-caste), making caste, rituals and priests irrelevant. Devotees often left their normal social caste roles to concentrate on worship.

[2] *M. Pickett states:* Scholars will tend to challenge any idealistic "corporate ladder" of caste. Any classic restatement of the standard, idealist theory of caste, and particularly the position of Shudras, is far more complicated, and actually more the product of changes in power structures over the last 200 years.

[3] *Koli comments:* Hindu nationalist fundamentalists (Hindutva) like the RSS and VHP parties clearly have a strategy to co-opt and keep OBCs within their fold. One such vehicle dominated and led by OBCs is the Bajrang Dal strategy (inspired by the monkey god Hanuman's monkey brigade that helped the god Ram in his rescue of his wife, Sita). Like the regional Hindutva, the Bajrang Dal recruits and uses the muscle power of lumpen elements (i.e., the dispossessed and uprooted) to do Hindutva's dirty work, including attacking Christians. The BJP party, now the majority party in power, has also successfully recruited OBCs into leadership ranks, the most prominent example being the former chief minister of Gujarat, Naranda Modi, now prime minister of India.

[4] *Koli comments:* Two major social processes simultaneously at work in Hindu societies are (1) Sankritisation—the perceived advancement up the caste ladder through the adoption of Brahmanical beliefs and practices by the lowered castes—and (2) Rajputisation, through which lowered castes, especially OBCs, emulate in externals—like name (most often Singh), dress, and occupation (most often the armed forces)—the identity of the princely-warrior Kshatriyas. [Editor's note: M. Pickett suggested that nearly everyone aspires to Kshatriya status and will ideally seek to emulate the raja in the way he plays the patron.] As a result, many OBCs pursuing upward mobility in the Brahmanical world, are reluctant to identify the themselves as Shudra or "backward." Since the 80s, a third process is evident: as a result of the Mandal Commission giving OBCs "reservations" (affirmative action quotas) in the government, and more recently in higher education, many Rajputised OBC jatis (like the Yadavs and Jats) have a vested interest in identifying themselves as OBCs.

[5] *M. Pickett states:* "I think we can say that almost by definition a jati is endogamous but the reality is that not all jatis have sharp boundaries. The reality is more complicated. Hypergamous castes are more of a spectrum (akin to sub-species of bird or mammal in some parts of the world), where caste members in area A intermarry with those in area B, those in B with those in both A and C and those in C only with those in B. Their marriage rules are more complicated than have been assumed."

[6] *M. Pickett states:* "There is a clear ambiguity here. If a single jati is not confined to a single language area, then how can that jati be an 'ethno-linguistic' group? Which is the criterion for determining a jati, endogamy or language? The author is saying both and seems to be contradicting himself, is he not?"

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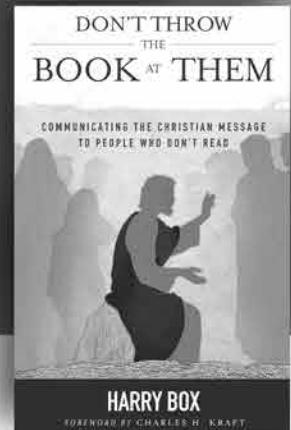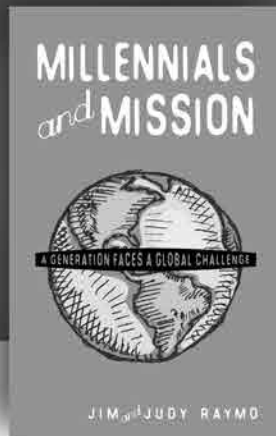
Leading Multicultural Teams

Evelyn and Richard Hibbert (Authors)

Churches and mission agencies are increasingly characterized by cultural diversity. As a result, many Christians find themselves working as part of a multicultural team. Leading these teams is a complex challenge that requires team leaders to understand how to help multicultural teams thrive. Team leaders need to know how to help team members grow in particular qualities and acquire specific skills related to multicultural teamwork. This book integrates insights from the Bible, team theory, leadership, and intercultural studies to explain how leaders of multicultural teams can help their teams become enriching and enjoyable contexts to work in, at the same time as achieving their purpose.

Millennials and Mission
A Generation Faces a Global Challenge

Jim and Judy Raymo (Authors)

This book focuses on the passing of the torch in cross-cultural missions and church ministry to the Millennial generation. Jim and Judy Raymo grapple with big questions and concerns in *Millennials and Mission*, while giving an in-depth look at this up-and-coming generation of young people and the future of missions in its hands. They highlight the strengths and weaknesses of this populous group born between 1982 and 2000, comparing and contrasting its characteristics with those of the Baby Boomers and Gen Xers. In spite of the challenges ahead, *Millennials and Mission* gives a clearly optimistic picture of the Millennial generation's potential contribution to the accomplishing of the Great Commission.

Don't Throw the Book at Them
Communicating the Christian Message to People Who Don't Read

Harry Box (Author)

Don't Throw the Book at Them addresses one of the most vital issues in contemporary missions. It is a manual for cross-cultural missionaries and national church leaders ministering in societies based on oral rather than written communication. Harry Box is a former missionary and researcher in Papua New Guinea and among the Aborigines of Central Australia. In this book, he explains the distinct characteristics of oral societies, how they differ from literacy-oriented societies, Jesus' ministry to oral communicators, and why effective presentation of the Christian message demands that Western Christians change their approach to orality. He goes beyond case studies and analysis, allowing the reader to develop a detailed plan for communication.

Recasting Evangelization

Ethnicity, Kinship, Religion and Territory:
Identifying Communities in South Asia

by Mark Pickett

Mark Pickett spent 20 years in South Asia before moving back to the UK where he teaches at Wales Evangelical School of Theology. His study of the Newar people of the Kathmandu Valley was published as Caste and Kinship in a Modern Hindu Society *(Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2014).*

T his article focuses on the question of social organisation in South Asia, where the social system of caste makes the enumeration of people groups a highly complex task. Uniquely, in this continent, the demarcation of groups for mission purposes has given as much weight to barriers of acceptance as to barriers of understanding. But what principles have we used to determine a barrier of acceptance? Conventionally, kinship is regarded as being the most significant principle. Ethnicity and religion are also considered significant, but territory or the actual locality of a people is not. I wish to approach this issue by examining the Newar people who are the traditional inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley and in particular one Newar caste. This analysis of caste in a city of Nepal will expose the inadequacies of our typical approach to identifying peoples, and should make us more aware of the significance of territory and intercaste relations.

When our Lord commissioned his followers to make disciples they were to do that with regard to social organisation: they were to make disciples of the *nations* (Matt 28:18-19).[1] The way we define nations (Gk. *ethnē)* has a huge impact on the way we distinguish unreached people groups (UPGs) and may have a dramatic effect on the way we approach strategies to reach them. Although I think it is possible to over-emphasize UPGs, it is, nevertheless, important we get our sociology right on this issue.[2] To be inaccurate and imprecise is to lead to great differences in the way resources are allocated and churches are formed.

But how do we classify those groups? Is it possible for an individual to be a member of more than one group at a time? What is the relationship between such groups?[3]

Categorizing the Peoples of South Asia

In South Asia the sociological phenomenon of caste has been a particularly thorny one.[4] In 2010 at the "Global Mission Consultation and Celebration:

From Edinburgh to Tokyo," a group of those working in the Hindu world acknowledged the ongoing "complexity of caste matters." It is commonplace, in fact, among missiologists to regard the myriad of different societal units, usually referred to in English as "castes," as discreet people groups, the vast majority of whom are unreached.[5]

Joshua Project (JP) uses two distinct principles for listing people groups.[6] Outside South Asia, the ethnolinguistic principle is the only way people groups are distinguished on the assumption that *understanding* is the most significant barrier to the establishment of a church planting movement.[7] Within South Asia, however, different principles are applied on the assumption that *acceptance* is the most significant barrier to the spread of the gospel, particularly when considering church planting movements (CPM).[8] The difficulty that JP has with caste is demonstrated by the imprecise nature of the principle of acceptance. In one place "culture, religion and caste" are used in contradistinction to language.[9] In another place in the same article caste community is mentioned alone. The writer asserts that "this is how people in this part of the world self-identify at the deepest level."[10]

In another article on the JP web site, Luis Bush reported on the work of Indian members of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, particularly that of Raju Abraham. Working with the data provided by the Anthropological Survey of India, the Indian members of the movement concluded that peoples of South Asia should be defined according to three or four characteristics: 1) they only marry among themselves (endogamous); 2) they see themselves as distinct from others; 3) others identify them as being distinctive; and 4) they share similar customs, food and dress.[11]

Of the four characteristics delineated by Raju Abraham, the second and third are entirely subjective (in different

ways) and the fourth is as vague and fuzzy a criterion as one could possibly imagine, rendering it completely impracticable. Only the first, caste endogamy (i.e., the marriage circle), gives us the slightest hope of bringing clarity to the task. Indeed, this is what the Anthropological Survey of India argues, but I wish to demonstrate that even this criterion is problematic.[12]

For the Joshua Project, leaning on the definition of the AD2000 and Beyond movement, endogamy is the defining criterion of identity and therefore should be used as the primary principle in constructing a list of South Asian peoples. Accordingly, JP lists 2,599 people groups in India (3,487 in South Asia as a whole).[13] In another article

> *But is such fragmentary analysis the best way to identify people groups for church planting?*

on the JP web site (adapted from Bill Morrison), Luis Bush argues that the peoples of South Asia (identified as endogamous castes according to JP criteria) are further sub-divided by language, as such groups are often spread across language boundaries. According to this logic, the number of people groups is much higher, and consequently the need for engagement with the unreached in South Asia is much greater than it would otherwise seem.[14]

For the Joshua Project, then, endogamy is the primary principle in use for the categorization of South Asian peoples, with language constituting a secondary principle.[15] But is such fragmentary analysis of South Asian

societies the best way to approach the task of identifying people groups for the purpose of church planting? The people group concept grew largely out of reflection on communities that were isolated and plainly distinct from those of their nearest neighbours.[16] In India they are the *adivasis,* or "Scheduled Tribes." These communities are usually distinct in multiple ways: they often occupy a distinct territory (often in hill country or forest), speak a distinct language, and follow their own distinct religion and culture. However, most societal groups of South Asia do not have such a distinct character.[17] Most such groups, including both peasant and urban communities (often one and the same), live side-by-side with other groups, interacting with each other in complex ways.[18]

Understanding Caste

Probably the most complex social setting of the planet is that of South Asia, and sociologists have argued over its precise interpretation for decades. South Asian society, though modified and transformed by South Asia's contact with modernity, still maintains much of its unique complexity, which is almost universally referred to as the caste system.

In the analysis of caste, we must begin by carefully choosing our terms. The English word caste comes from the Portuguese for "species"—*castas.* It has been argued, by some, that the use of such a foreign term prejudices the inquiry before we begin. They have called, therefore, for an abandonment of the word in favour of indigenous terms such as *jāti* and *varna.*[19] There has been much argument over the relation of the terms jāt/jāti with varna. It is clear that the terms are not synonymous as there are no substantive caste groups that can be properly categorized as varna.[20]

Caste society is usually looked at (by both foreign observers and many South Asians themselves) as essentially

a system of hierarchy, with Brahman Priest[21] at the top and Untouchable Sweeper (Dalit) at the bottom.[22] This approach to caste leads to an inevitable judgment on the caste system as being essentially prejudiced.[23] A careful look at the internal structure and intercaste relations of a group called the Pengu Dah in Nepal demonstrates, however, that certain assumptions about caste do not make sense of the ethnographic realities of Hindu communities. Any astute analysis of intercaste relations will significantly challenge the conventional wisdom on gospel work in this South Asian environment.[24] It is for such an analysis I now turn to a study of identity among the Newar people.

The Newars of Nepal

The modern state of Nepal is a landlocked country of twenty-nine million inhabitants sandwiched between the giants of India and China (Tibet). The Kathmandu Valley is a large fertile bowl situated at 1,350 metres (4,400 feet) in the middle hills of Nepal. The cities of the Valley gained wealth and prestige by their strategic location on the ancient trade routes between the North Indian plains and the Tibetan plateau. This led to the early flowering of an artistic, urban culture with a complex social system. The Newars are the descendants of those who created this culture.

The old cities of the Kathmandu Valley are models of compact settlement. As with all Newar settlements, though the cities are home to many farmers, they characteristically live in close proximity to each other and at some distance from their fields. Newar cities, then, are densely populated.[25] Lalitpur, one of these cities, is a most heterogeneous community of around 80,000 inhabitants.[26] Although a part of the modern nation state of Nepal, it still maintains many rituals that hark back to the days of the Malla kings (13th to 18th centuries AD/CE) and before, when the city was the centre of its own thriving kingdom. To some extent it

In defining the Newar, the principle that is usually invoked is that of language. This proves problematic as not all Newars speak the Newar language.

can be said that the social order of the city is hardly changed.

Four Principles for Establishing Newar Identities

In extending our discussion of South Asian people groups, we can expect the use of various principles to distinguish one group from another. I want to look at four principles that apply to the Newars and, in particular, to one endogamous Newar caste, the Pengu Dah. Two of these principles, I will argue, are weak and two are strong.

Ethnicity

The traditional heartland of the Newar (a.k.a. Newah) is the Kathmandu Valley situated in the foothills of the Himalaya. According to the latest published figures, the Newars total 1,245,232 or 5.6% of the population of the country.[27] The Newars occupy a unique place in the ethnic matrix of the country, and for the most part the identity of Newars is uncontested. But the question of how to *define* a Newar is a pressing one since no distinctive religion, festival or rituals are universally observed by them. The principle that is usually invoked is that of language, but that proves problematic as not all Newars speak the Newar language. Though they identify as Newars, large numbers have taken to speaking the national language, Nepali, especially those who have migrated to other areas of the country for trade.

The Newar language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family and demonstrates an affinity with the languages of other groups along the foothills of the Himalaya that have migrated from the east in ancient times.[28] Most other aspects of Newar culture, however, have a strong South Asian affinity with peoples to the south, indicated by

their many loan words derived from Sanskrit. Due to these complexities, the Newars do not easily fit into any of Nepal's major societal divisions.

The dominant group of modern Nepal is that of the Indo-Nepalese Parbatiyā community, who make up 38% of the total population.[29] These are native speakers of the Indo-European Nepali language, and are descendants, at least to a large degree, of people who migrated to the Himalayan foothills from the south and west. Sociologically, therefore, the Parbatiyā are considered the majority community, the "nation" as opposed to the minority "ethnic groups." The Parbatiyā are divided into a simple caste system, with most lineages claiming upper-caste pedigree, Chetri (Kshatriya) or Bāhun (Brahman). At the bottom of this system are a few small Dalit castes (formerly known as Untouchables).

The Madhesi groups of the Tarai (on the plains of Nepal contiguous with the plains of India), are distinct from the Parbatiya, and are divided into many more castes. They also demonstrate a kinship with groups over the border in India with whom they continue to maintain marriage relations.

A third major division of Nepalese society is that of the tribes speaking Tibeto-Burman languages from the middle hills. Unlike either the Parbatiyā or the Tarai groups, these tribes do not have a developed hierarchical social system but tend to be more egalitarian.

The Newars do not really belong clearly to any of these three major societal divisions. Though Newar language is Tibeto-Burman, their social structure is hierarchical and South Asian. But their hierarchical social structure is not equivalent to that of their traditional

near neighbours, the Parbatiyā. At first glance, they have the appearance of an ethnic group. The observant visitor becomes aware, however, that Newar society (if we can call it that) is characterized by great social and cultural diversity, quite unlike an ethnic group.

Studies of ethnicity have demonstrated that the phenomenon is essentially subjective.[30] The members of a group may conceive of themselves as constituting an ethnic group even though there is no such objective "reality." Ethnicity, therefore, is relational in that "it is the outcome of an interplay between self-assessment and outside-assessment."[31] Curiously, however, for the Newar population as a whole, the sense of Newar ethnicity always seems to have been relatively weak.

I have concluded, on linguistic, cultural, and historical grounds, that the Newars constitute a people who originated in a migration of Tibeto-Burman speakers from the east, who settled in the fertile Kathmandu Valley.[32] This population was augmented over the millennia by a regular influx of migrants from the south, who brought South Asian (Indic) culture and languages with them, to greatly modify the culture and language of the original settlers. At some point, however (and probably long before the Newars were absorbed into the modern nation state of Nepal in 1768–69), some of the new arrivals were not accepted as part of the Newar society. They were forced to live outside the city confines and had to beg and clean toilets to make a living. The quarters of these "Untouchables" can still be found today, but they may or may not be ethnically distinct. Though belonging to Newar society in the widest sense, their identity, from the point of view of the general Newar population, is still considered to be that of the outsider.[33] Furthermore, it is apparent that, far from being a throwback to some primordial self-assessment, Newar ethnic identity is one that has *grown* with the impact of modernity.[34]

Not only has national identity in Nepal begun to lose ground to the competing claims of ethnic communities, but some of these groups, till now seen as monolithic, have begun to express just how little sense of community they feel and maintain. Among the Newars, as in India, intercaste relations have declined; but, intracaste solidarity has actually increased so one finds organised bodies representing many pan-Newar caste groups, thus emphasizing the significance of subgroups rather than the Newar group as a whole.[35]

Until recently, in fact, the principle of ethnicity has not really been significant to the Newars themselves in determining identity.[36] The inclusion of the Newars as a single ethnic group in the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities suggests that the JP identification of the Newars of Nepal as a single group is not entirely unwarranted.[37] The construction of Newar ethnic identity is, however, a recent phenomenon whose significance can mask other, more important principles to which I will now turn.

Kinship

Newar society demonstrates many of the features found in other caste Hindu societies throughout South Asia.[38] These include mutually endogamous castes and an interdependence of the castes for ritual and economic services. The centrality of the king and the dominant caste (not a political reality at present, but still economically and ritually important) is another important feature that is beyond the scope of this paper but which I have dealt with in detail elsewhere.[39]

Kinship is the most significant principle of social identification for people in South Asia. This becomes apparent with careful analysis of ethnographic work. I spent a number of years researching a little-known caste of artisans who call themselves the Pengu Dah (lit. Four Groups) in the city of Lalitpur, Nepal.[40] The Pengu Dah constitute a non-dominant Newar artisan caste. For the most part, they provide no ritual services to other castes, but the crafts for which they are justly famous are an important aspect of Newar culture.

When one asks a Newar to identify his caste his answer is always in terms of kinship.[41] A Coppersmith, then, would immediately reply that he is a Tāmrakār (by far the most common surname, or *thar*, of the Coppersmiths) even if he no longer works copper himself.[42] The phrase Pengu Dah simply means "The Four Groups" that happen to be Coppersmiths, Sweetmakers, Stonemasons and Carpenters.[43] A Coppersmith, then, or a Carpenter, would always identify himself by his thar (Table 1, below). He will not say that he is a member of the Pengu Dah.[44]

Table 1. The Composition of the Pengu Dah

traditional occupation		coppersmiths	stonemasons (now wood carvers)	carpenters		sweetmakers
thar	honorific	*Tāmrakār*	*Shilpakār*	*Sthāpit*	*Bārāhi*	*Rājkarnikār*
	colloquial	*Tamvah*	*Lwahākahmi*	*Sikahmi*		*Marikahmi*

Table 2. Castes of Lalitpur

> *Thars* are italicized. Traditional marriage circles (endogamous units) are in bold type. English equivalents are capitalised in keeping with South Asianist protocol. Note: The castes are listed according to the English alphabet at this point because to do otherwise would be to accept certain and, I believe, false, presuppositions about the caste system.

Bhatta: Brahman Priests at Shankamul temple

Carmakār (Kulu/Kul): Drum makers

Citrakār (Pũ): Painters

Cyāmkhalah (Cyāme): Sweepers

Dyahlā (Pwah/Pwarya; Np. Pode): Sweepers, Fishermen

Kāpāli/Darsandhari (Jogi; Np. Kusle): Musicians, death specialists

> *Kāpāli/Darsandhari (Jogi; Np. Kusle):* Tailors/muhāli (shawm) players, death specialists

> *Vādyakār/Bādikār (Dom/Dwã):* Drummers, vegetable and curio sellers

Karamjit (Bhāh): Mahābrāhman death specialists

Khadgi/Shāhi (Nay; Np. Kasai): Butchers and milk sellers, drummers

Maharjan (Jyāpu): (Like the Shresthas this, the largest caste, is not uniform)

> *Awāle (Kumhah):* Potters and Farmers

> *Dãgol (Jyāpu):* Farmers

> *Maharjan (Jyāpu):* Farmers

Māli/Mālākār (Gathu): Gardeners

Mishra: Brahman temple Priests

Nakahmi/Lohakār (Kau): Blacksmiths

Nāpit (Nau): Barbers

Pengu Dah (here I list the colloquial title first to avoid confusion)

> *Lwahãkahmi (Shilpakār/Shilākār):* Stonemasons, now mostly wood carvers

> *Marikahmi (Rājkarnikār/Halawāi/Haluwāi):* Sweetmakers

> *Sikahmi (Bārāhi/Sthāpiṭ/Kāsthakār/Shilpakār/Sikahmi):* Carpenters; chariot *(ratha)* builders *(Bārāhi)*

> *Tamvah (Tāmrakār/Tamot):* Coppersmiths

Rajaka (Dhubya/Dhobi): Washermen

Rājopādhyāya (Bramhu/Dyahbhāju): Brahman domestic and temple Priests

Ranjitkār (Chipa): Dyers

Shrestha (Shesyah): Landowners, government ministers, civil servants and merchants

> *Amātya (Mahāju):* Ministers

> *Joshi:* Astrologers

> *Karmācārya (Acāhju):* Shaivite Tantric priests; some internal division

> *Malla:* descendants of Malla kings

> *Pradhān (Pahmay):* Government Ministers

> *Rājbhandāri (Bhani):* Royal Storekeepers

> *Shrestha (Shesyah):* Landowners, businessmen

> *Vaidya:* Ayurvedic physicians

Tandukār (Khusah): Farmers, musicians

Vajrācārya/Shākya

> *Shākya (Bare):* Goldsmiths

> *Vajrācārya (Gubhāju):* Buddhist Priests

Vyanjankār (Tepay): Market Gardeners, farmers

By and large, Newars will use the vernacular identifier in reference to a member of a particular thar, e.g., Jyāpu of a Farmer, but prefer to use the Sanskritic title in address, in this case Maharjan or Dāgol (see Table 2 on the previous page).[45] In the case of the Pengu Dah (in which the four groups are four thars), the members of any one thar may have any of three or four different surnames. For the purposes of analysis, therefore, I have resorted, for the most part, to the vernacular in each case.

For a Newar, as for other South Asians, kinship is the most significant principle of identification. It is not the work of carpentry or the building of ritual chariots, therefore, that makes a person a Bārāhi—it is his identity as one of the kinship group that builds the chariot. Occupation is not the central issue—it is *relation*.[46] Lineage names are often a good way to establish an individual's identity. Such names as Pwāhsyāh (Stomachache), Kwah (Crow), and Khica (Dog) are specific and easily verifiable. The Pengu Dah of Lalitpur, like most Newar castes, constitute an endogamous group in which the various lineages contract marriages between each other isogamously (i.e. between equals).[47]

Relations between Newar castes, as in other caste societies, have been characterized as constituting a patron-client system. The relation between a patron and client in South Asia has traditionally been labelled a *jajmāni* relation. Such patron-client relations have been observed in many varied ethnographic settings, being first described by the American Presbyterian missionary William Wiser in 1936.[48] Patron-client relations in Newar society persist to this day even though the economic interdependency typically reflected by those relationships is a mere shadow of its former self.

The precise characteristics of a household's jajmāni relations (which caste representatives are called to provide ritual services) tell us very little of the household's caste. For example, sometimes a family or lineage may change from calling for the services of a Vajrācārya Buddhist domestic priest to calling for a Brahman priest in performing life-cycle rituals. Such a change makes no difference to the beliefs of the household or to the marital prospects of that household's daughters or sons, and the family is not thought to have converted or abandoned their caste. This is an important point as the significance of ideology, or what outsiders usually call "religion," in the analysis of caste systems has, in my view, often been overrated.[49]

There are two boundary markers, however, that *are* significant. Among the Newars, the so-called "Water line" is one of them. Those belonging to "clean" castes will not accept water from those below it.[50]

Furthermore, traditionally the criterion of touch was the most basic division of the caste system. For older persons this continues to be very important. The Cyāmkhalah and Dyahlā are considered polluting by all the other castes if they come into physical contact. Some castes (four in Lalitpur) are considered unclean, but not untouchable, by the majority of other castes who consider themselves clean. So a Maharjan, for instance, would not accept a cup of water from a Khadgi, but they would not consider themselves polluted merely by touch.[51]

Newar communities, therefore, can be divided into three significant groups according to considerations of ritual purity (Table 3, this page).[52] It seems to me that these divisions are far more significant barriers to the spread of the gospel than others such as barriers to intermarriage or commensal relations (eating boiled rice together). The close proximity of the Newar people to each other presents little problem of physical distance. But barriers of ritual purity, often expressed territorially (most "unclean" and "untouchable" castes live in their own neighbourhoods) mean that Newars on either side of those barriers have little meaningful social contact. This is as true between the "lower" groups as it is between them and those considered higher. This means that

Table 3. Major Divisions in Newar Society

Touchable **Clean (water-acceptable)**
Bhatta: Brahman Priests at Shankamul temple
Citrakār (Pā): Painters
Karamjit (Bhāh): Mahābrāhman death specialists
Maharjan (Jyāpu): Farmers
Māli/Mālākār (Gathu): Gardeners
Mishra: Brahman temple Priests
Nakahmi/Lohakār (Kau): Blacksmiths
Nāpit (Nau): Barbers
Pengu Dah: Artisans
Rājopādhyāya (Bramhu/Dyahbhāju): Brahman domestic and temple Priests
Ranjitkār (Chipa): Dyers
Shrestha (Shesyah): Landowners, government ministers, civil servants and merchants
Tandukār (Khusah): Farmers, musicians
Vajrācārya/Shākya
Vyanjankār (Tepay): Market Gardeners, farmers
Touchable **Unclean (water-not-acceptable)**
Carmakār (Kulu/Kul): Drum makers
Kāpāli/Darsandhari (Jogi; Np. Kusle): Musicians, death specialists
Khadgi/Shāhi (Nay; Np. Kasai): Butchers and milk sellers, drummers
Rajaka (Dhubya/Dhobi): Washermen
Untouchable **Unclean (water-not-acceptable)**
Cyāmkhalah (Cyāme): Sweepers
Dyahlā (Pwah/Pwarya; Np. Pode): Sweepers, Fishermen
Dyahlā (Pwah/Pwarya; Np. Pode): Sweepers, Fishermen

Khadgi Butchers, for example, would not normally have social interaction with other "unclean" castes. (Refer to Figure 1 below.)

Religious Tradition

Broadly speaking, Newars can be divided into two main religious traditions according to the orientation of their domestic priest *(purohit)*.[53] Those that call the Buddhist Vajrācārya priest to perform life-cycle rituals are termed *buddhamārgi* (<Skt. *mārg,* way) while those who call a Brahman priest are *shivamārgi*.[54] For most Newars, however, this distinction is hardly significant. It is not relevant to marriage or to commensality, nor does it bar anyone from participating in any festival. Among the endogamous group of the Pengu Dah some lineages call the Brahman priest for life-cycle rituals and others the Vajrācārya. For this reason a new bride may have to adjust to some differences in religious practice, if say her natal home called a Brahman priest but her marital home calls a Vajrācārya.[55]

The designation "Hindu," then, is more useful as a *structural,* not a philosophical or "religious" term. Hindu people are those who live in a society that is structured according to kinship and kingship, i.e. the caste system. Religious tradition in itself, then, is not a barrier to social interaction; not even to intermarriage or commensality. They may worship Shiva, Krishna, the bodhisattva (Buddhist saint) Avalok-itesvara, or even become devotees of Yesu (Jesus) but no social rupture is inevitable.[56] Religious tradition, then, is a weak principle when it comes to Hindu identity. This is profoundly in conflict with the way that Hinduism is usually understood and has signifi-cant consequences for evangelism and church planting.[57] But there is yet one more principle that is significant in the determination of a Newar's identity.

Territory

Much of the daily life of the Newar is lived within his urban locality or, in the hinterland, in his village. Each locality *(twah)* within the city to some extent constitutes, in microcosm, what the city is on a grander scale.[58]

The locality, almost invariably, is charac-terised by a central square that is clearly

Figure 1. Diagrammatic Representation of Lalitpur's Caste System
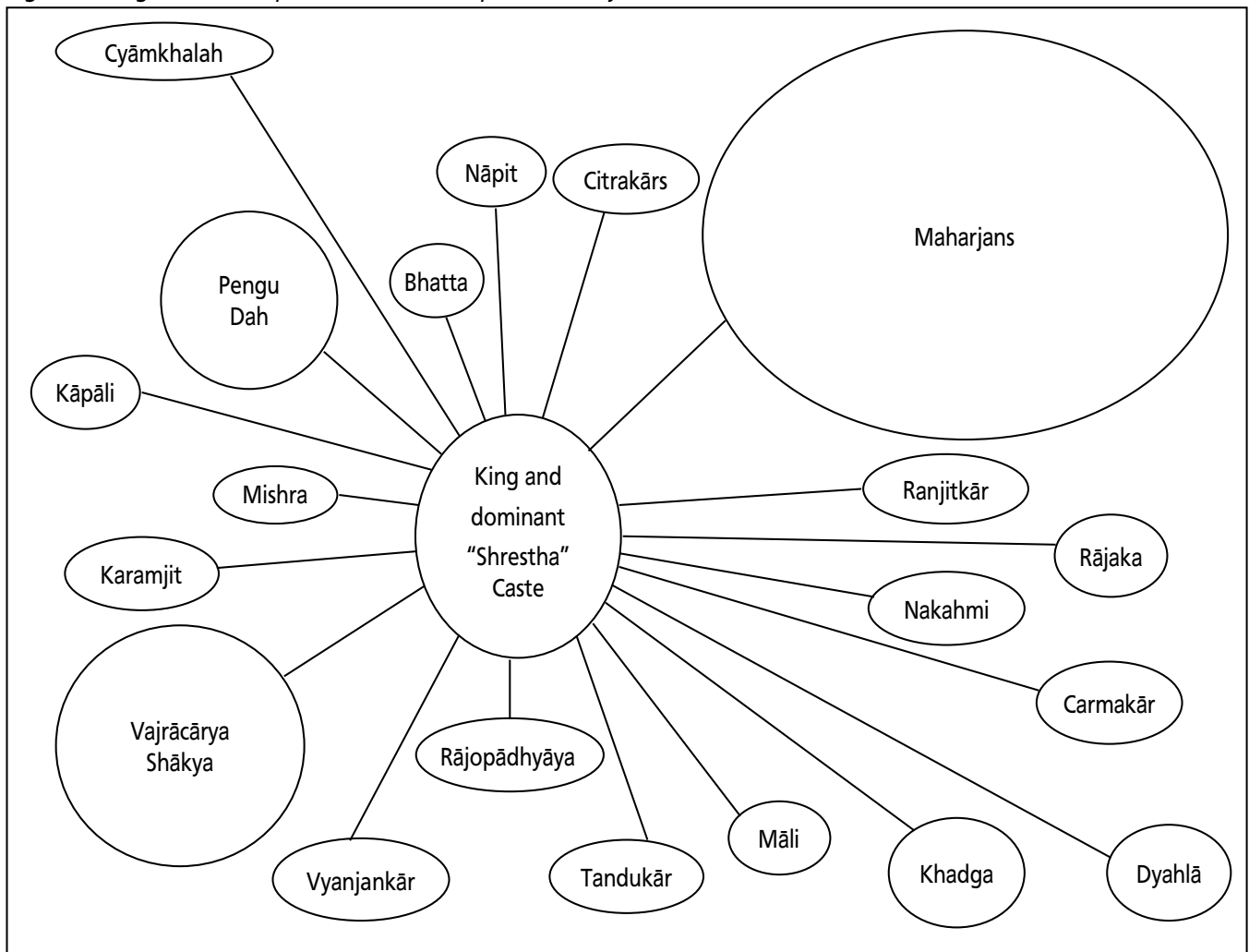
analogous to that of the city as a whole. The square, or in many cases, the monastery *(bāhāh, bahi)* has its temples and its blend of religious and secular uses: farmers spread out their unhusked rice to dry; women wash the family clothes at the well; vegetable-sellers display their produce; men sit and talk politics; a post-partum mother gets an oil massage; and children climb on the temple guardians and play hide-and-seek.

We have already noted the strength of the lineage and the caste, and the way they spread throughout the city, and in some cases beyond. But, and this is significant, territory in some respects *transcends* Newar lineage or caste ties. Strong caste ties would be detrimental to the genesis and maintenance of city unity, for they emphasize loyalty to a sub-set of that city. The locality, however, can often cut right across the boundaries of these caste groups and has the effect of weakening caste solidarity.

Certain very important institutions exist within the locality which regulate much of the social and ritual interaction of its inhabitants. Foremost of these is the *guthi,* which functions typically as either a funeral association or temple worship group. Membership in the guthi is exclusive to a kinship group, a thar group, or more unusually to a multicaste group.[59] An analysis of the plethora of guthis belonging to the Pengu Dah leads me to conclude that the principle of *territory* is fundamental to the constitution of the guthi.[60]

Musical ensembles are also found all over the city.[61] Some ensembles are constituted as guthis, with strict rules of membership and duty towards the group, where others are constituted on a more ad hoc basis. There is clearly a significant difference between an ensemble that is a guthi and one that is not. Membership of the more ad hoc ensemble is somewhat fluid and, though caste and territory are significant principles in their organisation, there is little loss of status if one leaves and therefore little social control can be exerted. The

guthi, on the other hand, has traditionally exercised considerable social control.

Territorial organisations, however, do not have the power they once had because of the rising importance of organisations based on single castes, which pay scant notice to issues of territoriality. They emphasize the solidarity of the caste in a manner that transcends territorial boundaries. In recent decades, associations have been constituted among many of the thars of Lalitpur, analogous to organisations in India such as the All India Washermen's Federation. For the most part these associations have economic considerations at their heart, such as to fund awards for educational achievement.[62]

The locality, however, can often cut right across the boundaries of these caste groups

Territory as an organising principle, therefore, no longer has the power it once had. The reasons for this are three-fold: the demise of the city as the capital of an independent political unit; the migration of the city's inhabitants from the localities to outlying "suburbs" and further afield; and the developing sense of Newar identity as an ethnic group with the subsequent growth of solidarity of organisations based on single castes as sub-sets of that ethnicity. The traditional more or less integrated caste society, as a system, is also in decline due to the growing strength of the nation state and the impact of modernity.

Nevertheless, territory continues to be a strong principle of identity in traditional

Newar settlements. Lives are lived in local communities, made up usually of a number of castes. The multicaste community may not eat boiled rice together, or exchange brides with each other, but they do worship corporately and carry out practical work together to improve their neighbourhood.

Territory, I would argue, is much more significant when it comes to church planting than has hitherto been acknowledged. An individual is part of a local community that may worship together. That community may be multicaste and not a forum for contracting marriages or eating boiled rice together, but community it is.

Another Look at Barriers of Acceptance

We have noted four principles that are involved in South Asian identity: ethnicity, kinship, religious tradition and territory. Missiological categories, as we have seen, have tended to acknowledge the significance of ethnicity and kinship (though both rather simplistically), but have reflected sometimes a serious misunderstanding of religious traditions, and have treated territory as almost irrelevant. The inclusion of the Newars as a single people group in the JP list suggests that the principle of ethnicity is the only relevant principle when it comes to counting people "groups" for the purpose of evangelization (though acknowledging that Newars who have migrated to India or Bangladesh may be considered as distinct).

In India, however, the principle of kinship (and caste) has assumed overwhelming priority for the JP list. Certain people are assumed to belong to a single people group on the basis that they share a common name. Such are the Badhai, the name used by large numbers of Carpenters in India (and some of the Tarai in Nepal).[63] A promotional video recently released by a mission organisation tells us that "the Badhai are one of hundreds of Hindu tribes scattered across the Himalayas."

Careful research on the Badhai in accordance with the principles I have elucidated above, however, would lead one to conclude that almost everything in that sentence is false. Although the majority of Badhai, as far as I can find out, are Hindu, they are certainly not a tribe and probably none live in the Himalayas.

Moreover, until recently the Badhai have almost certainly not considered themselves as a single group. A quick survey of web sites that carry the name suggests there are a number of attempts to create a corporate identity for the Badhai. This may lead to more wide-scale intermarriage and have the effect over time of them becoming a quasi-ethnic community, which could lend the Badhai greater political clout among the many other caste groupings wishing to obtain political advantage. Further research is needed to discover whether such pan-Indian caste groupings are really that significant in the lives of their members. If they become overwhelmingly important, then the sort of groups that are identified in JP would make much more sense than they do at present.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I suggest that each of these four principles needs to be revisited missiologically. Ethnicity is not necessarily a barrier of acceptance since many caste societies are ethnically mixed. Winter suggests that ethnolinguistic groups are helpful identifiers for the purpose of mobilization and preparation for ministry. Though the Newars have not traditionally seen themselves as an ethnic group, they do have some sense of identity that lends itself to this purpose. But in the work of seeking to establish Christ-focused communities among all the peoples of South Asia, it is important that the principle of ethnicity is held very loosely as other principles are also important. Chief among these are kinship and territory.

As in other societies of South Asia, kinship is the primary principle of

*T*erritory is another dimension that may not have been taken into account sufficiently in the enumeration of people groups in South Asia.

Newar identity. It is only as a member of a particular lineage that an individual can prove his caste credentials (or family members, theirs) and thereby have any acceptable place in society.[64] Kinship is clearly an avenue of great potential for the spread of the gospel message; yet, the communication of the gospel *across* kinship boundaries should not necessarily be an issue. If kinship groups have no history of intermarriage, then they may not want to begin marriage relations solely on the basis that those individuals or families are now following Christ. That is a pastoral issue. Kinship boundaries themselves, however, are not a barrier to communication, religious discourse, or even to corporate worship, as is evidenced by the multicaste guthis and musical ensembles.

Hindus have not normally had much psychological dissonance in their devotion to a plurality of deities or philosophical systems. The adoption of a particular deity for personal devotion has not led to disruption of the social system and caste relations. On the other hand, the adoption of what is seen as a *foreign* religion, with the consequent repudiation of swathes of traditional life, and with both tacit and manifest rejection of the kinship group, has often caused great barriers to the further spread of the gospel message. Furthermore, the ethnographic reality among the Penga Dah of Lalitpur demonstrates that groups which call themselves Hindu but patronize a Buddhist priest can enjoy commensal and marriage relations with those who patronize a Hindu Brahman priest. Any religious dichotomy demonstrates the sledgehammer imprecision of attempting to slot people groups into mutually exclusive Hindu or Buddhist megablocs.

Territory is another dimension that may not have been taken into account sufficiently in the enumeration of people groups in South Asia. Traditionally, kinship groups have lived in a specific and tightly bounded locale. In that locale, they have relations with other kinship groups of two kinds: (1) those who constitute their caste with whom they intermarry, and (2) other kinship groups with whom they would not intermarry but with whom they have long-established economic and ritual relations. Relations with those of other neighbourhoods who share the same title (thar) or surname might be weaker than their relations with those in their immediate locale who do not. Often, then, the traditional locality, village or urban neighbourhood, constitutes a significant socio-people, to use Winter's terminology. This is a group which might provide a focus for ministry. Thus, the AD2000 and Beyond South Asia group's insistence on a community being defined by endogamy is woefully inadequate. Some communities, particularly those that inhabit an urban neighbourhood, have traditionally comprised a large number of endogamous castes. Nevertheless, this group of disparate endogamous castes functions in many ways as a single community.

Territory still constitutes something of a barrier to the acceptance of the gospel in South Asia. Traditionally, and still today for many people, life is lived out in a village, or the local neighbourhood of a city. Established city dwellers do not ordinarily have much to do with those who are from the outside. Luis Bush has suggested that castes may be divided by language. That would be true if people sharing the same title or surname were considered to belong to one and the same caste. Such people often speak a range of languages as they live across a

large swathe of territory in which various languages are spoken. If, however, across South Asia as is common in the Kathmandu Valley, people have a view of those from other places as *not* belonging, even if they do share the same title (thar or surname), then territory is a significant principle of identity. In such a case then, territorial boundaries themselves are a significant barrier to the acceptance of the gospel irrespective of language. So to come back to my assertion above (1), the 57,166,000 Yadavs of India and Nepal may not be one endogamous group but several, with fuzzy boundaries (the national border probably not being one of them). The same may be true for the 27,424,000 Bania and a host of other larger castes. This phenomenon must not be ignored in order to fit a given individual and his lineage into some procrustean bed of endogamous caste commitments.

The way we approach caste groups in South Asia will depend on our interpretation of caste. A few million people scattered across South Asia may have the same title and traditionally do the same job, but until recently they may never have considered themselves as a single people group at all. They have been part of many castes that have very little to do with each other, even though they share the same name and traditional occupation. Recent changes in caste have meant that such scattered caste groups with some sense of shared identity have started to regard themselves as a single group (as we saw in the case of the All India Washermen's Federation above). This does not seem to be widely accepted, though, as I noticed in a cursory survey of caste web sites that have evidently been set up for this very purpose.

Tribes are largely distinct societal groups that are much easier to identify. Because of their societal identification, they are easier to describe and it is generally easier to generate strategies for reaching them. Castes, on the other

hand, are not so distinct. They usually do not have a language discreet from the other groups around them. They share many characteristics with other groups in the locality. Traditionally, in constituting a society, individual castes situate in a locality with other castes. Those traditionally regarded as "Untouchables"—the Dalits—were a clear exception to this, for they were always considered as not belonging to the dominant societies and situated as outsiders. Perhaps for this reason they have often regarded themselves as belonging to a wider oppressed community, and it is this identity, among other factors, that has led to such widespread "people movements" since the nineteenth century.[65]

> *It demonstrates the sledgehammer imprecision of slotting people groups into mutually exclusive religious megablocs.*

I do wonder if categorical decisions regarding the identification of people groups in South Asia were overly influenced by considerations of India's Scheduled Tribes and Castes (Dalits) for whom ethnicity and caste closely coincide with religious tradition and territory. For the dominant peoples of South Asia, however, we must review the principles of ethnicity, kinship, religious tradition and territory and reshape our strategies for engaging these people with the gospel. **IJFM**

Endnotes

[1] It has become a truism that people do not receive the gospel merely as individuals. See the following for representative and influential arguments on this issue:

Charles H. Kraft, *Communication Theory for Christian Witness* (Rev. ed.; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991), 70-71; Paul. G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995); Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (Rev. Ed.; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1990), 202–206.

[2] This paper focuses on strategic issues relating to caste. I address ethical issues in "Caste-Sensitive Church Planting: Revisiting the Homogeneous Unit Principle" *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies*, 32 (3, 2015): 177–187.

[3] Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch outline four approaches to categorizing people groups that may all be useful for different purposes in "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, A Reader* (Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., 4th ed.; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009), 531–46.

[4] The South Asia region includes, for JP purposes, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and the British Indian Ocean Territory. The exclusion of Pakistan is presumably due to its cultural affinity to the neighbouring Central Asian states to the north and west. I think this is regrettable as other countries firmly in the region are also majority Muslim—Bangladesh and the Maldives—and significant numbers of Muslim minorities exist in most of the other territories. Furthermore, some of the JP literature explicitly includes Pakistan within the region (see e.g., Luis Bush, "Christ's Missional Challenge: 50 largest UPGs A Case Study for South Asia" October 8, 2012, n.p. [cited 11 July 2013.] Online: http://joshuaproject.net/assets/articles/south-asia-remaining-task.pdf). The difficulty of defining the western boundary of the region is not just a missiologists' one as is demonstrated by the fact that the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) now includes Afghanistan (since 2007) and the UN Southern Asia region further includes Iran.

[5] S. Kent Parks and John Scott, "Missing Peoples: The Unserved 'One-Fourth' World: Especially Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims," 3, [cited 26 June 2012.] Online: http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/resources/detail/10535. See also "Statement from the Hindu Peoples' Task Force" Tokyo 2010, *Mission Frontiers* July/August 2010, 17.

⁶ The World Christian Database, upon which the JP list is constructed, uses only the former principle (www.worldchristian-database.org/wcd/). The JP list is constructed by supplementing the WCD data with other data gathered from the field.

⁷ "People List Methodology," 1 [cited 12.7.13.] Online: http://joshuaproject.net/assets/articles/people-list-methodology.pdf.

⁸ Here India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are explicitly included.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹¹ Luis Bush, "Clash in Worldview and the Peoples of South Asia," (1998), 5 [cited 15 July 2013.] Online: http://joshuaproject.net/assets/articles/worldview-clash-and-peoples-of-south-asia.pdf.

¹² See K. S. Singh, *Communities, Segments, Synonyms, Surnames and Titles,* People of India National Series Volume VIII, (Delhi: Oxford University Press), 1996. This massive multi-volume work is the result of years of research by hundreds of ethnographers and demographers on the peoples of India. A quick scan of the introductory chapter of this volume shows how difficult it is to define a caste/jāti and how the listing of communities has been such a problematic project especially since the national censuses began in 1881. The fundamentally definitive characteristic of a community, according to the survey, is *endogamy.* This is, however, not at all straightforward as my research, below, demonstrates. The ASI, comparing census lists from 1881 onwards came up with a figure of 17,129 entries (avoiding repetition of groups that they considered to be one and the same though in different territories): ibid., 8. When they then independently created a list of the Peoples of India (POI) it came to 4,635 communities: ibid., 9. This includes 587 groups that they designate as "segments" but excludes "territorial units." They later added 48 more bringing the total to 4,683 communities: Ibid. Bush reports the POI figure to be 2,795 ("Clash in Worldview and the Peoples of South Asia," 5). It would seem that Bush is using data from the first edition counting major communities and significant segments of these communities separately, but not dispersed subgroups of the major communities located in different geographical areas. My thanks to H. L. Richard for helping solve this puzzle. See also H. L. Richard, "Community Dynamics in India and the Praxis of 'Church'" *International Journal of Frontier Mission* 24 (Winter) 2007: 185–94.

¹³ Again, it is not clear how this precise figure was arrived at but this is not particularly problematic for my argument. Similarly, the Etnopedia web site gives a figure of 2,500+ peoples for India and 350+ for Nepal but it is not clear on what basis the figures were derived; n.p. [cited 7.9.13.] Online: http://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page.

¹⁴ Luis Bush, "Christ's Missional Challenge", 1-2, [cited 3.10.13.] Online: http://joshuaproject.net/assets/articles/south-asia-remaining-task.pdf, citing Omid's research (Omid is a pseudonym for an expatriate researcher working in South Asia and providing Joshua Project with data on people groups in the region). In India alone, he reports, there are about 22,000 people groups.

¹⁵ About 6,000 of the 22,000 people groups have populations that are estimated to be lower than 100. Bush suggests this means they can be discounted, in which case a third principle (size) has also been introduced into the definition of UPGs.

¹⁶ As Paul Hiebert explains, it rests largely on a theoretical framework provided by British social anthropology, which was often "reductionist and explained all of the various spheres of human life in terms of social dynamics." Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 89.

¹⁷ Ibid., 92. An issue of *Mission Frontiers* (vol. 32 no. 3, May–June 2010) responds to Hiebert's critique of people group strategy, with authors largely acknowledging that Hiebert has a point but not wanting to drop the concept as it is biblical and does still reflect the reality for many people.

¹⁸ I will not address the issue of the recent mass migration of people to the big cities that throws up another, also very important, set of questions.

¹⁹ I have used a simplified transliteration system in this paper. A number of names end with an "h" where this is a lengthened vowel.

²⁰ For a careful discussion of the issues here see Declan Quigley's masterful analysis, *The Interpretation of Caste* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993). Quigley's argument is a reformulation of the work of Arthur Maurice Hocart, *Caste: A Comparative Study* (London: Methuen, 1950).

²¹ The initial capital is used by South Asianists to identify a member of a caste group that traditionally followed a particular occupation even if the individual or group concerned no longer does so.

²² Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications* (Transl. by M. Sainsbury, L. Dumont, and B. Gulati; Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1980). The work of Louis Dumont, the champion of this idealist theory, has the effect of reducing the ethnographic data to the level of ideology. For him the issue of whether castes are actual, discrete, substantial groups is irrelevant. But it is my contention that this is an important issue. If discrete caste groups are no more than a product of the sociological imagination, then the caste system, as Dumont asserts, may rightly be reduced to an ideology. Dumont's theory, then, is not powerful enough to explain how one can be a Brahman, i.e. a member of a particular kinship group, and yet not be a *brahman,* i.e. a practicing priest. Dumont's work leads one to assume that the two words represent coextensive semantic fields. Advocates of the contrasting materialist occupational theory of caste, such as Gerald Berreman, argue that caste is based simply on the occupations of the various groups that go to make up the society: Gerald D. Berreman, Hindus of the Himalayas, 2nd. ed., revised and enlarged; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972). According to him ritual status is a direct product of a person's economic status, which leads to a caste rank that is closely tied to occupation and in effect denies the unique status of South Asia's ideology. Neither of these theories are robust enough to account for the ethnographic data.

²³ Brad Gill's characterization of India (in an otherwise very helpful article) as "caste-ridden" is not unusual in this respect: "The Dynamics of Ethnicity and Globalization" *Mission Frontiers* 32 (3) May-June 2010, 8. According to Omid, the emic perspective is to be given priority above the etic, to use Kenneth Pike's terminology: "Why the Community/ Caste Focus is Needed in Support of Church Planting Movements, May 2013" n.p. [cited 3.10.13.] Online: http://joshuaproject.net/assets/articles/using-caste-to-define-peoples-in-south-asia.pdf. This is a philosophical choice that has profound implications and to which, again, I will return. At this point, suffice it to say that Omid believes he has the emic perspective and that this perspective is, first and foremost, a caste perspective. I want to argue that he is right and wrong at the same time and for the fundamental reason that caste is not the *only* principle by which South Asians identify themselves (as is in fact acknowledged even in JP literature). The caste system, and Hinduism more generally, is widely misunderstood and this has led to false conclusions about people groups and strategies to engage them with the gospel.

[24] *Caste and Kinship in a Modern Hindu Society: The Newars of Lalitpur, Nepal* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2014) is my book-length study of this community. The ethnographic data adduced in this article is described in detail in this book.

[25] It is important, however, not to exaggerate the city's density by isolating it from its hinterland which, though not so relevant for ritual purposes, is an important part of the city's traditional economy.

[26] The 2001 census puts the population of Lalitpur district (that is the urban area and a large number of villages that dot the Valley and hills to the south) at 136,200 of which Newars constitute 40.4%.

[27] Ibid.

[28] M. Paul Lewis, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, eds., *Ethnologue: Languages of the World,* 17th ed. (Dallas, Texas: SIL International), 2013, n.p. [cited 16 July 2013] Online: http://www.ethnologue.com.

[29] Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002, n.p. [cited 16 July 2013]. http://cbs.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2012/Population/Caste%20Ethinicity%20Population.pdf . The figure is closer to 30% when one deducts the Dalits from this group.

[30] See e.g., Claire Burkert, "Defining Maithil Identity: Who is in Charge?" Chapter 7 in *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom* (eds. David N. Gellner, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and John Whelpton; Amsterdam: Harwood Academic), 1997.

[31] Andreas Höfer, *The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal: A Study of the Muluki Ain of 1854,* Khumbu Himal series 13 [2, 1979]: 25-240 (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner: 47).

[32] Pickett, 2014

[33] Others, such as Khadgi Butchers, were accepted into society but regarded as unclean because of their occupation, and so had somewhat ambiguous status.

[34] The issue of ethnicity is not merely of academic interest. It takes on huge significance when one asks whether the Newars count as one of Nepal's "indigenous" peoples or not—a question of great political importance. The "indigenous peoples" movement of Nepal, organised under the umbrella of the Nepal Adivasi Janajāti Mahāsangh (Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities) defines an indigenous people linguistically—those communities that speak a Tibeto-Burman language—so as to include the Newars but exclude all groups thought to belong to the dominant Indo-Nepalese Parbatiyā and Madhesi communities, included Dalits: "Definition of Indigenous."

Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, n.p. [cited 16 July 2013.] Online: http://www.nefin.org.np/list/Definition-of-Indigenous/5/94/4. If the ethnic groups, or "nationalities" as the Federation calls them, had been defined *socially* the Newars would clearly have been excluded due to their caste-based social structure.

[35] More of this below. See C. J. Fuller, *Caste Today* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[36] Many authors have attempted to delineate a pan-Newar ranking of castes as if the castes represent sub-groups that extend throughout the entire Newar range, dividing horizontally into a ladder an otherwise united community. These are reviewed in Pickett, 2014, 46–48.

[37] The JP divides the Newars into three peoples on the basis of location (one each for Nepal, India and Bangladesh, with the vast majority being in Nepal, the others being migrants).

[38] See e.g., Diana L. Eck, *Banāras: City of Light* (New Delhi: Penguin India), 1993 (first published 1983 by Routledge and Kegan Paul), Adrian C. Mayer, *Caste and Kinship in Central India: A Village and Its Region* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1960, and Jonathan P. Parry, *Caste and Kinship in Kangra* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1979.

[39] Pickett, 2014.

[40] The "h" in Dah is in fact not an English "h" but an extension of the vowel and usually represented in transliterated form as an "h" with a subscript dot.

[41] It is polite to use the term thar (surname or title) rather than jāt, which is the term for caste used in common speech and may cause offence.

[42] In South Asian studies the initial capital shows that the reference is to a caste rather than an occupation. Not all those who work copper are entitled to that name, so a copper worker who does not belong to such a lineage would be referred to as a coppersmith (with lower case initial).

[43] Other artisan groups, such as Citrakār Painters, Ranjitkār Dyers and Nakahmi Blacksmiths are not members of the Pengu Dah or of any other marriage circle for that matter but constitute endogamous castes in and of themselves.

[44] The very lack of an encompassing name for the group speaks volumes about its significance for a person's identity. What the person is asserting is his identity as a member of a particular lineage or group of lineages, not his membership of an endogamous caste

(though most of the city's inhabitants would know what caste they belong to once they know the person's thar).

[45] Vernacular titles are not always of Tibeto-Burman origin but may be so.

[46] It is possible, by eliciting the right information from an individual, to ascertain exactly whether they belong to a certain group or not. These criteria are based on the access to various shrines and temples that belong to the groups involved.

[47] In spite of this strong tendency to isogamy, however, there is a minor theme of hypergamy (i.e. marrying women "up") that begs for attention. It is notable that the majority of reported hypergamous unions of the Pengu Dah are with Shresthas. Hypergamy is a well-documented phenomenon among the Rājputs and Brahmans of north India. The Rājputs of north India constitute the dominant caste in many areas, in much the same way as the Shresthas of the Kathmandu Valley do. Unlike the Shresthas, however, Rājputs strongly favour hypergamous unions, a characteristic that tends to seriously compromise caste solidarity as, in this stylized representation, men of village A take brides from villages B and C but not D and E, men of village B take brides from villages C and D but not A and E, and men of village C take brides from villages D and E but not A and B.

[48] W. H. Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmāni System* (Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing, 1936). Some have called for a complete abandonment of the notion of a jajmāni system citing that its misuse has led to much confusion. Nevertheless, as an analytic tool, the teasing out of relations between patron and clients can be most instructive. In this study I will keep the term jajmāni for this purpose while acknowledging that such a structure may not apply to all patron-client relations.

[49] The Newars do, however, share with other Hindus a concept of purity and pollution. This has significance in terms of their standing in the community but not to the extent that a ladder-like hierarchical diagram can be neatly constructed of Newar castes with Brahman at the top and "Untouchables" at the bottom. This is the common way that ethnographers and other social commentators have represented the caste system but, as you will see, is problematic. Hierarchy is *contested.* The ladder, as it is perceived by one caste, is different from that perceived by another. This is inevitable when such castes have no formal relations with each other.

[50] As such, then, those above the line are called "lah calay ju" (lit. water goes) and

those above the line refer to those below as "lah calay maju" (lit. water doesn't go). This boundary is also expressed in the access to the services of certain ritual specialists, such as Brahman or Vajrācārya domestic priests and Nāpit Barbers for purification.

51 The principle of marriage seems today to be almost as strong as it was in times past, which is how we can identify endogamous castes today. Without precise historical data, however, it is impossible to tell how strictly the rules of marriage used to be enforced. There seems to have been a relaxing of attitudes towards intercaste marriage even during the period of my fieldwork. Many intercaste marriages are now celebrated with full ritual, though whether this reflects changing attitudes towards caste or ritual or both is not clear to this researcher.

52 Viewed from the perspective of the vast majority of Newar society who consider each other to be clean.

53 In India a religious tradition is usually called *sampradaya* but I did not come across this use in Nepal.

54 David N. Gellner, *Monk, House-holder and Tantric Priest: Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 71.

55 In my experience they seem to take it in their stride and certainly do not see it as a "conversion" from Hinduism to Buddhism in any way.

56 H. L. Richard, "New Paradigms for Understanding Hinduism and Contextualization (including the H-scale for Hindu Contextualization)" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 40 (July 2004): 316–20.

57 I do not have data on the marriage customs of castes in India. However, participation in a sect and the question of marriage are very important and relevant issues. I would also expect that Hindu and Muslim identity does indeed throw up a serious social barrier that is rarely crossed. It may be that the Newars are an unusual group as Buddhism is still practised in a caste society whereas it was re-absorbed into the wider Hindu fold in India a long time ago. There are of course large-scale modern Buddhist movements in India and I have no data on them. Modern movements into Buddhism have largely been Dalit movements so I would expect that marriage circles in them have hardly changed, if at all.

58 Levy calls the twah the "village in the city." Robert I. Levy *Mesocosm: Hinduism and the Organization of a Traditional Newar City in Nepal* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 182.

59 It is an interesting fact that no guthi exclusively represents the Pengu Dah as a whole. All one finds when one casts the net wider are multicaste guthis.

60 Membership of guthis seems to have been more important as an indicator of one's identity in the past than it is today. See Declan Quigley, "The Guthi Organisations of Dhulikhel Shresthas" *Kailash* 12 (1-2, 1985): 5–61.

61 These ensembles play music from either the *bājā* or *bhajan* traditions.

62 They also aim to limit the rampant inflation around weddings and similar events by establishing rules to prevent ostentatious displays of wealth but are not significant when it comes to considerations of kinship and marriage.

63 It would seem that the Badhai are also referred to as Bārāhi in the ethnographic literature. Any suggestion that they are one caste with the Bārāhi of Lalitpur, however, would be met with an emphatic denial by the Lalitpur lineage, which is further evidence of the constructed nature of pan-Badhai caste identity.

64 I have demonstrated in *Caste and Kinship in a Modern Hindu Society* that caste structures emerge out of the creative tension produced by the two antagonistic forces of kingship and kinship. Kingship is centripetal whereas kinship is centrifugal. Kinship boundaries need to be markedly unambiguous as a way of creating stability in this political climate. Notions of pollution and separation, therefore, are not the building blocks of the system but the derivatives of it. Traditionally in South Asia, social order was to be maintained by the regulation of social distinctions.

65 A phenomenon that is ongoing; cf. Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present* (Oxford History of the Christian Church; Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2008.

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Fruitful Practices in Sub-Saharan Muslim Africa:
Some Recent Research Findings

by Gene Daniels

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Introduction

Since 2007, the Fruitful Practices Research team has studied the efforts of church planters[1] across the Muslim world. We have used a mixed-methods research approach, surveys complemented by in-depth interviews, to discern the practices of workers which promote the emergence, vitality, and multiplication of fellowships of Jesus followers in a Muslim context. Initially, we focused on understanding this data set as a whole. However, due to the widely recognized regional differences in the Muslim world, we are now doing focused analysis of subgroups of that data. This article will present findings specifically from church planters working in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

One of the primary ways our team has organized our research findings is a list of sixty-eight "Fruitful Practices" which were described in an article in this journal (Allen, et al. 2009). These were gleaned from the data in our first round of research, conducted in 2007–2009. Then, in 2010–2012, we conducted a second round of research that built on the previous one. In this second study, we very intentionally sought to include a significant number of workers from Asian and African mission agencies because these had been underrepresented the first time around. In addition to that, we had two primary reasons for this second study:

1. to validate (or invalidate if needed) the Fruitful Practice statements from the first round of research, and
2. to search for possible new Fruitful Practices that were not yet identified.

In practice, we found it very challenging to draw participation from our non-Western colleagues as they are even less inclined to fill out surveys than their Western co-laborers![2] It is not that they were uninterested in the project; rather, we realized that impersonal quantitative instruments are not their preferred means of participation. In the end we were able to focus on collecting interviews from non-Western workers for the qualitative side of the study to make-up for this and achieve a good mix of study participants.[3] This was particularly so in

certain regions of the Muslim world such as the one this study will focus on, sub-Saharan Africa.[4]

In this region, 97% of those who responded to the survey were expatriate workers; however, over 60% of the church planters we interviewed were themselves African.[5] Therefore, while we have striven for balance, if anything these findings may be slightly "Afrocentric," something we believe is actually quite fitting. The commonly held narrative of devoted, self-sacrificing white missionaries in Africa needs to be revised by a much lesser known story,

> that of the black evangelists who were [and still are] mainly responsible for spreading the Gospel throughout sub-Saharan Africa. (Killingray, 2005)

Our research affirms Killingray's words are equally true in the spread of the gospel among Muslims in this region.

Figure 1. Sub-Saharan Muslim Africa (Global Mapping International)

Major findings

1. Fruitful Practices Affirmed

The first, and perhaps most significant, finding we have to report is that the vast majority of the sixty-eight Fruitful Practices described in the original study were affirmed by workers in sub-Saharan Africa, either through the survey or by the in-depth interviews. This indicates there are abundant commonalties in ministry across the breadth of the Muslim world. Only nine of the original sixty-eight statements were *not* affirmed in any significant way by workers in the sub-Saharan Africa study.

- Fruitful workers begin discipling seekers as part of the process of coming to faith.
- Fruitful workers disciple in locally appropriate and reproducible ways.
- Fruitful workers disciple others in settings that fit the situation.

- Fruitful workers help believers find ways to remain within their social network.
- Fruitful workers prepare believers to explain why they believe.
- Fruitful workers use various approaches in discipling.
- Fruitful workers mentor leaders who in turn mentor others.
- Fruitful workers use Bible study as a means of sharing the gospel.
- Fruitful workers use the Qur'an as a bridge to sharing the biblical gospel.

Since the study focused on learning *what* workers are doing, rather than on *why* they are doing or not doing certain things, it is impossible to state with any certainty why these nine Fruitful Practices are not widely practiced in sub-Saharan Africa. However, since research is in part the task of theorizing, we propose two possible explanations for this discrepancy.

The first one is the most obvious—context. Certainly church planting among Muslims is, on one level, a context all its own, thus needing to be considered separately from other mission efforts. This is one of the fundamental presuppositions behind the entire Fruitful Practice research project. However, on another level, the regional contexts within the Islamic world vary, so that they impact what is, and is not, fruitful in ministry in those different contexts.

The second explanation for the difference in practice is the workers themselves. As noted above, the study pool for the sub-Saharan Africa data set is quite different than for our first study. Whereas the participants in the first study were predominately Western expatriates, the majority of the participants in the sub-Saharan Africa data set are themselves African. Since both the first and second studies were mixed methods research (quantitative and qualitative), strict statistical comparison is not possible. However, the data strongly indicates that the Fruitful Practices which were not affirmed in
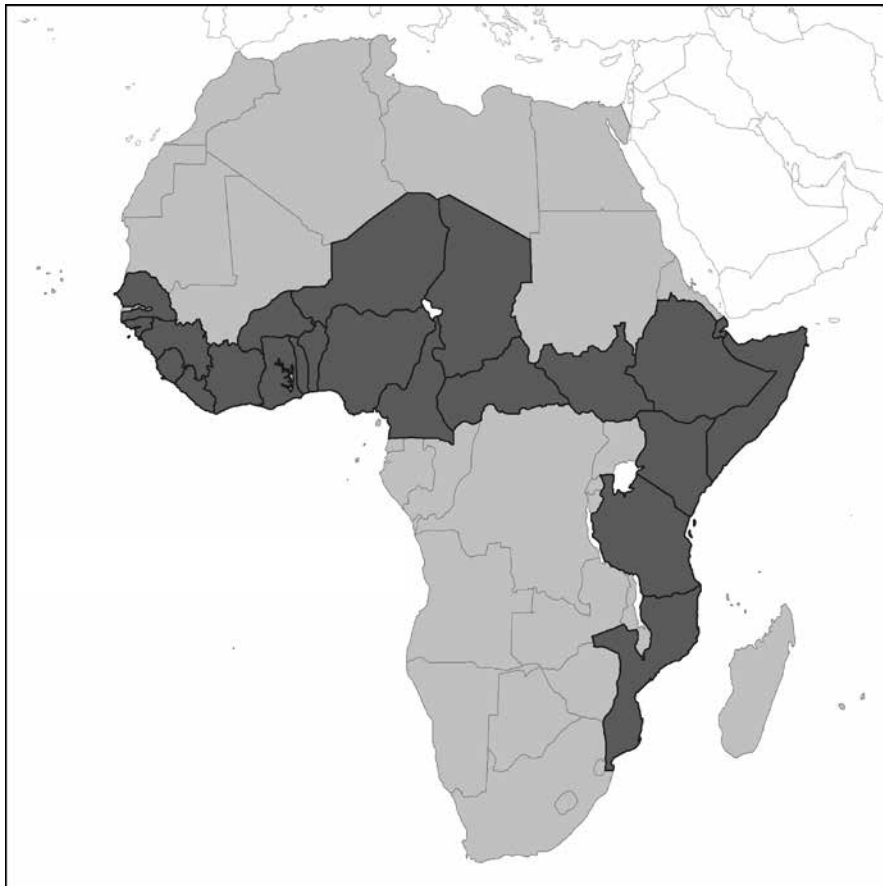
this study probably reflect the difference of practice between fruitful African workers and their expatriate colleagues. This has important implications.

Our findings in this data sub-set suggest that while some Fruitful Practices are nearly "universal," the background of the practitioner may be more important than previously recognized. Expatriates involved in Africa need to remember that their local brothers and sisters can be very fruitful without following our patterns of ministry. Perhaps Westerners might be more fruitful in Africa if they learned from the patterns of fruitful African workers? With this in mind, let us turn to some of the possible new Fruitful Practices we encountered in sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Suggested New Fruitful Practices and a Revision of Another

Another purpose of this round of research was to look for possible new Fruitful Practices to be added to the existing list. This was primarily a function of the in-depth interviews. There were several candidates for possible new Fruitful Practices, but only two were widespread enough in the data to set them apart as truly significant, both of which would fall into the Fruitful Practice category of "Relating to Believers:"

- Fruitful workers prepare new believers for persecution and suffering.
- Fruitful workers recognize time and process as crucial elements in people coming to know and grow in faith.

It is still to be decided if there is strong enough support in the overall data for us to add these to the Fruitful Practices list. However, based on an abundance of new data from both sub-Saharan Africa and our on-going studies of other regions, we have decided that it is appropriate to revise one of the more controversial Fruitful Practice statements. Originally we had stated:

- Fruitful workers use the Qur'an as a bridge to sharing the biblical gospel.

*I*n Sub–Saharan Africa the bridge for the gospel may not be the content of the Qur'an as much as the emotional power of familiarity with Islamic culture.

However, the findings in this second study regarding the above Fruitful Practice were quite conflicted, probably in some ways reflecting the current missiological debate about how, and to what extent, the Qur'an should be used in witness. We were very glad when our data from sub-Saharan Africa brought some clarity to this issue.

Over the past several years, various evangelistic methods have been developed and promoted which attempt to connect certain Surahs in the Qur'an with the biblical gospel, and certainly there are many workers who use these methods. However, what appears to be much more common, at least in sub-Saharan Africa, is a slightly different practice. This raises an important question, "What is actually fruitful? Is it linking the content of Surahs from the Qur'an to the gospel, or is it something different?" Our research suggests that the answer lies closer to the latter than the former. What we have heard workers describing in this second round of interviews has led us to revise the original Fruitful Practice statement in the following way:

- Fruitful workers use Islamic terms and thought patterns as a bridge to sharing the biblical gospel.

Or to expand this just a bit, many workers find it fruitful to draw on common expressions, terminologies and patterns of thought from Muslim cultures. This helps them to clarify ways in which biblical truth parallels, diverges from or completely counters traditional understanding. Fruitful workers may reference Qur'anic passages in order to share the biblical gospel but do not dwell unnecessarily on them. The following excerpt from an interview is insightful:

> If you don't bring this experience [of Islamic culture] it will be a negative impact in spreading the message of Injil… We have to use their familiar language and rituals. Otherwise it will be difficult to make them receptive of our message.… and it initiates argument, fear, and doubt among them (FPNS, Interview 122-M5, 2011).

Specifically note how this BMB (Believer from a Muslim Background) church planter explained that it is familiarity with terms and behaviors which functions as a bridge, not content from the Qur'an. This was a common sentiment among the workers we interviewed in sub-Saharan Africa, who again, we point out, were mostly Africans. Perhaps it can be explained in the following way:

Our missionary thinking is rooted in verses like Romans 10:17, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (NIV). Therefore, since we know that faith is linked to "the message," i.e. the content of the gospel, many Western missionaries unthinkingly see "content" writ large over all things related to a person coming to faith. Therefore, if a worker uses something related to the Qur'an in their witness, they assume that it was the *content* of the Qur'an which functioned as the bridge. But based on our interviews with BMBs and other near-culture workers in sub-Saharan Africa, the bridge for the gospel may not be content as much as the emotional power of familiarity with Islamic culture.

David Greenlee calls this familiarity "congruence" or an intersection between the terms and symbols used to carry the gospel and those in common use by the receptor community. He says that

> Congruence refers to the overall fit and the ease of transition between the old and the new, between the former faith and set of values and Christianity. (2006, 56)

In a similar vein, Decker and Injiru have explored the emotional power of using a familiar Arabic script[6] when translating the Bible into African tribal languages for Muslim peoples (2012). Specifically they argue that familiarity with the script and the general sense of holiness associated with all things Arabic produce a powerful bridge for the gospel. Both of these point toward familiarity with Muslim symbols, rituals, and language as a powerful, emotional bridge rather than the actual content of the Qur'an.

This is not to say that there is no evidence of workers using specific Qur'anic passages in their witness; there is. But that practice has not been widely affirmed in our second study. So, while the debate continues about using the *content* of the Qur'an as a bridge to the gospel, our latest data suggests a slight reorientation to the use instead of Islamic terms, thoughts and symbols that are familiar to Muslims in that culture.

3. Worker Boldness and Prayer

The data showed an interesting connection between a worker's boldness in witness and his or her practice of prayer. This is best explained in two steps, the first of which concerns the following two Fruitful Practices:

- Fruitful workers are bold in witness.
- Fruitful workers pray for the needs of their friends in their presence.

We found that Africans are much more likely to be "bold in witness" than Western workers, and that non-Westerners in general tend to "pray for the needs of their friends in their presence" more than their Western colleagues.[7] This implies that whenever workers are bold in witness they are more likely to pray face-to-face with Muslim friends. Taken alone this is only suggestive, but when coupled with results from the following pair of Fruitful Practices it forms a clearer picture:

- Fruitful workers mobilize extensive, intentional, and focused prayer.
- Fruitful teams[8] engage in corporate prayer and fasting.

While participants in the overall quantitative survey "highly affirmed" these practices, they were very seldom mentioned in the SSA qualitative interviews, even though we specifically asked about the role that prayer plays in their work. In other words, Western expatriates are more likely to *organize* for, and pray *with,* other Christians, or their teammates (generally expatriate church planters), yet less likely to pray face-to-face with their Muslim friends and neighbors. While conversely, our African colleagues are more likely to enter into something we would call "direct prayer engagement" with the lost.

In the end, all these workers are expressing a spirit-driven impetus to pray, but in different ways. However, we need to

> *We found that Africans are much more likely to be "bold in witness" than Western workers.*
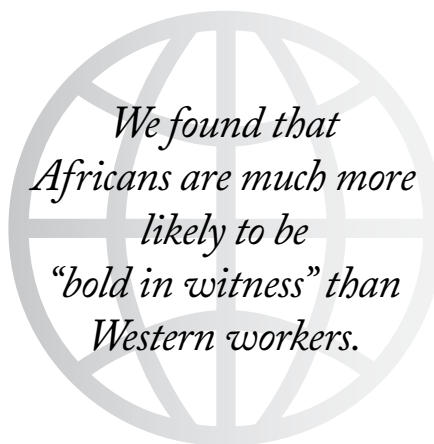
carefully consider the implications. It could be this is simply a demonstration of different kinds of spirituality, and that is probably part of the explanation. However, it is just as possible this has something to do with Western society's aversion to risk. Whatever the reason, the de-emphasis of personal prayer ministry among Western workers is concerning in light of what we know about the animistic echoes and pervasive "fear-power" paradigm in many Muslim cultures. It is important that church planters from the West learn from the practice of their African colleagues so they do not fall back on private forms of Christian intercession as less risky than public expressions of prayer that might initiate public power encounters.

4. The "Embedded Worker"

Irrespective of gender, or a worker's country of origin, there were several Fruitful Practices that emerged strongly in the study and seem to be characteristic of a successful church planter among Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, these practices do not appear to be random behaviors, rather they seem to form a taxonomy, or a pattern of relationships. The anchor point of this taxonomy is one particular Fruitful Practice:

- Fruitful workers communicate respect by behaving in culturally appropriate ways.

This Fruitful Practice was very strongly represented in the SSA data. It was highly affirmed in almost every way. Not only that, but we also found that a number of other Fruitful Practices tended to cluster around RSO1 producing an idea we have called the "embedded worker" (see Figure 2 on p. 41).

This archetype of the successful worker in sub-Saharan Africa is a church planter who is highly enculturated[9] into the respondents' culture.[10] From a spiritual perspective, these workers are fruitful because they have a vibrant, expressive relationship with God that in various ways spills over into the lives of those around them. From the sociological standpoint, they are fruitful because *they are themselves* a bridge of congruence between the gospel and the culture they are trying to reach. Also, because these workers are living in harmony with local cultural and social norms to a significant degree, they tend to produce churches that do the same.

Conclusion

This study offers a focused look at workers planting churches among Muslim peoples in the diverse region of sub-Saharan Africa. The fact that the majority of the original Fruitful Practices were affirmed by workers in this more narrowly focused study speaks of the commonalties which hold
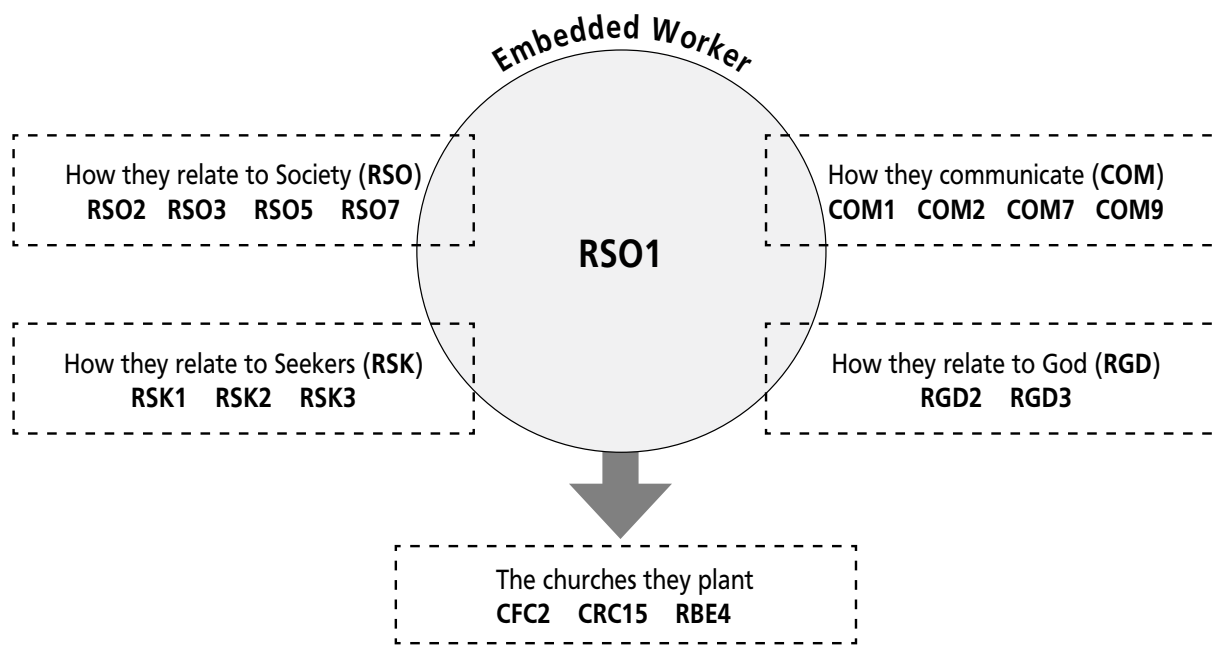
true across the world of Islam. However, our findings also pointed toward some of the ways that ministry in SSA might be different from other regions. In particular, we saw the importance of the church planter being deeply "embedded" in the pattern of his society.

Another highly significant finding was clarification concerning our original Fruitful Practice statement about bridging from the Qur'an. The qualitative interviews helped us better understand what workers are actually doing. We found that rather than using the Qur'an *per se,* what is widely practiced is that workers are using terms, and thought patterns from the Islamic cultural milieu as a bridge in their presentation of the gospel. This analysis Talso pointed out differences between Western and non-western workers in the practice of prayer, and how that impacts the boldness of their witness.

As a means of pulling all of our findings together, we looked at a cluster of practices which describe the typical, successful church planter in our study, someone we are calling the "embedded worker." The anchor point of this "embedded-ness" is one particular Fruitful Practice that was very strongly represented in the SSA data: Fruitful Workers communicate respect by behaving in culturally appropriate ways.

Figure 2. Fruitful Practices associated with the Embedded Worker in sub-Saharan Africa

RS01	Fruitful workers communicate respect by behaving in culturally appropriate ways.	RSK1	Fruitful workers are bold in witness.	COM1	Fruitful workers use culturally appropriate Bible passages to communicate God's message.
RS02	Fruitful workers address tangible needs in their community as an expression of the gospel.	RSK2	Fruitful workers pray for God's supernatural intervention as a sign that confirms the gospel.	COM2	Fruitful workers communicate the gospel using the heart language, except in situations where it is not appropriate.
RS03	Fruitful workers relate to people in ways that respect gender roles in the local culture.	RSK3	Fruitful workers pray for the needs of their friends in their presence.	COM7	Fruitful workers share the gospel in ways that fit the learning preferences of their audience.
RS05	Fruitful workers pursue language proficiency.	RBE4	Fruitful workers help seekers and believers find appropriate ways to identify themselves to their community as followers of Jesus, without imposing their own preferences.	COM9	Fruitful Workers use Islamic terms and thought patterns as a bridge to sharing the biblical gospel.
RS07	Fruitful workers build positive relationships with local leaders.	RGD2	Fruitful workers engage in regular, frequent prayer.	CFC2	Fruitful churches worship using indigenous forms of expression.
		RGD3	Fruitful workers persevere through difficulty and suffering.	CFC15	Fruitful churches generally meet in homes or other informal settings.

And finally, we wish to acknowledge some of the limitations on what we can and cannot say from this research:

1. *Our findings are* descriptive, *not* prescriptive. By this we mean that our findings should not be viewed as a methodology for church planting, but rather a picture of what God has already been doing. We encourage workers to reflect on their own ministries in light of these findings rather than to simply attempt to repeat the practices of those workers we studied.

2. *The etic versus emic question.*[11] The responses we collected and studied were, for the most part, the perceptions of those who contributed to the church planting process (etic), rather than of those who received the gospel (emic). We understand that the perceptions of these workers and those of the members of churches they helped to plant may be different. Also, our respondents may simply be unaware of, or not fully understand, the social, psychological, spiritual, and other factors that played a role in the formation of the church.

3. *There is always the "God factor."* We recognize that church planting is ultimately the result of a sovereign God whose ways no research project can fully explain.

We trust this study will contribute to the mission community's knowledge about how God is working in one of the most hotly contested frontiers of Christian-Muslim interaction. This report is one small part of a much larger collaborative effort and is the first of several focused research reports the Fruitful Practice research team hopes to produce. Although it is not possible to name all of those who contributed, the other primary members of the research team certainly deserve mention: Dr. David Greenlee, Dr. Bob Fish, Mike Baker (all of whom are on the quantitative research module) and James Nelson, my co-leader of the qualitative research module.

Please contact our team at info@fruitfulpractice.org for updated findings and analysis, or to open the door for an exchange of ideas or ministry applications stemming from this work. **IJFM**

Endnotes

[1] Speaking of "church planters" raises the issue of the term "church." In our research we generally used the term "fellowship" to describe local expressions of the biblical term *ekklesia.* We did this in order to take into account the range of terms, and many various languages, used by the workers involved in this study. Therefore, in this report the terms "fellowship" and "church" are used interchangeably as needed for clear English syntax, all the while recognizing that some readers do not recognize the terms as fully equivalent.

[2] The overall survey received 433 valid responses from workers hailing from thirty-eight home countries, 59% male and 41% female.

[3] The overall qualitative module included a total 188 workers; seventy-six women (40%) and 112 men (60%).

[4] The SSA specific quantitative data sub-set consisted of seventy-seven valid survey responses and thirty-six interviews.

[5] Ten of these interviews were with expatriates and twenty-six were with near-culture workers. All interviews were done using a standardized protocol, recorded for accuracy, and conducted in the workers native language whenever possible. They were later translated and transcribed for analysis.

[6] Decker and Injiru are clear that they are not arguing for use of the Arabic *language* in reaching African tribals, only for the "Ajami" script which can be used to express any spoken language.

[7] This observation is drawn from the entire quantitative study, not just the SSA data set.

[8] Teams take many and widely varied forms, particularly as it concerns non-Western mission agencies. Our working definition of a team is "a group of two or more working together to establish multiplying fellowships of Jesus-followers." Therefore, we asked study participants to think in terms of those whom they worked with intentionally, regularly, and with shared purpose. It could be just people from their own organization, or it might include workers from other groups as well as local believers.

[9] "Enculturation" is normally used to refer to the way children learn the customs, beliefs and practices of their own people. How-ever, it is used here in the metaphorical sense to describe the way a cross-cultural Christian worker enters a new culture as a learner, and then goes on to modify his own worldview to be more aligned with the host culture.

[10] This is not surprising since so many of the study participants were planting churches in their own, or a nearby, culture. However, since the data set has a combination of expatriates, BMBs, and other near-culture church planters, this picture has both etic and emic perspectives.

[11] Anthropology and other social sciences often use "etic" and "emic" to refer to an important distinction in the way people perceive a given subject. The "emic" viewpoint is that of "insiders" to a culture, whereas an "etic" perspective is that which outside observers use to describe and classify it.

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Building a Better Bridge:
The Quest for Blessing in an African Folk Islamic Context

by Alan Howell

After multiple miscarriages, Fatima finally gave birth to a healthy baby girl. This young mother desperately wanted to protect her baby and one day she heard a radio announcement that a famous healer would be coming to town. She could probably scrape together the money necessary to buy an amulet for her only child. What should she do?

Abudu wanted to have a better harvest this year. He saw that many of his neighbors had more than enough food to eat and sell. Some of his friends had been using conservation agriculture techniques to increase production. But, his brother-in-law suggested that Abudu should purchase an amulet from the local Imam. What should he do?

Fatima and Abudu share a common desire: they long for blessing. The quest for blessing is a universal one and despite predictable cultural differences, there is a remarkable similarity in the kind of blessing people yearn for: status and honor, a long life, material prosperity, protection from disasters or malevolent spirits, safe births, healthy children and grandchildren able to care for one who reaches old age, the approval of God and eternal life.[1] But even when people do all they can to secure a "good life," there is no way for them to guarantee it.[2] So much of a person's life is beyond his control. Therefore, in the face of such problems and challenges, the essential question for many is this: "How can they assure themselves of prosperity, and safeguard themselves against such misfortunes?"[3]

Living in northern Mozambique, among the Makua-Metto people, we have been surprised by the power that folk religion possesses to shape culture and behavior. I've come to believe that two main functions of popular or folk religion help explain the breadth of its influence: guidance in a quest for blessing, and help in response to suffering. These aspects are so interrelated and connected that we could almost think of them as two sides of the same coin. Our Mozambican friends spend large portions of their time and treasure in the quest to find blessing

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and to confront suffering. While these desires for a constructive response to suffering and for the procuring of blessing are certainly driving forces within folk religion, that does not mean that they are inherently evil. Throughout the biblical texts,

> these two aspects—deliverance and blessing—are found together. They are both part of God's activity in the world. We cannot have one without the other.[4]

Since these two impulses are present in the story of God's saving action in Scripture, we should not ignore their potential to provide powerful points of contact with the target culture as well. I have explored how the Makua-Metto folk religion responds to suffering in an earlier article in this journal.[5] This article will concentrate on the search for blessing in the Makua-Metto context.

The concept of blessing has been largely ignored in the Western world. Sophisticated North Americans or Europeans may give lip service to God as the source of blessing, but most act as if blessing comes exclusively through education, entrepreneurship, and sweat equity.[6] Blessing has been regulated

> to formulas people use to pray before eating or to express concern for one who has sneezed. Even in the Church, the word "blessing" often has the connotation of simply signifying the end of the worship service.[7]

And the training cross-cultural missionaries receive in Western universities and seminaries does little to correct this blind spot. Students are often taught to "see evangelism as dealing with the cosmic issues of high religion, not the immediate problems of everyday life."[8] This notion of blessing is

> neglected or rejected because of magical, superstitious interpretations or ties with animism that many missionaries have given it.[9]
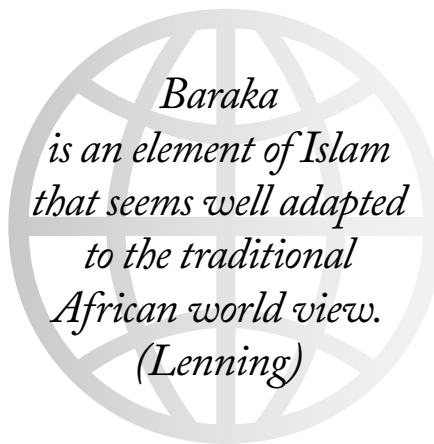
The combination of these factors means that often the quest for blessing is disregarded as a potential avenue for folk Muslims to encounter the gospel.

This neglect has forced me to lean on a small cadre of missiologists whose work can orient how we approach African situations like my own.

Initial Thoughts: Who Needs this Bridge of Blessing?

Baraka is the Arabic word for "blessing," and

> is widely used throughout the Islamic world to denote a mysterious and wonderful power, a blessing from God, indicating holiness or "blessed virtue." *Baraka* … is possessed by saints and the prophet Muhammad possessed it in the highest degree … *Baraka* is seen in miracles, holy places and people, prayers, blessings, and curses.[10]

> *Baraka is an element of Islam that seems well adapted to the traditional African world view. (Lenning)*

It is "an element of Islam that seems well adapted to the traditional African world view."[11] Baraka, in many places in Africa,

> is believed to be fundamental to one's faith and religious practice. While the power of *baraka* is sometimes used in questionable ways, such as magical methods of healing, its misuse does not negate or reduce the impact it has had and continues to have on Islamic life and outreach in Africa today. Its influence touches people at every significant transition point and moment of crisis in their lives.[12]

Since the concept of blessing is a central one in African folk Islamic contexts, by offering a ministry of blessing,

the church could build a bridge that is appealing to African Muslims.[13] Establishing blessing as a "natural redemptive analogy"[14] is one of the best ways that the church might be able to bring "together the focuses on salvation and the abundant life that Muslims seek."[15] At the same time, though, it is important that the Church be careful "to distinguish between blessing (baraka) that has its source in God and animistic baraka."[16] While this potentially difficult distinction might seem to be a hindrance, it could become an opportunity because a folk Muslim's openness to the power of blessing may be just what eventually draws him to decide to walk with Jesus, the source of all blessing.[17] Lenning notes that blessing

> can become an effective instrument of witness and bridge building because of its centrality both in biblical and Islamic Scriptures and in the everyday life of the believers of the two faiths. Such commonality can reduce or eliminate confrontation or hostility. A Muslim hearing a Christian describe the blessing of God will not reject him. The blessing of God brings Muslims and Christians into a common arena where, hopefully, effective two-way communication, witness, and dialogue can take place.[18]

Now that we have looked briefly at the importance of baraka in folk Islam, we will begin to examine how the quest for blessing takes shape in our specific context in northern Mozambique.

In investigating the role of blessing in the Makua-Metto culture, I was told that baraka is a kind of luck that affects multiple aspects of one's life. While God is named as the source of baraka, the primary ways for acquiring blessing are by making offerings to an idol or a tree or by going to the grave of a blessed person known locally as a saint. Women typically seek a blessing if they want to get married, are unable to have children, or are concerned for their children's health, whereas men will look for a blessing when they need a wife or are trying to secure employment.

A common refrain, though, was that a person would need to use his or her blessing wisely or it would be wasted. And while people agree that those who have a bad or corrupt heart may be able to arrange a temporary blessing, the assumption is that eventually one's evil deeds will catch up with him. Even good people who possess baraka will suffer, though, and it is a common belief that in order to get a blessing you have to sweat and expend a lot of effort; you cannot get a blessing without it costing you something.

Powerful magical practitioners such as traditional healers or Islamic teachers are seen as sources of blessing, although there is skepticism among some in this society who express a lack of faith that a magical practitioner who doesn't even own a car himself would be able to produce magic powerful enough to conjure up a car for another person.

> Wouldn't he have used the magic for himself first? Also, why would he make a charm to help my son succeed in school if his own children have not completed their studies? If he has baraka at his disposal, why doesn't it seem to make his life better?

When I asked if this skepticism was widespread, I was told, "No. Many, many people still look to traditional healers and witchdoctors for a blessing. Where else can they go?" The African folk Muslim context is a confusing mix of Islam and Animism. In order to build an effective bridge, it is useful to categorize the specifics of our host culture's approach to blessing and the connection points it makes in the lives of its adherents. While the common categories of "white magic and black magic" might be helpful,

> a functional analysis reveals four types of magic practiced among a wide array of folk Muslims: 1) productive magic; 2) protective magic; 3) destructive magic; and 4) divination.[19]

This categorization provides helpful distinctions for understanding the Makua-Metto practice. While the last two types

*I*t is a common belief that to get a blessing you have to expend a lot of effort; you cannot get a blessing without it costing you something.

(destructive and divination) are generally related to suffering,[20] I believe that the first two types of magic (productive and protective) are mostly used in the quest for blessing. We will use the distinction between productive and protective magic to frame our exploration of Makua-Metto belief and practice.

Surveying the Terrain: The Blessing of Production

According to Rick Love, folk Muslims often pursue blessing in terms of

> prosperity, fertility and success... At the most practical level, they seek blessing in order to pass exams at school, find a mate, bear children, have a plentiful harvest or succeed in business. In these pursuits, they often turn toward what could be described as productive magic for success.[21]

Among the Makua-Metto, in order to get this kind of blessing, many make sacrifices in the hopes that their ancestors will improve their production. Others may travel great distances to sacred sites or trees or even make their requests at the graves of deceased kings. People will purchase a magical amulet in the hopes of enhancing their position at work at the expense of others. Years ago, our family employed a guard who buried a magical charm in our yard that was supposed to make me displeased with his fellow workers.

Another version of productive magic involves purchasing a piece of string or cloth that has been infused with magical powers and turns into a snake that secretly steals money from random people and brings the riches back to its owner. Others do this kind of magic through personal contact. By touching someone's shoulder or shaking hands with them, the money is transferred magically from that person's pocket secretly to their own.

An even darker version of this productive magic *(dondozi)*—what many would call an outright curse—must be done at the expense of one's own relatives. The purchaser of this type of magic sits in front of a mirror in the presence of a magical practitioner. He or she "sees" family members in the reflection and then the magical practitioner pokes the mirror indicating which family member is the one who must die in order to get the buyer a financial blessing. The act of "poking" the image is typically seen as enough to kill the person, but sometimes their death actually happens at the hands of the one requesting the blessing of production. Also, the person who is killed must be from one's own flesh or family or it doesn't count: it can't be a stranger or foreigner because that wouldn't "cost" the person anything. This magic is believed to make the "killed" person disappear while a "fake" body of theirs remains in its place. They are said to become invisible zombie slaves who work as slaves in the farms of their new master or carry wealth from the market to their owner's homes. When I asked a local Imam about the ethics of this practice, he told me that

> stealing is always bad—no matter how you do it. But, making someone into a zombie slave is even worse because the suffering one inflicts happens over a longer period of time.

The abuses that come from the use of magic in the quest for a blessing of production stem from a warped vision of the blessed life. In conversations about baraka, there were two related terms with the distinction between them at least initially difficult to pin down. The word *mpuha* describes a blessed state in terms of material possessions, while the word *nnema* describes a state of grace and peace, a life that is blessed relationally and spiritually. When I

inquired about the intersection of baraka, nnema, and mpuha, I was told that baraka or blessing is the source of both mpuha (material blessing) and nnema (relational grace or peace). One person might have nnema without mpuha (they will feel sympathy for others, and will be willing to share even though they may not have much to share), while another person might have mpuha without nnema (the individual might have the means but might be unwilling to share). The longing for material wealth (mpuha) divorced from its relational component (nnema) stems from the root cause of productive magic: *nttima* (greed and jealousy).

Surveying the Terrain: The Blessing of Protection

Among folk Muslims, "protective magic is possibly the most developed or comprehensive" form.[22] While the root cause in productive magic is greed and jealousy, the overriding emotional cause related to protective magic is fear. People are afraid and their hunger for "supernatural measures to overcome these fears" leads to a plethora of charms.[23] A charm, or amulet, is

> an object containing supernatural power to protect or bless people. Through power rituals, shamans empower (literally "fill") a normal object to turn it into a charm.[24]

This is true in the Makua-Metto culture where the dominant form of protective magic comes in the form of charms or amulets. The most common form is the *alupatiri* or *ihirrissi,* a cord worn around the neck or hidden on one's person. Made from twisted rope, it usually holds a small pouch that contains a word of blessing in Arabic, a root with magical properties, or the hair of a lucky or blessed person, such as a saint. Interestingly, a Mozambican imam and other practicing Muslims here have told me that the name ihirrissi comes from the Arabic word for defense and that is exactly what this magical object is expected to provide:

a defense against evil. Another protective charm is the *ikulula* which is made from traditional rope and worn around the waist. It is very common to see children wearing these as a defense against evil and sickness.

A second way that Makua-Metto people acquire blessing is from a traditional healer: through the purchase of magical medicine that is then applied to one's person. For example, a root with special properties is cooked and the one who bathes with that water is believed to have acquired a blessing. In another practice, the traditional healer makes an incision and places crushed root powder under the skin to protect against illness or bad dreams.

The driving force behind the desire for protection is fear.

Some will pay an Islamic teacher to write words in Arabic to invoke a blessing over the house when it is placed over a door. Others will offer sacrifices at holy sites, and if what they desired comes true, will need to take an additional gift back there as thanksgiving or payment. Traditional healers serve as priests at these special places to receive those who travel from far away seeking blessings of both production and protection.

The driving force behind the desire for protection is fear. The Makua-Metto people live in an environment saturated with fear and suspicion, and spend their time and resources in often futile attempts to find protection.

Building the Bridge: Proposing an Alternative Quest for Blessing

While the previously described search for blessing in Makua-Metto culture could certainly lead one to despair, there is hope that as blessing is strategically incorporated into the rhythms of church life—theological, missiological, and liturgical—perhaps effective bridges can be built into the Muslim communities all across Africa.[25]

One of the first steps in building this type of bridge is to develop a shared understanding of the need for it. To initiate that kind of conversation with our Mozambican friends, we used the image of a tree to visualize the methods used and the subsequent consequences of the search for blessing in Makua-Metto culture. On the left side of the drawing of the tree we listed the different types of productive magic, writing them on the branches. Then we drew a stick figure of a person using those practices who was picking fruit off the tree. This person was probably thinking that he or she would receive a productive blessing that would last. On the right side of the tree, we listed the protective magic practices. We drew a stick figure there, as if someone were taking refuge from the sun under those branches. This person was assuming that by following those practices the blessing of protection would last. As we named each of these practices, Mozambican participants had lively discussions where people shared stories of how these practices had affected the lives of their friends and family. Then I drew everyone's attention to the roots of that tree and pointed out how it grew out of both fear *(wova)* and jealousy or greed (nttima). Since most of the Makua-Metto people we work with are subsistence farmers, it was easy to get them to imagine the destructive result that would come from a plant growing in poisoned soil.

Next, we imagined what would happen to these two people later on. The person

who trusted in the blessing of production, ate the fruit and started feeling stomach pains. He painfully regretted the evil he had done and realized the folly of the fleeting wealth gained from productive magical practices. The person sitting in the protective shade of the tree was hit by the same branch that he trusted to bless him. Then I asked participants to imagine looking into the branches above the individuals and spotting serpents, representatives of Satan, hiding there, looking gleefully down at the people they had deceived. These images encouraged lots of conversation and helped our Mozambican friends affirm the fleeting benefits and ultimate futility of magical practices done in search of blessing.

Then we turned our attention to a third image, one that helped initiate conversations about how the church could harness the longings for blessing in healthy and holy ways by searching for blessing in the Kingdom of God. Instead of a tree filled with magical practices, we asked them to imagine a different tree, the cross, rooted in nnema (the grace and peace of God) whose horizontal beam offers both lasting production and protection to Christ's followers. The striking contrast between the two trees highlighted the ineffectiveness of Makua-Metto folk religion's attempts to find blessing and provided a solid place to begin talking about blessing in the kingdom of God. In the next two sections, we will explore how the church might respond effectively to the host culture's ways of searching for blessing and how it differs with the kind of blessing we find in Jesus.

Fortifying the Bridge: The Blessing of Production in the Kingdom of God

Followers of Jesus should share basic core convictions about how blessing functions in the kingdom of God. First of all, God is "the source and giver of blessing."[26] Secondly, blessings are not

*I*nstead of a tree filled with magical practices, we asked them to imagine a different tree, the cross, rooted in nnema (the grace and peace of God).

understood only as ends in themselves, but ideally they lead us to live holy lives.[27] And thirdly, it is instructive that in Jesus' most famous speech, the Sermon on the Mount, he began by redefining who is able to receive the blessing of the kingdom of God.[28]

That redefinition of who is blessed in God's kingdom, especially who is able to receive a blessing of production, is an important distinction since blessing in the host culture may often be seen as the result of destiny. Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4 is particularly useful in reframing this topic. From an African folk Islam perspective, this woman did not have baraka. Being a Samaritan, a person of questionable lineage, she was despised by Jesus' people, the Jews. The Bible says that she arrived all alone at the local well at noon. While modern readers may find these details insignificant, my Mozambican friends, farmers who mostly draw or hand pump their water from wells, assumed that this woman probably didn't get along well with others, otherwise she would have made the trek to carry water in the cool of the day with the rest of the women of her village. As her conversation with Jesus progressed, we also learn that this woman had been married multiple times and was now living with a man who was not her husband—something truly scandalous in Jesus' day. So, in the eyes of the world, this woman was not blessed at all. She was of the wrong nationality, of a despised religion, flagrantly immoral, a social outcast—and most likely destitute; otherwise, she would have paid someone to fetch water for her in the blazing sun. And yet, she providentially bumped into Jesus and after a short conversation, she abandoned her bucket there at the well and ran back home. Amazingly, when this Samaritan woman did return to the well she literally brought her whole

village to Jesus. So, this woman started out with miniscule (we might even say, negative) influence, but she ended up using what little she had to bless others. Jesus invited her to participate in the Kingdom of God, and offered her an internal spring of water that wells up to eternal life. When she was blessed by Jesus, she was not selfish with it, as one might be with a merely productive or material blessing (mpuha), but instead, in her joy, she freely shared with others the blessing of grace and peace (nnema) she had just received. This story has been very helpful in reframing the concept of blessing for Makua-Metto disciples.

Ultimately, however, to effect a real change in perspective of productive blessing (related to prosperity, fertility and success) we will need to address the negative roots of the problem: greed and jealousy (nttima). There are four key affirmations that Makua-Metto followers of Jesus should internalize to assist them with these powerful temptations.

1. *We will NOT do productive magic.* Leviticus 19:26b plainly states, "Do not practice divination or sorcery" (NIV). This simple prohibition has become an oft-quoted text among Makua-Metto Christians who are committed to resisting the temptation to engage in productive magic. These believers talk about the importance of obeying God's commands and of trusting in him to provide the blessing. But, simply telling someone to stop doing magic in their search for blessing is not enough. This commandment works best as a deterrent when its truths are held alongside other convictions that can help combat the potentially destructive emotions of greed and jealousy.

2. *We value a contented life marked by grace and peace* (nnema) *more than one defined simply in terms of material blessing* (mpuha). Financial prosperity has a limited impact and is not the determining factor of whether one has a good life.[29] 1 Timothy 6:6–11 is a useful text as it points to the importance of contentment and reminds us that even the extravagantly rich will not be able to take the financial blessings of this life with them when they die. Paul reorients our perspective to wealth by telling us that "godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6 NIV). Verse 10 is a strong reminder that jealousy and greed can lead one to wander from the faith and fall into a trap where one ends up "piercing" himself. Interestingly, that specific word makes a powerful allusion to a practice of which the Makua-Metto people are painfully aware. As discussed earlier, magical practitioners use a mirror to "pierce" and, by extension, to kill family members of those who are purchasing a blessing. Paul's words sound a warning that to define one's life in terms of material possessions is dangerous as it could lead someone to practice witchcraft and to eventually fall prey to his own evil practices. Instead, the text reminds us to pursue blessings that are good and life-giving.

3. *We count on the blessing and riches Christ has stored up for us.* Ephesians 1:3–14 tells us of the great blessing that God graciously prepared for us before we were even born. Through Christ's sacrifice, he has secured a rich blessing for us. So, while in the Makua-Metto culture (where there is a common assumption of a "limited good") some people will kill even their own family members in an attempt to secure a blessing of production for themselves, Jesus models a completely different way as he

sacrifices his own life to secure a blessing for others. As noted earlier, the cultural expectation is that a blessing must cost you something. Incredibly, for those of us in God's kingdom, the price has been paid by Christ and we then in turn will have to die to ourselves as part of the blessing bargain.[30]

4. *We live as the truly blessed people we are—like firmly rooted trees who produce abundantly in season.* In Psalm 1, we are given a picture of a man who looks to God as the ultimate source of production (or fruitfulness and abundance) and protection. Instead of delighting in wickedness and wealth, this

> *Some people will kill even their own family members to secure a blessing for themselves*

blessed person delights in the riches of God's words and is said to be like a tree planted by a river that consistently produces fruit in season (implying then that there may still be seasons of want). The end of the psalm contrasts the image of a blessed man, securely rooted like a productive tree protected by God, with the wicked who are at the mercy of passing breezes and blown around like trash. Our Makua-Metto friends laughed as they imagined that those who trust in productive magic are just chaff, floating off through the air because they lack real weight and substance.

Fortifying the Bridge: Blessing of Protection in the Kingdom of God

Now we turn our attention to how to appropriately respond to the search for the blessing of protection and how to best address the root problem of fear. A helpful story that addresses fear and also animism's failed quest for protection is the tale of Balaam from Numbers 22–24. The story opens with Balak, King of Moab, having called together the elders of his people to deal with a problem. The Moabites were deathly afraid because the Israelites, a numerous people, had escaped from Egypt and had camped nearby. Balak summoned Balaam, a powerful magical practitioner, with the intention of cursing Israel, but on the road to Moab, Balaam had his famous conversation with a donkey and an angel warned him not to give in to greed nor to deviate from God's will. While we usually stop the story at this point, the text goes on to tell us how Balak built altars and offered great sacrifices in the hopes that Balaam would curse Israel, but each time God turned Balaam's words into a blessing for his people instead. This story confirms what we've noted before, that fear is the underlying reason for using protective magic. Balak was terrified of God's people and used every means at his disposal to curse them. While the king of Moab assumed that

> blessing was a magical formula or power… as the story unfolded, blessing was shown to be a prerogative of God. Balaam did not possess a magical power to be used without regard for God.[31]

A persistent question that throbs in the hearts and minds of disciples of Jesus in folk Muslim contexts is whether or not it is possible for God's people to be cursed. Numbers 23:23 is a key verse in this story and one that is meaningful even today. It states clearly that no magic or divination can be done by other human beings against God's people. Believing that promise of protection,

though, is certainly easier said than done and as we look at how to address the root issue of fear, there are four affirmations that can both help that conviction to take root and assist followers of Christ to faithfully look to God alone as the ultimate source of protection.

1. *We will NOT put on protective magic; instead we will wear the armor of God.* Ephesians 6 is a key text for followers of Jesus in any context, but especially for believers in contexts saturated by magic.[32] This text challenges our Makua-Metto friends to lay aside magical items and to put on the armor that God has given us to wear. Those who continue to wear amulets reveal their allegiance to the enemy. And verse 12 reminds us that ultimately our battle is not against the people who are trying to use magic against us, but against the spiritual forces that have deceived them. The best response of Christians under attack from evil, even the evil of witchcraft and curses, is prayer (v. 18).

2. *We will trust that God is faithful and true to his promise to bless and protect us.* God's consistent message to his people—the most common command in the Bible—is this: "Do not fear." Isaiah 41:10 says succinctly,

   > So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

3. *We have the right to choose between blessing and cursing for our own lives (Deut. 11:26–28), but Satan has no power to steal our blessing (1 John 4:4).* These two texts provide a foundation for Makua-Metto believers to discuss another key question about blessing in this folk Muslim context: Can a disciple lose God's blessing? The conclusion that fits best with the overall message of the Bible is that while

*T*he Old Testament is clear that the reception of blessing required obedience. Otherwise, the blessing would become a curse. (Lenning)

we can lose our blessing due to our own disobedience, we should not be afraid of other people, or even the demonic powers, because they are unable to curse us and take the blessing of God away from us.

4. *We will follow Abraham's example of obedience and remember that, like our great father in the faith, we too, are blessed to be a blessing (Gen. 12:1–5).* Abraham obeyed God's instruction to leave his home and to journey to an unknown land, trusting in God's blessing to provide and protect. Lenning notes that

   > the Old Testament is clear in its assertion that the reception of blessing required obedience. If obedience was missing, the blessing would become a curse.[33]

   But, beyond that, it seems clear that

   > obedience is a crucial part of blessing because a man is blessed not only when God has done something for him, but when through obedience, he is able to do something for others.[34]

   It is important for followers of Jesus to understand that we have been blessed in order to be a blessing to others.

Crossing the Bridge: How Can We Engage the Holistic Dimensions of Blessing in Powerful Ways?

Effectively adapting the concept of blessing as "a bridge" for reaching African folk Muslims will require us to move beyond the realm of ideas to include re-envisioning the practices of the church. This is additionally important when we recognize "the strategic centrality of ritual" in the lives of Africans.[35] It takes great courage and wisdom to re-examine the forms of

Christianity that we have inherited and cultivate rituals that harness the redemptive aspects of blessing for that context.[36] This is a crucial part, because otherwise, Christianity's impact will be mediocre, at best.[37]

Successfully implementing non-Western forms and rituals of blessing as part of a holistic strategy for reaching African folk Muslims is certainly a daunting undertaking and one that requires much more than this space allows. That being said, how shall we find our bearings? I think that an appropriate place to begin is with the idea of power. One of the reasons that the influence of Folk Islam is so prevalent in Africa is that it promises blessing from a variety of sources: power persons, power objects, power places, power times, power rituals.[38] So, one way for the church to systematize a holistic response to the quest for blessing is to offer healthier and holier alternatives for each of these sources of power.

Power persons. As has been seen in the history of the Church in Africa, when leading well, charismatic individuals can have a positive impact in their areas of influence. Some denominations may need to rethink and contextualize models of Christian leadership to better fit their African folk Islamic contexts. What if leaders of Christian communities in these settings looked less like pastors from the West and instead functioned more like holy men or even the patriarchs of old? It seems clear that,

> the emphasis in the Old Testament is on blessing as a holistic power working in the lives of his chosen, obedient servants. Abraham as the first of the patriarchs is one (but a key one) of many such blessed people. Because they represent God, they are gifted with the power to bless others.[39]

An effective evangelist to folk Muslims will then

> exhibit the power of blessing which he has received from God. The holy power of blessing evident in his life will communicate to Muslims that he represents Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.[40]

While other religious practitioners in the community may hoard their access to blessing or use it for financial gain, Christian leaders should be counter-cultural as they aide every member of the body of Christ to become the priests and kings they were created to be.[41]

Power objects/words. Unfortunately, in many contexts followers of Jesus use Christian symbols in ways disconnected from their source in God, and they act as magical amulets, in and of themselves, to bring blessings of production and protection.[42] Even the Bible, instead of being honored as "a guidepost pointing to God," is sometimes seen as a powerful magical book.[43] Since there is so much inherent danger in power objects, it seems wisest to concentrate on contextualizing a use of power words. In oral societies everyday speech, even words offered in jest, are believed to have the power to bless or curse. In our context, Christians have augmented the traditional greeting of peace *(Salama)* by greeting each other with the "peace of Christ." By filling their everyday speech with words of blessing, followers of Jesus can grow their influence and power for good in their community.

Power places. Understanding blessing as a bridge to the Kingdom of God should reframe our view of place. I come from a faith tradition that downplays an emphasis on respecting the sanctuary, but this neglect of a theology of place may hinder the advancement of the gospel among the Makua-Metto people. Lenning notes that

> not only must respect for God's holiness be present in the sacraments and worship setting, but the place of worship must also be guarded and preserved as

a holy place. In this way God's blessing is present. If the Christian Church does not care properly for the house of worship, its neglect will destroy its witness to Muslims.[44]

Since Makua-Metto believers are an extreme minority, decisions about removing places of traditional worship are not even on the table. Instead it seems best for them to carefully consider how their own places of worship can contribute or detract from the influence the church can have in a ministry of blessing to its community.

Power times. In the Makua-Metto context, funerals are the times that hold the most potential for revealing the church's power to bless. When a death occurs in the family

> *Funerals are the times that hold the most potential for revealing the church's power to bless.*

the Church has a strategic opportunity for witness and for bestowing the blessing of God. While the funeral customs vary from area to area, the Christian pastor serving in an Islamic region needs to be viewed as a man of blessing who is involved in the total death and mourning process.[45]

I have personally seen how churches which have mourned well and blessed bereaving families have then experienced new growth through conversions, but when churches have done funerals halfheartedly they inevitably decline. Funerals are important times for showing that the church or the community of believers is an agent of blessing that lovingly cares for orphans and widows.[46]

Power rituals. Rituals can help believers leave behind magical practices and therefore

> "deliverance" should be an important part of discipling new believers. Folk Muslims who come to Christ have been immersed in the world of spirit powers, charms and amulets. We cannot simply ask them to repent in a general way and believe that is sufficient.[47]

Baptism can serve as a ritual of exorcism[48] because it serves as an initiation rite where people make a break with their former way of life. In the Makua-Metto context, people possessed by evil spirits practice daily ceremonial washing with water. Baptism into Christ by contrast is a one-time washing ritual that declares our acceptance of a different kind of spirit—God's holy spirit who empowers us to live a blessed life under the reign of our Lord Jesus.

Using these six power sources can be an effective way of integrating blessing

> into the ministry, worship, outreach, and theology of the Church... (which) will increase the African's receptivity to the Gospel... In this way, it has tremendous potential for the Church in its holistic mission and ministry to the people of God.[49]

To make the search for blessing into an effective bridge, the church among the Makua-Metto might use mental categories like production and protection to fight underlying causes, but it also needs to address the desire to live well through power persons, words, places, times and rituals that affect everyday life.

Conclusion

Many evangelistic approaches geared for Muslims attempt to address the teachings of Muhammad and his heirs with apologetics, in a confrontational, head-on manner. They engage Islam in what adherents would perceive as points of strength by looking at their doctrines and calling them to reconsider the words of the Qur'an. While that approach may be helpful in certain settings, I believe the kind of bridge proposed in this article is a more effective

method for evangelizing and making disciples in folk Muslim areas of Africa. By initially side-stepping "Islam" and directing the approach towards elements that are normally considered to be in the category of "folk" or felt needs, the church can concentrate on opening a path for people who are the most dissatisfied or disillusioned with their current systems of procuring a blessing.

Returning to the two stories at the beginning of the article, we could ask: What if someone shared with Fatima a different way to bless and protect her daughter? What if a follower of Jesus were able to help Abudu find a good and holy way to bless his family through increased production (or prosperity)? Using "blessing as a theological bridge to Islam" has the potential to touch every area of people's lives and allows the church to have a "holistic impact on the individual and the community."[50] And as the African folk Muslim's worldview incorporates a more integrated understanding of the sacred and the profane, he is primed for a faith that incorporates the biblical ideas of blessing. From the Old Testament ideas about "fertility, prosperity, health, wholeness,… power, peace, and holiness" to the New Testament teaching that Christ reveals and fulfills the promises to bless his people, the biblical texts point to the way reframing blessing can positively impact the whole person.[51] A commitment to steer clear of the dangers of the "health and wealth gospel" should not blind us to the fact that God longs to bless us and show us how to live well. The God and Father of Jesus Christ

> did not deliver his people only *from* slavery and sin; he also delivered them *to* a new life, a new state of blessing that was designed for growth, prosperity, enrichment, and maturity.[52]

That is a message of blessing that the Makua-Metto people want and need to hear. That is the good news that has the potential to touch lives in meaningful ways and serve as a sturdy bridge for African folk Muslims to find their way into the Kingdom of God. **IJFM**

*W*hat if Fatima learned a different way to bless and protect her daughter? What if Abudu were taught a holy way to bless his family?

Endnotes

[1] Paul Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw and Tite Tiénou, *Understanding Folk Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 133.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Larry Lenning, *Blessing in Mosque and Mission* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1980), 68.

[5] Alan Howell, "Turning it Beautiful: Divination, Discernment and a Theology of Suffering," *IJFM* 29, no. 3 (Fall 2012).

[6] Special thanks to my wife, Ladye Rachel Howell, for this insight.

[7] Lenning, 9.

[8] Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 60.

[9] Lenning, 16.

[10] Ibid., 10.

[11] Ibid., 48.

[12] Ibid., 65.

[13] Ibid., 122.

[14] Ibid., 66.

[15] Ibid., 122.

[16] Ibid., 113–114.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 113.

[19] Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 26–27.

[20] Howell, 129–137.

[21] Love, 27.

[22] Ibid., 27–28.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., 30.

[25] Lenning, 133.

[26] Ibid., 70.

[27] Hiebert, 136. (see Matthew 25:31–46; Acts 3:25-26; Heb. 6:7-15; 1 Peter 3:9).

[28] Matthew 5:1–12.

[29] See Proverbs 15:16–17 and 16:8.

[30] See Romans 6:5–11; John 12:24-26; and Mark 8:34–38.

[31] Van Rheenen, 202–203.

[32] For more on how Ephesus was a major center for magic in the ancient world, see Clinton E. Arnold, *Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1989), 5–40.

[33] Lenning, 70.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 134.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Love, 24.

[39] Lenning, 70.

[40] Ibid., 121.

[41] See 1 Peter 2:9.

[42] Van Rheenen, 229–230.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., 130.

[45] Ibid., 131.

[46] See James 1:27.

[47] Love, 160.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Lenning, 133–134.

[50] Ibid., 117.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 68.

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Book Reviews

Ecclesial Identities in a Multi-Faith Context: Jesus Truth-Gatherings (Yeshu Satsangs) among Hindus and Sikhs in Northwest India, by Darren Todd Duerksen (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015, pp. 292)

—*Reviewed by Herbert Hoefer*

Many years ago, I gave a presentation of my research in South India among "non-baptized believers in Christ" (who have subsequently wisely named themselves *Jesu Bhaktas*) at the US Center for World Mission (now known as the Venture Center) in Pasadena, California. In the discussion afterwards, the sainted Dr. Ralph Winter made his usual prescient observation: "Perhaps you should have titled your book not "Churchless Christianity" but "Christianityless Churches."

At the time of my research in the mid-70s, there were only a few gatherings of Jesu Bhaktas, notably gatherings of women in Sivagasi and Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu. However, forty years later, with the Holy Spirit blessing the efforts of a few Western missionaries and several Jesu Bhakta leaders, "Christianityless Churches" have been forming in many parts of India. Darren Duerksen's book, *Ecclesial Identities in a Multi-Faith Context,* records how these church groups are functioning in Northwest India.

One consequence of the formation of these groups was a new reality "on the ground." It was no longer a theoretical proposition or a few isolated individual instances. Initially, there was strong opposition from most Indian church leaders and a few missiologists. In my own case, it was the strong disagreement by our Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) partner church leadership over my involvement with Jesu Bhaktas that led to my removal as Area Director. The support within the Indian church came primarily from Indian mission agencies whose field missionaries reported the necessity of approaching caste Hindu evangelism in a less churchy way. Dalits want a non-Hindu form of church, and Dalit church leaders resented that a different form of church might develop that was not under their leadership. Once it had developed, it was a reality to be reckoned with and recognized.

Duerksen similarly reports that most of the *satsang* leaders he interviewed had developed this approach as part of their mission outreach, indeed as an outgrowth of their church house groups. They did not seem to face opposition from their church leaders, so it appears that at least the church leaders in that region have recognized the necessity of this new form of church among caste Hindus and Sikhs. The churches in South India are more heavily Dalit, so the resentment and opposition are understandably greater there.

The sociological theory that Duerksen uses likewise focuses on the realities on the ground. He carefully looks for the visible markers that identify these groups as church (pp. 146–59). Duerksen systematically demonstrates how "emergentist" theory delineates criteria and guidelines for describing and evaluating a cultural development that is only emerging, in a state of flow and change (p. 123). In this regard, Duerksen provides a significant new tool and insight into the Indian insider movements. He demonstrates that a sociological tool such as this can be a great service to missiologists both in understanding what is happening and in interpreting it to others. In addition, his thorough, consistent use of this tool commends the book as a sociological case study.

Duerksen places the satsangs in the vast, ancient *bhakti* tradition of Indian religion, whether in Hinduism or Sikhism or Sufi Islam. Duerksen's interviewees point out the considerable benefits of approaching Christian faith as bhakti:

- It crosses religious lines and adapts religious forms. (p. 52)
- It enables Christians to express their faith in a classical Indian form, thus affirming their common cultural roots and identity. (p. 58)
- It minimizes the huge evangelistic issue of Christianity being perceived as totally "Other" in the society (p. 69), remaining sociologically "Hindu." (p. 87)
- It frees devotees to avoid simply demonizing all of Hinduism and Sikhism, embracing all that is good and helpful for their spiritual path. (p. 102)
- It provides a form of piety that does not contradict, but complements, traditional church piety. (p. 116)
- It promotes an emphasis on inner spiritual change, which frees devotees from the external changes expected in most church practices. (p. 148)
- It can utilize practices from church traditions, particularly Pentecostal, that complement a bhakti tradition. (p. 192)
- In summary: "the leaders seek to shape ecclesial identities that are ideologically aligned with Christian teachings from the Bible, but that are structurally associated to varying degrees to the Sikh and Hindu communities in their areas." (p. 112)

On the other hand, emergentist theory recognizes that there is a great deal of tension and flux in the process of cultural change. Duerksen records the varying opinions and approaches of the satsang leaders in regard to how much church practice can be brought into the worship and still

*D*uerksen focuses on realities on the ground. He systematically demonstrates how "emergentist" theory provides criteria for describing and evaluating a cultural development that is only emerging, in a state of flow and change.

be authentically classical Indian bhakti. The practice of the biblical sacraments becomes particularly problematic, as these tend to be identifiers of Western church identity (pp. 133–35), but Western Pentecostal practices such as loud, long prayers and "Hallelujahs" have been brought into the satsangs (pp. 140–41).

Duerksen reports that the aspect of Pentecostalism that has had the most profound and positive effect has been the emphasis on the supernatural power of God (p. 149). The leaders recount how miraculous visions, dreams, healings, and answers to prayers were formative in their own commitment to Christ (pp. 164–73). They, in turn, boldly and regularly pray for the same in the lives of their worshippers. Indeed, such experiences are the typical way people come to Christ across the world among caste Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists (cf. Hoefer, "Gospel Proclamation of the Ascended Lord," *Missiology,* Oct. 2005).

Duerksen's interviewees express strong convictions concerning some of the critical markers of orthodox Christian faith. In his concluding chapter, he traces how the ecclesiastical markers of the satsangs are remarkably similar to those described in the book of Acts (pp. 202–39). He reports that "The *Yeshu satsang* leaders' teaching on idol worship and the exclusivity of Jesus would thus be very similar to the teaching of other Christian leaders" (p. 113). Thus, Duerkson ably demonstrates that the common church accusation of syncretism has little basis in the facts on the ground:

> The ways in which the disciple community's ecclesial identity can reflect continuity and discontinuity with its traditions thus correlates with the dynamics that the Yeshu satsangs face as they seek a level of continuity with the Hindu or Sikh bhakti traditions of their context while also establishing clear Christological foci for their communities. (p. 215)

One important insight that surfaces in this research is that the satsangs cannot be reduced to a manipulative evangelistic strategy. Rather, the satsangs must be rooted first and foremost as an expression of authentic cultural identity. He quotes one follower of Christ, Swami Dayanand Bharati, who speaks of such cultural expressions of *Yeshu bhakti* as one's "birthright" (p. 251). Another of the leaders expressed it this way: he "values the satsang practices both for the relationship it creates with his family and community, but also for their utilitarian function of bringing people towards faith in Christ" (p. 187).

Duerksen concludes his book with some speculations as to where and how these insider movements might develop.

The key development must be the eventual rising up of leaders from the satsangs themselves. As Duerksen points out, the current leadership has roots in the historic churches of India and its traditions. One would pray that the Spirit would raise up bhaktas (devotees of Jesus) who can lead their own people. In the history of missions, for example, the great movements to Christ typically occur only after the missionaries have left.

As stated above, Duerksen mentions briefly one such leader from South India, Swami Dayanand Bharati. There is another *Jesu Bhakta sannyasin* running an *ashram* in Varanasi, Swami Muktanand. What one would pray for is the unfolding of Jesu Bhakta communities, ecclesial expressions, and leaders as ethnically diverse as India itself.

Theologically, a fundamental affirmation must be that these Jesu Bhaktas are indeed integral members of the body of Christ. In Scripture, the term "body of Christ" holds much more theological currency than the term "church." In the classic passage on the body of Christ, St. Paul begins by identifying the one criterion for participation in the body: the testimony that "Jesus is Lord … by the Holy Spirit" (I Cor 12:3). Paul points out what Duerksen commends in his research: that there are many varieties of the Spirit's expression, "together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (I Cor 1:2). **IJFM**

In Others' Words

Editor's note: In this department, we highlight resources outside of the IJFM: *other journals, print resources, DVDs, web sites, blogs, videos, etc. Standard disclaimers on content apply. Due to the length of many web addresses, we sometimes give just the title of the resource, the main web address, or a suggested search phrase. Finally, please note that this January–March 2015 issue is partly composed of material created later in 2015. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience caused by such anachronisms.*

Modi's India Shuts Down 9000 NGOs Which Accept Foreign Funding

As reported in a *New York Times* editorial May 7th, close to 9000 Indian NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) who accept foreign funds have had their registrations canceled this past April 2015 by the Indian government—ostensibly for their activities "stalling development." Despite rumblings of this occurring even two years ago, this crackdown appears to have greatly accelerated with the election of popular prime minister Narendra Modi of the BJP, the Hindu nationalist political party. The government is partially upset because some Indian NGOs have been campaigning against nuclear reactors, genetically-modified crops, and religious fundamentalism. Nevertheless, the *New York Times* article claims that an NGO as highly regarded as the Ford Foundation is now on the government watch list—and required to get government approval for every grant to an Indian organization—for other more chilling political reasons. Indeed, one of the recipients of past Ford Foundation grants, the Sabrang Trust, used some of the Ford money to "hold meetings and workshops on religious violence, including the deadly sectarian riots that shook Gujarat in 2002," when Modi was the Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat.

Delhi Rape Documentary Raises Powerful Questions

India's Daughter, a new controversial documentary, first aired this past March 8th on International Women's Day. Its theme is the brutal gang rape of an Indian medical student in New Delhi in 2012 which aroused huge protests all over the country. One has to ask whether the conscience of a western country which experiences similar gender-based violence would have been similarly roused. So why has the Indian government banned the film? In a powerful article in the *Atlantic* called "I Am Not India's Daughter," an Indian journalist describes a culture of pervasive msyogyny. A double rape and hanging of two young girls in Uttar Pradesh last year led another Indian filmmaker to lodge a strong accusation of the connection between rape, racism, and caste. Further complicating issues of caste are the newest efforts on the part of Hindu nationalists to re-convert Christians and Muslims to Hinduism. According to a Dec. 23, 2014 article in the *New York Times,* the "homecoming" ceremony called *ghar wapsi* supposedly has welcomed thousands back to Hinduism with promises that the new converts can choose their own caste, something the *Times* calls "an extraordinary offer that would seem to overturn thousands of years of a system in which birth determines caste."

The Newest Boat People

Religious extremism is on the rise: not just Muslim, and not just Hindu. Now a budding virulent Buddhist nationalism is gaining ground in Myanmar. According to a *Time* magazine article June 4th, the Buddhist government widely thought to be reformist is trying to either exterminate or drive out an entire people group, a Burmese Muslim minority people called the Rohingya. Desperately fleeing across the Bay of Bengal to Malaysia and Indonesia, the Rohingya, the world's newest boat people, is a group of 1.3 million Burmese Muslims who have had their citizenship revoked, have been placed into camps, or summarily executed. This year more than 90,000 tried to escape their native land with the result that tens of thousands were trafficked aboard smugglers' vessels, or left to drown at sea.

From Paper State to Caliphate

A lengthy new Analysis Paper was published in March 2015 by the Brookings Project on US Relations with the Islamic World entitled "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of Islamic State." Author Cole Bunzel, a PhD candidate studying under esteemed Princeton University professor Bernard Haykel, is also a frequent contributor to the blog *Jihadica.* Readers of *IJFM* may remember that Haykel was extensively interviewed by Graeme Wood for his groundbreaking article "What ISIS Really Wants" (March 2015) mentioned in the IOW in *IJFM* 31:4. Alexander Thurston also weighed in with a blog entitled "The Islamic State's Intellectual Geneology" in which he mentions ten Muslim thinkers from different periods of Islamic history whose writings have been used extensively by ISIS to justify and validate their goals and actions.

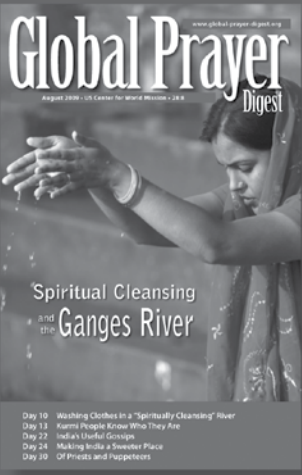## A Missiologist Responds to Harley Talman's "Is Muhammad Also Among the Prophets?"

Warrick Farah, in his *Circumpolar* blog (March 30, 2015) published a thoughtful response to Harley Talman's lengthy article "Is Muhammad Also Among the Prophets?" (*IJFM* 31:4) Farah suggests that Talman's nuanced article should be "a must read for all those interested in an evangelical theology of Islam." Farah then goes on to raise some excellent questions of his own. Read his blog and then Talman's meticulous answers to Farah in a later *Circumpolar* blog, April 6th. **IJFM**

IJFM & Perspectives
On the World Christian Movement

Whether you're a Perspectives instructor, student, or coordinator, you can continue to explore issues raised in the course reader and study guide in greater depth in **IJFM**. For ease of reference, each **IJFM** article in the table below is tied thematically to one or more of the 15 Perspectives lessons, divided into four sections: Biblical (B), Historical (H), Cultural (C) and Strategic (S). *Disclaimer: The table below shows where the content of a given article might fit; it does not imply endorsement of a particular article by the editors of the* Perspectives *materials.* For sake of space, the table only includes lessons related to the articles in a given **IJFM** issue. To learn more about the Perspectives course, including a list of classes, visit www.perspectives.org.

Related Perspectives Lesson and Section

Articles in IJFM 32:1	Lesson 7: Eras of Mission History (H)	Lesson 8: Pioneers of the World Christian Movement (H)	Lesson 9: The Task Remaining (H)	Lesson 10: How Shall They Hear? (C)	Lesson 11: Building Bridges of Love (C)	Lesson 14: Pioneer Church Planting (S)
Will the Earth Hear His Voice? Is Ralph D. Winter's Idea Still Valid? Greg H. Parsons (pp. 5–18)	X	X	X	X		
Other Backward Castes (OBCs): the World's Largest Megabloc of UPGs Yashwant Koli (pp. 20–21)			X			X
Ethnicity, Kinship, Religion and Territory: Identifying Communities in South Asia Mark Pickett (pp. 23–36)			X	X		X
Fruitful Practices in Sub-Saharan Muslim Africa: Some Recent Research Findings Gene Daniels (pp. 37–42)				X	X	
Building a Better Bridge: A Quest for Blessing in an African Folk Islamic Context Alan Howell (pp. 43–51)				X	X	
Book review of *Ecclesial Identities in a Multi-Faith Context: Jesus Truth-Gatherings (Yeshu Satsangs) among Hindus and Sikhs in Northwest India* Herbert Hoefer (pp. 52–53)			X	X		X

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THIS YEAR THE ISFM AND EMS JOIN FORCES around the theme "Controversies in Mission." ISFM sessions will explore vital missiological perspectives—including the Bridging the Divide model—that have enabled us to go beyond mere controversy. Editors and contributors to the 2015 book, *Understanding Insider Movements,* will handle multiple interactive sessions on new descriptive and analytical research into actual insider movements. For more, including EMS sessions, see www.emsweb.org and the ad on the inside front cover (page 2).

For more, see ad on page 2.

For conference details, registration and accomodations, see www.emsweb.org.

ISFM Speakers include: John Travis, Kevin Higgins, Darren Duerksen, Louisa Cox and Harley Talman.