

FACETS OF MISSION

"Ken Pike then had a meeting for anybody interested and the room was packed. He started off by just looking at us and then said, 'So you want to go to the Amazon as a missionary. Let me tell you in two years one-third of you will be dead, one-third of you will be invalided home and only one-third of you will be left on the field suffering from malaria trying to get something done on the language.' Well that was the kind of challenge you know I couldn't avoid." Taken from Dr. Dan Wooding's interview of Dr. Dale Kietzman, the words of Dr. Ken Pike "

Decades ago, when we talk about missions, it meant being in the forest or mountains, living among the tribes, planting churches, translating the Bible and helping the locals to be educated. Missionaries back then were willing to give their lives for the cross of Christ. In the same manner that Dr. Kietzman was challenged, I believe that many missionaries are in the mission field because of a noble desire to heed a higher calling. This is what we wanted to share with you when we included Dr. Dan Woodings' interview: to remember the challenge in missions that first brought us to enter in the service of the Risen Savior!

A couple of months ago, Damples, our editorial staff, stumbled upon some information about Heartstream Resources, the ministry of Drs. Lawrence and Lois Dodds. She believed that Heartstream Resources is an important ministry to support missionaries in mission fields and must be included in this issue. The article "Am I Still Me" talks about missionaries' difficult passage to enter the culture of their host country and how to cope with cultural differences. We give thanks to God for people like the Dodds, who are a great help and support for missions.

We invited Dr. David Han to write about his mission to the Nuu-Chah-Nulth tribe. We will get to know one of the first nations people groups through his article. He wrote about his experiences in sharing the Word and the life of Christ to the tribe through use of a new method in missions.

Dr. Chansamone Saiyasak, one of our known Asian missiologists and the current president of Asian Society of Missiology, allowed us to include his paper written for the AMA Convention held last October, 2013 in South Korea. In his paper, he wrote

about Disciple-making in Asia's Buddhist Context. Discipleship must be our goal in missions as the Lord has commanded us. Dr. Marvin Newell, vice-president of MISSIO-NEXUS and one of our regular contributors, also shares with us the biblical beginning of human culture, which is a study necessary to understand missions.

Both Dr. Reuben Ezemadu and Pastor Aliba Imchen shared reports about their mission activities in Nigeria and India, respectively, in order to share with us the joy of missions.

This is our lineup of articles for you, our dear brethren. We wanted to share with you the challenge, support, method, goal and joys of missions, and we give thanks for this ministry always!

Timothy K. Park, Editor

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AM I STILL ME?

Changing the Core Self to Fit A New Cultural Context

Lois A. Dodds & Lawrence E. Dodds

ABSTRACT

Going across cultures requires a person to change his or her core self in significant, even profound, ways. Adjusting to and internalizing the values and practices of a new culture requires that one relinquish aspects of the self shaped in the home culture. These changes may be welcomed, and even fostered, yet they may come at a high cost. Struggles in identity and loss of self-esteem are two results of the loss of familiar reference groups and relationships. Cues and feedback about one's self shift radically in the new context. One may have to develop other traits and qualities, practice one's profession differently, fit into the social structure at a different level, and give up cherished roles or aspects of the self. This paper explores the reasons for change, the process of change, and suggests strategies for shoring up the shifting self. It concentrates on the needs of people in cross-cultural ministry.

AM I STILL ME?

A young missionary a year and a half into his field term recently said to us, "I feel like every part of me has been disassembled and is lying about. I've been taken all apart. Nothing works. I can't put myself back together, and I don't know who can." We hear painful pleas like this frequently, especially from people serving their first years in foreign cultures.

The challenge to develop a new identity is faced by people the world over who are forced to or chose to go across cultures. It is one of the painful aspects of becoming a refugee, for instance, or of immigrating for more hopeful reasons. Whether we are forced into a new culture or voluntarily make the choice, we usually face multiple changes resulting from the move into the other culture. There is often a change in social standing and economic level, as well as the grief of leaving behind all that is dear and familiar. Talking with immigrants and refugees around the world, we see a similar pattern of loss of identity and the need to form a new one based on the new context. Those who leave the homeland with a high status, and are well educated, highly trained, or are pillars of their community, particularly feel the impact of their come-down. While they were once looked up to, they may now be disdained as aliens with little to offer, or worse, as intruders who are using resources rightfully belonging to others. We saw this personally in our friendship with an Afghan family who fled to the U.S. during the communist years. The husband, a gifted surgeon, later committed suicide. It seems he could not overcome the loss of identity and status, unable to practice his profession in the new land.

We have found that this matter of the shifting core self is seldom addressed in mission training or other cross-

cultural preparation. Yet, this adjustment accounts for a great deal of the stress involved in going across cultures. It can require enormous amounts of energy to effectively re-form one's identity and to regain appropriate self-esteem. We believe it would be helpful to address the issue of the changing self during mission and other cross-cultural training programs. Such teaching would give a framework for assessing one's own and others' process of change. It would be a pro-active way to prepare people for the stress involved. Most training focuses on more superficial, external changes and does not anticipate or deal with the deeper changes that will be required.

A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Becoming one's self is a life-long process. Our original formation of the self is considered to be a complex process, beginning at birth. Various theorists of personality (the self, the ego, personhood) place differing emphasis on the degree of genetic influence; all agree that we are born with certain qualities, traits and pre-dispositions. What we inherit is then strongly influenced by many factors, primarily the historical and cultural contexts and our families of origin. Who we become (the self) emerges most strongly from whom we belong to—who loves us or not, who makes a place for us, emotionally, socially, and physically. (Fromm, in Wrightsman, 1988)

Erik Erikson (1950, 1956, 1968) is best known and respected for his theories about the formation and development of identity and the crisis and confusion which may relate to it. He defined identity as a "persistent sameness within oneself" (p. 62, Wrightsman, 1988) in which there is coherence between values and beliefs. Erikson's theories primarily relate to life stages of adolescence and young adulthood.¹

Other theorists have built upon Erikson's work. McAdams (1985) considers identity a function of our "life story;" we integrate identity through our narrative.² James Marcia (1966, 1980) proposes four "states" of identity: 1) confusion or diffusion (the person has experienced no crisis and has made no commitment), 2) identity foreclosure (the person has experienced no crisis but has made a commitment to

1. Erikson (in Wrightsman, 1988, p. 63) proposed that identity confusion arise in part due to an inability to make choices. We see this as also very relevant in cross-cultural life because the individual must constantly chose between values and behavior, language and other means of expression of the home culture and the host culture. At times one experiences overload (such as during culture shock) from the choice-making; a sense of paralysis may set in, leading to confusion or crisis.

2. McAdam's idea is intriguing. In our Intensive Care programs at Heartstream we place heavy emphasis on narrative therapy as a means of helping the troubled person regain a sense of identity and significance. For a description of our programs, see Powell and Bowers, 2002.)

a value system, such as one gained from parents, 3) identity moratorium, with identity on hold or still in process, and 4) identity achievement. We see Marcia's proposal as relevant to mission, particularly because of the outcomes we see in the lives of people who go across cultures in different "states" of identity. Those in states two and four seem to do best. Also relevant in cross-cultural adjustment is the role of crisis and commitment in the states Marcia describes.

WHY A NEW SELF?

Chosen, but no longer suitable:

Each of us is shaped by our home culture, which is the larger context in which our family teaches us how and who to be. We become "fit" for the world in which we are socialized. But in order to become effective in a new reality we have to change who we are. Who we have been is usually no longer sufficient in the new culture's expectations and demands. We have to be re-socialized.

This is paradoxical, because we are "chosen" by our churches (and by God, we believe) and selected by a mission because of who we are and who we have already become. We may be accepted to some extent by the potential for growth and change that trainers see in us, but that is usually not brought up to consciousness in the excitement and glory of becoming mission candidates. We don't think about being chosen because others may see in us the potential to become a different person. How we make the shift to becoming "different" seems to be in part a reflection of the degree of identify achievement before the challenge of cross-culture is attempted. We see that a person without a solid sense of self struggles more to make the change, and also suffers more significantly in re-entry to the home culture.

Loss of familiar and preferred roles:

An important aspect of the formation of our identity is the roles we have learned to fill within our own society. Adjusting to life abroad means we must give up many of these roles and adjust other roles to the new context. We must relinquish aspects of self related to these roles, perhaps some of which we treasure. This causes disequilibrium. We lose our balance as we let go of aspects of the self and take on some new aspects which seem foreign, perhaps even seem unacceptable at first. Yet these new things are expected of us - even to the extent of having to emulate behaviors which we do not value.

We may have to practice the roles we have in new ways, such as when Americans used to touching their spouses in public have to keep their hands off so as not to offend people of the other culture who are watching.

Loss of affirmation:

In our home cultures we have learned to gain affirmation in certain ways. This is what keeps us emotionally filled up. We learn the gestures and feedback which say we are valued, appreciated, loved, approved of, accepted. For most of us, this is an unconscious process. We learn to recognize it,

with a rude awakening, when it becomes evident in the new culture that we are experiencing a dearth of affirmation. We are forced to see ourselves in a new light when we receive different feedback. Our emotional resources run dry without approval or encouragement. We often receive criticism and even disdain because we don't measure up to what is expected in the new. This is true again when we re-enter the home culture, often having changed in ways not appreciated or affirmed by the significant persons of our lives who remained in the home culture.

Loss of reference groups:

Back home, we learn who we are on a daily basis through the various reference groups who are sources of affirmation for us. Through them we develop a sense of our own value, our place, the boundaries of what is acceptable and expected. Going into another culture usually means we leave all of these groups behind, all at once! Those who go single rarely have even one other person to accompany them into the new. Couples or families have each other. Ideally they are able to provide some ongoing affirmation for each other as they remain one familiar group. In most cases it takes years to become a solid member of a new reference group. Meanwhile, we may feel we don't fit and have no place. The sense of isolation and aloneness contributes to some loss of self. This is one reason we strongly urge agencies to send out whole teams, not just individuals or couples.

Disillusionment about the self:

People going into ministry are usually idealistic, especially missionaries. We want to go out and change the world, to love the world on Christ's behalf. We intend to make a difference through the sacrifices we make. The pain of discovery that we are not as "good" or as "loving" or as "committed" as we believe ourselves to be is very real. It doesn't take long before we discover that we don't measure up to our idealistic self. I remember finding it hard to love people who spit on my walls and let their children wet on my couch. I found I had to have divine love to love those for whom I had no natural affinity.

This pain of change and the loss of who we thought ourselves to have been is like a pruning process. The fruit and foliage of our lives are cut off when we are transplanted into the new place, leaving a barren mass of branches while we transition to the new. This is essential, of course, to put down our roots in the new soil. But it is not easy; it is quite painful and even ugly at times. It reminds me of what happens when I order flower bushes or bulbs by mail. I order the gorgeous blooms on glossy pages to brighten my garden. What arrives are lifeless-looking brown masses. It takes faith to plant the "something" which arrives in brown bags from the floral company! I want the blooms, and hate the slow process of coaxing life out of the bare roots. I know it is essential to plant just a bulb, or a stock, or a bare root, but it's certainly not beautiful to start with. Of course, once we begin to change to fit the new context, we will no longer fit our home culture as well. We can't go back to who we once were; we will no longer be perceived and perhaps not even

loved the same again. That means certain losses, which engender sadness and require grieving. After returning to California from the Amazon, we used to joke with our friends, "Remember, we seem weird here and now because you prayed for us to adapt to life in Peru! God answered your prayers!"

Back to babyhood:

Another quality of most people who go cross-cultural is the ability to articulate one's vision, one's values, one's hopes and dreams, as well as all the matters of everyday life. Yet, going into a new culture means letting go of one's competence to manage even the most elementary aspects of daily life. One reverts to babyhood. This is depressing.

Seeing toddlers who surpass you in language skills and cultural knowledge is humbling, at best. The more highly trained one is, the bigger the step back to infancy.

"Sickness" in host cultures:

Going across cultures means entering a system which may be "sick," probably in ways different from our own society's sickness. Fromm (p. 173, Wrightsman, 1988) proposes that no culture of society is entirely healthy. We may be called into one which is actually psychosocially sick. This compounds the adjustment process because we have to sort out what to adopt (the healthy aspects) and what to reject (unhealthy aspects), while yet understanding and working within the system—we have to accommodate with out assimilating the whole.

My personal experience living in the Amazon for many years brought me into contact with some very sick societies. From a Christian perspective we would have to say they included evil and even "demonic" aspects antithetical to life. For example, one culture has taboos against eating certain foods during pregnancy and lactation: no meats, no fruits, no vegetables, nothing except manioc root (see Shaver and Dodds, 1990). This results in very low birth weight babies, and severe nutritional depletion of mothers after two or three pregnancies. Another culture teaches their boys, beginning at age five, to prepare and use hallucinogenic drugs while roaming the forest alone searching for a spirit to help them become good killers. (Larson and Dodds, 1985, 1991.)

In our work we find that cross-cultural workers experience considerable stress from being immersed in cultures whose practices or values seem sick when viewed from a Biblical perspective. (Think of Lot, "vexed in spirit" by the practices of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.) How does one adapt the self appropriately to a culture in which adult men are taking child brides as young as six? Forging a new identity in such cultures is particularly complex and exhausting.

A CLOSER LOOK AT IDENTITY

Inherent in going across cultures is the need to adapt the self, since we cannot adapt the culture to fit ourselves. Both deep and superficial aspects of the self must change in order to become effective in the

new context. Changing most everything in one's life simultaneously demands an overwhelming amount of adaptation, and adapting successfully means forging a new identity. This process is an exhausting one, requiring enormous energy. Few of us are prepared for the drain. We do not expect the stressful process of changing identity, yet it is a major cause of exhaustion. When it goes on and on, it sets us up for depression through actual changes in the brain structure and chemistry. (See the recent studies on the role of chronic stress in depression in *Scientific American*, September, 2003, including "Taming Stress," by Robert Sapolsky, pp. 86 to 95. He also wrote *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*.)

One's whole life pattern needs re-working because of simultaneously changing multiple life elements. Overnight the person entering cross-cultural ministry changes his or her cultural context, the actual job or role, the place and standing in society. He or she leaves behind all or most family, friends, acquaintances. These are profound losses. Even the seemingly superficial or "surface level" things such as climate, clothing and foods, are real and costly in terms of energy. They too press the self to adapt.

Loss of one's reference groups becomes a central factor in the change in identity. Those familiar people who provide both subtle and overt feedback about who we are and how we are perceived suddenly disappear. The people who become new sources of feedback, especially those not from our own culture and language, may give us very different messages about the self. In the early stages of our adaptation, they will likely let us know that we are inadequate in the new cultural setting, our new role, etc. For instance, many young parents we talk with say their host culture often tells them they are "bad" parents. How could responsible parents fail to put yarn wrist bands on their beautiful twins to prevent the evil eye from getting them? How could they utter the baby's name out loud where evil spirits may overhear them?

On our first day of linguistic training, Dr. Cal Rensch of SIL told us, "Starting today you will never really belong to the people you are going to work with or belong fully to the people you are leaving. You will be people between." We experienced this in various ways. When we were in the process of becoming missionaries, people in our home context idealized us; they saw us as models of commitment and inspiration. They told us this in many ways, and even though we thought we did not take it much to heart, it was a shock once we lost that affirmation and instead received feedback from some Peruvians maligning us as "imperialists, paternalists, full of self interest" and other derogatory terms. No one thanked us for coming or thought it admirable that we had uprooted our whole lives in order to help them change! They perceived such a move as stupid, or at best suspicious. We suffered some loss of self-esteem with every loss of skill in language and relating, with every misunderstanding about our motives and character.

Without anyone around who actually knew us over time, we had to start fresh in being known to a degree that we could again receive positive feedback about

ourselves. That took time because we started out with no shared history. In the meantime, we starved for the kind of affirmation which keeps one emotionally nurtured. This has been true in locating in another sub-culture within the U.S. as well as in our move to Peru!

Over time, if one is successfully adapting to the new, one achieves an altered sense of self, a new identity, incorporating some of the old and some of new. This is not easy or quick, as it means letting go of parts of the former self. This is in fact a painful process as we seek to determine which aspects of the self are negotiable and which aspects we cannot change if we are to keep our sense of integrity. I had the goal of becoming "really Peruvian" when we first went to Peru. Soon, however, I discovered that this meant accepting certain attitudes and habits which were in conflict with who I perceived myself to be – notably attitudes towards others and issues such as honesty. To fit the new I would have to change to a degree that I would no longer fit myself or my own Christian sub-culture. To stay the same meant I would be miserable as well as ineffective in the new. I had to find a middle ground of change so that I would in fact never again fit my own culture, and would never be fully a member of the other culture – I had to forge a new self, to become a "marginal person" in the anthropological sense of being a person between, living successfully on the boundary. In a sense, I had to become a bridge between two worlds, connecting what could never be fused. I had to give up my goal of total assimilation and acculturation and settle for a functional level of adaptation.

At home in the U.S., I had created an orderly and satisfying life, as a wife, a mother, a creative person serving the church, a nurturer of the extended family. With our move to the Amazon, it seemed like my carefully constructed life was suddenly thrown in the air, coming down like a jig-saw puzzle unable to hang together. Re-building and re-ordering life in the new culture meant I had to re-form myself as well. For Larry, a physician with elite training in space and aviation medicine who had served as flight surgeon for President Lyndon Johnson, practicing medicine in a simple jungle clinic, without glass for windows or modern equipment, led to a shift in his professional identity.

PATTERNS OF CHANGING SELF-ESTEEM

Most of all the changes resulting from cross-cultural work, of context, of language and so on, are assaults to self-esteem in some way. The culture cues about our adequacy (or likely inadequacy) will often be radically different, perhaps even unrecognizable. It becomes hard to answer "How am I doing?" because the means of feedback, as well as the actual messages differ. It is difficult to measure our appropriateness or progress in the new. Expectations for us likely vary in significant ways, most often unknown to us. We have to ferret out what is expected and what will gain approval.

An extreme example of this loss of moorings is a single missionary who went to South America, met a national on the bus, and within two weeks of landing

in the country was wooed into landing in his bed.

Even when one goes away to do the same job, such as pastoring or teaching, it is not likely practiced in the same way, with the same values and attitudes, the same resources. One may have to let go of exercising important gifts or areas of training which contribute to a sense of competency. Loss of resources and compromise of our internal standards of practice can undermine self-esteem, leading to doubt about our own integrity and adequacy. Our usual tools, standards and criteria for performance may be absent. The new peer group may conceptualize the profession or job in a radically different way. The new culture may place our profession or role in a different place in the social hierarchy. All these require adaptation and sorting out: what is most essential, what can we give up or compromise, what must we cling to in order to remain ourselves? It becomes hard to see one's self as coping and adaptable given the multiplicity and rapid rate of change.

As mentioned, language acquisition is particularly hard on self-concept and self-esteem. As educated people prepared for ministry in our own culture, we usually are articulate and skilled in communication. When the educated and articulate person enters the new context, where even toddlers surpass him or her in speech for the first couple of years, it is not only humbling but also damaging to self-esteem. Most professionals are reluctant to make mistakes. Depending on personality type, this may lead to a severe problem in adjustment, since language acquisition consists of multiple mistakes and constant correction. In our experience of 35 years in missions, it seems to us that the most educated and articulate suffer the most loss of self through the process of language development. Once gained, of course, mastery can once again enhance self-esteem.

Another critical area relating to self-esteem is success. It is hard to see and measure achievements in ministry where long-term and often intangible goals guide us. It is hard to maintain vision without visible gains. Uncertain or imperceptible progress creates self-doubts. How do we measure our effectiveness and whether our sacrifices are worth it? The perpetual unfinished work may lead to lack of self-confidence and sense of achievement.

Most missionaries do eventually reach a state of equilibrium, with enough sense of success to keep them in ministry.³ However, faced with the prospect of return to the homeland, the self is once again assaulted. Long-term cross-cultural workers may have lost their sense of ability to cope when returning to homeland or "regular" life and work. This can create a feeling of panic or despair. Having changed to fit the new, they no longer see themselves as able to readjust to the old.

A typical pattern in the fluctuations of self-esteem seems to be a sharp decrease in self-esteem in the first years during the period of culture shock, a gain or increase with adaptation to the new culture and

3. William Taylor's book *Too Valuable To Lose*, startled the missions community by showing that attrition rates are much higher than was generally acknowledged.

field situation, and another drop with the stress of furlough or re-entry. Return to the field setting may bring another boost in self-esteem as one experiences success, or lead to chronic culture fatigue because adaptation remains a constant struggle. There seems to be a cyclical pattern provoked by the constant change which cross-cultural ministry requires. Especially in the early years of ministry there is seldom a phase long enough to reach equilibrium, to relax and get back to normal.

Another important factor relating to self-esteem is that many Christians, especially those from fundamentalist backgrounds, seem to be predisposed to feelings of guilt, shame, and worthlessness even before entering cross-cultural ministries.

Some individuals may have temperamental, genetic, or familial predisposition towards depression or self doubt. These create additional vulnerability, as all the challenges to self compound through events in the new culture. These factors should be carefully evaluated in candidacy selection. Using Williams self-esteem inventory with thousands of persons working cross-culturally for twenty-plus years, we find that the three lowest areas (among ten) of self-esteem are 1) not feeling unconditionally loved by God, 2) not being able to accept one's weakness, and 3) being unable to forgive one's self. These emotional realities are in stark contrast to the cognitive statements in Christian theology!

Certain situations particularly wound the self-esteem of missionaries and others who go across cultures. When a person's home culture identity is not well achieved and he or she goes into the other culture but does not "succeed" in changing, self-esteem and identity are deeply damaged. This is compounded if the church or family give feedback about "failure" and "not being missionary material." Such a triple assault to self-esteem and identity may be devastating. We continue to meet, around the globe, persons from many nationalities who went across cultures and returned broken. Sometimes their attempts to regain equilibrium have led them into mal-adaptive behaviors. Without appropriate care these individuals are usually lost to ministry and to the church. They may remain marginal for years—a tragic loss! It seems that "forced" re-entry is exceedingly challenging. Those who re-enter after years of "success" abroad seem to adjust more comfortably—perhaps due to increased self-esteem from being themselves as good at coping, and having increased the inner resources.

The nature of ministry, especially cross-cultural, provides continual opportunity for self doubt, as expectations for living "the examined life" and "making the most of every opportunity" present continual choices. One young missionary put it this way, "Every moment has to be given to a necessary responsibility — things which do in fact have very real consequences if you do or do not do them."

Even persons who go cross-cultural for non-religious reasons tend to struggle with self-doubt and loss of self-esteem. One embassy person said to us, after a three-day seminar on the stresses of cultural adaptation, "We have all the same problems as you

(missionaries) do, but we don't have God!"

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SHAPING IDENTITY

What God entrusts to us is that we make Him visible to the world. We see this theme especially in Colossians, and in the teachings of Jesus. Loving the world on His behalf is no easy matter. It seems that what God gives us, as His cross-cultural agents, is the opportunity for accelerated learning. Our spiritual, emotional, and social growth has to be speeded up to fit us for the new demands and opportunities. He gives us more frequent and more serious testings to move us into fuller usefulness. He asks us to learn that our identity is in Him, for "in Him we live and move and have our being." This is a radical shift, because as we grow up, we are unaware that "we live and move and have our being" in our home culture. Our unconscious acceptance of our cultural environment with its values has to shift radically to intentional living out of Christ's values. We must grow in faith more quickly than the average Christian back home.

The accelerated, chronic high stress of adjustment reveals the "cracks" in the foundation of the self. Pressure causes even fine fractures to become larger, perhaps even to develop into chasms. All of the stresses and our responses to them point us to our need for transformation. It is more difficult to live out our ideal selves in the crucible. We quickly see our needs for God's power. He reveals to us that our human love and idealism is inadequate to the task to which He has called us — of loving others as He loves them, on His behalf. We discover that our human love is insufficient, that we must have His divine love to fulfill His divine purposes.

This, of course, is not a complimentary process. Sadly we usually attempt to cope with all the stresses by using our past experiences, in our past culture. Under high stress we usually regress or revert to the old ways we developed in anxious situations. We may withdraw or fight. When our identity gets shaken because new stresses touch or tap into old experiences and hurts, we revert to believing lies about ourselves which we learned from distortions of childhood.

We may feel, as did the Psalmist that "no one cares for me." We may cry and be in desperate need (Psalm 142). (See poems by Lois Dodds expressing some of these feelings, 1997, 1998.) We may feel our hearts destroyed and our spirits faint (Psalm 143:3, 4). Yet, we can find hope that one day, the "righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me" (Psalm 142:7b).

Many of those who come to our programs for restoration of cross-cultural workers have been torpedoed in their ministries because of the confluence of field stresses and old beliefs about the self which cause pain. We find that people have heart messages, deeply hidden, which are contrary to God's truth. The Scriptures refer often to the process by which we feed on lies. Isaiah 44:18 speaks of those who worshiped idols as "feeding on ashes." Ashes are caustic, destructive. So too the lies many of us internalized in childhood which we have never replaced with God's

truth about who we are. Psalm 143 speaks of the enemy plunging us into darkness, so that our spirits grow faint and our hearts dismayed. When we are under pressure, the “father of lies” brings back to us all the harmful things we were taught about ourselves. Thus the pressures of the cross-cultural experience bring to light the hidden things God wishes to change.

God offers us freedom from these lies. He allows us to exchange the gloom for gladness, to substitute His magnificent truths for our destructive lies (Isaiah 61:3). He allows us to be transformed by renewing our minds through His Words (Romans 12:1). He assures us there is no condemnation to us when we are in Him (Romans 8:1).

One key we can use to unlock our true identity lies in the Gospel story of Jesus telling the disciples “to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” He led them into this by asking, “Whose image is on the coin, whose inscription does it bear?” We can ask the same questions of ourselves. Are we not His image bearers, inscribed in our hearts with His marks of love?

STRATEGIES FOR GROWTH

The counselor to the cross-cultural worker, both peer and professional, can assist the person in significant ways during the period of identity transition and loss of self-esteem.

Teach about the process of changing identity and fluctuating self-esteem so that the person can discover he or she is not “going crazy” or is alone in the struggle. Help him or her see that many others share this struggle.

1. Affirm the uniqueness and inherent worth of the person, especially from a Biblical perspective of our identity being in Christ, being His workmanship, being His beloved children, being His chosen. Nurture the wounded person, because experiencing God’s love and acceptance through the counselor becomes a key source of energy and motivation for regaining equilibrium.
2. Help the person identify key aspects of the self, to sort out what is negotiable for change and what must remain relatively stable in order to maintain integrity of the self. This involves traits, qualities, values, habits, ways of relating. Understanding personality type can also help persons see why certain aspects of the host culture may be more difficult to adapt to.
3. Affirm the adaptive ability the person already manifests, as evidenced by the levels of stress already endured and the amount of change already achieved.
4. Educate regarding the energy demanded for adaptation and affirm the reality and difficulty of maintaining a good sense of self given all the layers of change required by cross-cultural ministry.
5. Teach about God’s view of growth and His purposes for “conforming” us to the image of Christ. Teach about the abiding presence and life of Christ within us which enables us to grow to

become like Him. Also illustrate the role of Holy Spirit to enlighten us, show us our blind spots (hidden faults, secret sins, hurtful ways) and to empower us to make the changes. (See Dodds, 1992, for a dissertation study on the role of the Holy Spirit in growth and development. This is highly relevant to the growth of cross-cultural workers.) Help the person internalize the Truth that God’s aim for us is to become persons in the fullest sense, of the highest development, transcendent of any particular culture (Dodds, 1992). In Him lies our true identity.

6. Encourage the person to participate in a small group in which he or she can be vulnerable by sharing in others’ failures, disappointment, needs, changes, struggles. This lends perspective, difficult to achieve alone, to one’s struggles.

Helpful Biblical perspective: A study of Ephesians 1 and other passages which describe our place in God’s family is a valuable resource for focusing on central and unchanging aspects of identity and re-experiencing positive feelings towards the self, based on God’s love for us. (See Dodds on self-esteem, 1980.)

Suggestions for Further Inquiry

Research on a person’s level of development achieved in the home culture before going across cultures, and the speed and degree of adaptation of identity in the host culture would be valuable. Understanding the correlation between these two would help agencies and candidates for cross-cultural life to assess the readiness to take on the enormous challenge of changing identity. Pro-active strategies to enhance the adaptation process might be developed. Thousands of people might be spared the devastation of “not succeeding” in the host culture, and of then being regarded as “failures” when returning to the home culture if matters of identity and change were better understood. Perhaps the re-entry process might also be smoother with more understanding and strategies for fitting in to home culture again.

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A NUU-CHAH-NULTH MISSION: What Does Native Salvation Look Like?

David Han

NUU-CHAH-NULTH

Americas are made up of many different *First Nations* people groups. Among them is the Nuu-chah-nulth people of the Pacific Northwest. Their traditional territory is the western half of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, about 125 miles north and south of mid-coast. The Nuu-chah-nulth people share their language roots and particular worldview and social structure with their northern neighbors, the Southern Kwakwaiutl and the Nuxalk. There is no agreement on the length of time, or, how and when they first appeared on the region, but it is generally accepted that Nuu-chah-nulth culture changed relatively little during the 5000 years preceding their first contact with non-natives.

FIRST VISIT

Our work began among the Nuu-chah-nulth people in 1996, two years after a group of us mainly Asian-Americans and other urban ministry personalities, including a native pastor, in Toronto, Canada, started a Christian mission alliance called 'Ekklesia.' Our objective was clear from the beginning that the focus of our work should be to serve the people in North America. It was our conviction that when God takes people from one land and transplants them to another land, God has purpose in them to carry His mission to the new land, as this was evident in the histories within the Bible. Thus, we had fixed ideas that our mission focus will be the poor in the inner cities and the native communities in America. As we look back at the recent human history and the struggles of current society, two dominant ideas have been dividing our human societies, namely, colonialism and capitalism. Our two ministry areas, the poor and the forgotten, corresponded with the needs of our human society as well.

A group of us was invited to Ahousaht, a sub-tribe of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation, in the summer of 1996. The reserve was on Flores Island in Clayoquot Sound, the west coast of Vancouver Island. No one among us had any previous encounter with a native culture and community except when we were students. We drove across the American continent as a summer fun and adventure and occasionally ran into the "Indians" and wondered about them because some of them looked like us.

Our short-term visit to the Nuu-chah-nulth Reserve, which was to be for 10 days and one time deal, kept us there for 18 years, to this day. Although it is difficult for me to recapture the excitement of our first visit, I remember that the visit to this First Nation village progressed from an initial shyness, to rapid building of friendship, and resulted in a celebration of life together. The chemistry between the First

Nation people and Asian-American visitors were amazingly natural. We didn't know what were the appropriate things to do in the First Nation reserve. So we spent the day with our native companions with no agenda. We played many games, sang old gospel songs and told our stories together. Though it was hinted that this was a "Christian" visit, the people didn't seem to give much attention to it, but rather they just appreciated and enjoyed our presence. We had no organized religious meetings or a bible study. Watching us interacting together all day reminded me of a gospel passage where Jesus stated his mission: I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10.10: NIV).

Later, we heard from an elder of the village that many youngsters had been attempting suicide, as many as 20 youths in a year at the village of about 900 people. Why suicide? The statistics show that 80 per cent of teenage suicides in the Province of British Columbia are First Nation teenage boys. The community also faced teen pregnancy, school dropout, and the usual suspects, drugs and alcohol problems.

In the morning when our boat left the village dock, I remembered seeing the tears in the eyes of the village boys and girls. When my eyes met the teary eyes of Rodney, a shy native boy who we got to know, as he followed us on the rocky embankment, God softly spoke to my heart, "David, You can do more for these young people".

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

We went back to the west coast for the next 10 years before we permanently moved to Mowachaht, a traditional Nuu-chah-nulth village. During those 10 years, our main focus of ministry was on the young people. We ran friendship camp for Asian-American and First Nation youths, where we celebrated life together for a week every summer. All 14 Nuu-chah-nulth villages have gradually joined and sent their youths to the camp. The adult members and families of the hosting village, Ahousaht, all came out to our site, Kelthsmath, and camped with us, cooked for us, and attended our morning and evening praise gatherings where the native elders and preachers shared good messages. The women of the village taught our youngsters the traditional native crafts, made from inner barks of cedar tree, and allowed us to participate in the traditional dances and ceremonies. The men brought out their traditional canoes and went fishing with the youths. We brought songs and music and small group bible studies. Asian-American teenagers joined the camp from all over North-America. Asian parents also joined the camp as their summer vacation, which, as a result, brought the Asian cultures to the camp. This has become a joint event that all of us looked forward to for the next 10

years.

BRIEF HISTORY OF MISSION

When British Columbia joined Canada in 1871, Nuu-chah-nulth people became part of the federal Indian reserve system. Villages still in use received small reserves in the 1880s, though without having formally surrendered any land to the government. Missionaries arrived to carry out government health and education programs. Such programs included the establishment of Indian boarding school, which is often referred as Residential School, where native culture was ruthlessly suppressed. The children were exposed to Christianity through attendance at church services and through the recitation of scripture verses and prayers at school where their own worldview and culture were denounced, and the use of traditional clothing and language was inhibited.

The traditional family and social structure were also marred since their children, from 5 to 15 years of age, were mandatorily taken away from their communities and only to return for short times within 2 or 3 years. The introduction of smallpox disease in 1875, brought, by European settlers, to indigenous peoples who had no immunity to resist, resulted in dramatic decrease of the population and thus altered the tribal social systems.

The mission of Christian denominations, Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican, in British Columbia began in the late 1800s and most of them ended around 1965. During the mission in this period, success was seen only in bringing western civilization to society, education, and medicine. But, Christianity was received as a foreign religion. A Methodist missionary reported back to his church that the natives have forsaken their traditional clothing and adopted western style clothing as a progress. While focusing on external outlook on the natives' lives, the mission did not seek to understand their culture and worldview as the key to transform lives. Native culture was also condemned, as "heathenism" and a reappearance of traditional cultural practice was an appeal for more missionary activity (Crosby 1914:186). The Missionary Society Reports of Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, in the similar period of time, indicated that the "Indian Mission" in British Columbia was widely suspected being a "failure." The failure perceived was always connected to the resurgence of native traditional cultural practices among the people.

SHIFT OF VIEW

While missionaries worked to Christianize the First Nations people, no significant progress has been made to this day. It seems, though, that the reason for the lack of conspicuous success was not the lack of effort, as we clearly see how many missions tirelessly serve in the region even today. We alleged that the reason for perceived slowness in the Christian progress in the people is being the lack of clear understanding: the salvation of First Nations people may look different from that of the customary outcomes which for the previous 200 years the Christian church had been familiar with.

NEW DEFINITION

Now we see the Nuu-chah-nulth mission with a set of new missional lenses. Instead of using the old measures, we need to engage a new method of mission to gauge the progress of the Nuu-chah-nulth Christianity. Instead of asking how many churches have been established, we ask, "What does native salvation look like?" Instead of asking how many converts and baptisms have been counted, we now ask, How can the fundamental religious values embedded in Nuu-chah-nulth culture (worldview) give understanding of the gospel to a Nuu-chah-nulth person? With this new direction, we acquire clear guidelines for which we engage the Nuu-chah-nulth mission.

The Nuu-chah-nulth traditional beliefs and inclusive religious worldview allow them to keep the traditional religious practice and Christianity equally together and yet without conflict. Today, most of the Nuu-chah-nulth people consider religion to be synonymous with Christianity and there is no resistance to the Christian messages. Yet they remain traditionally rooted. Their traditional beliefs and practices, which were religious in the broader sense of the term, i.e., beliefs in supernatural beings and forces, and practices for dealing with them, remain important factor in their religious identity. The Nuu-chah-nulth people do not see conflict in these parts of their religion with Christianity.

Christianity has not been fully integrated in the Nuu-chah-nulth culture. Neither Christianization of the Nuu-chah-nulth tradition nor indigenization of Christian faith has happened. The basic features of Christian traditions, such as prayers, readings, and sermon, have been used in their weddings and funerals. But the features of the traditional practice take parallel importance in these ceremonies. Over the years I witnessed that the Nuu-chah-nulth people responded, with emotion, to their traditional features more than the Christian features. Drums and rattles are used with modern instruments in these ceremonies.

I believe that it is necessary for Christian mission to engage in the traditional values and worldview in order to properly communicate the gospel message in more acceptable form to the people. The aim of this quest is to envision a local Christianity and how religious ideas and values expressed in their traditional worldview could help enrich Christianity among the people and also to communicate better to the people.

Because of the nature in which the gospel was communicated in the colonial era, the recipients of that gospel had never have a chance to fully explore what it meant to be a Christian in their own cultural self. And, because of the way in which the Christianity was translated in the West and its forceful transmission to native peoples, the delicate features of their own worldview were never mirrored in the making of their own theology. An observation was made by an African post-colonial theologian, which resonates in the indigenous missions in America, that the "areas of

traditional Christian doctrine which are not reflected in the African past, disappear or are marginalized" (Hastings 1950:52).

The reason for reconstructing one's own cultural religious identity and connecting and attributing to their own collective Christian self-understanding may be obvious: the validation of the authenticity of the peoplehood of God. People in every culture want to know that God was in their culture, even before Christianity arrived. Archbishop Desmond Tutu articulates it well:

African theologians have set about demonstrating that the African religious experience and heritage were not illusory and that they should have formed the vehicle for conveying the Gospel verities to Africa... It was vital for Africa's self-respect that this kind of rehabilitation of his religious heritage should take place. It is the theological counterpart of what has happened in, say, the study of African History. It has helped to give the lie to the supercilious but tacit assumption that religion and history in Africa date from the advent in that continent of the white men. It is reassuring to know that we have had a genuine knowledge of God and that we have had our own ways of communicating with deity, ways which meant that we were able to speak authentically as ourselves and not as pale imitations of others. It means that we have a great store from which we can fashion new ways of speaking to and about God, and new style of worship consistent with our new faith (Tutu 1978:366). Christianity and the Nuu-chah-nulth tradition remain distant and detached perhaps because of the forceful transmission of Christianity into their culture, while their own native values were denounced by the missionaries. Thus, it is our current missional task to create a healing environment to restore the respect and the dignity of their values. This is an arduous task to undertake especially today when the relevance of institutional religion to our human society is dwindling.

CULTURAL IDENTITY

American society is known for its aptitude to absorb disparate social and cultural groups. We often relate America to a huge cultural homogenization machine. Conversely, it is difficult for distinct groups and people to survive socially and culturally, in such a setting. Perhaps, the First Nations community could survive profound cultural loss and continue as social groups if the political (cultural) situation of First Nations tribes were in a better position.

However, given the weight of Pauline Theology which often-emphasized the "salvation of Israel" as an integral part of Israel's salvation, the cultural identity and survival of the native people in North America is an essential element in defining their salvation. Robert K. Thomas, a Cherokee scholar and social prophet who led discussions among the native leaders through Native Ministries Consortium and whose primary concern and passion was the survival of "Indians" as peoples, suggested that all of those minority peoples in the Old World who have survived in such circumstances have four features in

common (Anderson 1990:23):

1. A distinct language, even if it simply functions as a ceremonial/holy language;
2. A unique religion, even if it is their own version of a world religion;
3. A tie to a particular piece of land, a homeland and a holy land;
4. A sacred history, which tells you who you are and why you must survive as a people.

At this point in the Nuu-chah-nulth Christian history, it looks like their salvation may be an integrated cultural understanding of Christian message. If so, this has to be insured by the vitality and survival of their own cultural identity. Christian self-understanding based on their culture, language, political and social make-up, points to a development of a local theology for the Nuu-chah-nulth. Otherwise, their Christianity will remain parallel to their traditional religion.

LOCAL THEOLOGY

Western theologians admit that the theology of Western churches is seen to be no longer transcending all regions of the world. It is precisely in its Western form and no longer universal and accessible for persons from other cultures (Schreier 1985:ix). This change of view was brought about and signified by the emergence of various contextual theologies. We realized that western theologies have just as much socio-cultural bias and they are local theology themselves, in its social and cultural context, bringing the Gospel expression to its own context. Schillebeeckx recapped, "How can this selfsame Gospel, which is given only in a societal and cultural context and can never be wholly extricated from any culture, be allowed to speak the language of an entirely different culture? (Schreier 1985:ix)"

However, given the weight of Pauline Theology often-emphasized the "salvation of Israel" as an integral part of Israel's salvation, the cultural identity and survival of the native people in North America is an essential element in defining their salvation.

What we call the history of Christian thought really consists of a series of local theologies. Therefore, theology should deal with cultural concepts along with theological concepts, in order to fully complete cultural and theological views. The quest for recent Christian theologies gathered a clear consensus, among theologians, to the fact that conversion to Christianity must be coupled with cultural continuity (Fashole'-Luke 1975:267-268).

However, this way of theologizing raises the question about the peculiar nature of folk religion and the boundaries of meaning in relation to Christian identity.

Each attempt of local theology must be responsible for bringing the Gospel in its essential form to its people. Local theology hangs in the balance of its pastoral characteristic and the salvation normally offered by Christian faith. It is not only, for local theology, to be responsible for guarding the truths of Christianity in its construction, but also to give the preponderance of pastoral characteristics of local expression for its people.

In constructing a particular local Christian theology in postcolonial sentiment, many amongst local theologians have chosen to go down three major paths of theological trend – inculturation, liberation, and reconstruction. In the recent past, liberation and inculturation have been the two most fashionable theological responses. But, about a decade ago, reconstruction method was introduced as a new paradigm. (Mugambi, 2002, 190)

POSTCOLONIAL METHODOLOGY

We have embarked on constructing towards a Nuu-chah-nulth theology. Religiosity is reflected in every aspect of human life. By critical analysis of the key elements of culture, we understand the religious identity of the people. The religious identity is the window through which we understand the cultural form of Christianity. The religious identity understood from the study of tradition can now provide a basis of cultural understanding of Christianity. The elements of religious faith embedded in traditional religious worldview portrayed in the Nuu-chah-nulth ceremonies and social structures can provide a framework for understanding the cultural shape that Christianity has taken among the Nuu-chah-nulth people.

This theologizing method renders a theology that is free from power struggle and does not produce counter-force since it naturally builds and understands a local theology from its own cultural sources and their own cultural religious identity.

This theologizing method renders a theology that is free from power struggle and does not produce counter-force since it naturally builds and understands a local theology from its own cultural sources and their own cultural religious identity. This way of constructing a local theology may create a new opportunity for the Nuu-chah-nulth to hear the message of Christ. This new approach implies for our friends new appreciation of the Christian faith itself as a non-Western religion.

The Nuu-chah-nulth people are a people just like us. They live in communities on the rugged coasts experiencing life of happiness, and sadness. Charlotte,

a Nuu-chah-nulth scholar who teaches American Indian Studies, at the University of Washington, once told me, 'Our people are not perfect but they are pretty happy people.' Maggi, a good friend, also stated in a form of question, 'Who says that we are not saved already?' The ordinary Nuu-chah-nulths understand salvation to be living in their community of families and friends. The chiefs and councils understand salvation to be that they become a politically and economically viable people. While our mission is serving the existential aspects of their salvation, we also want them to know that the heavenly father who created them and love them to be the people who redeemed, in all aspects (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) of life, through the grace of our Jesus Christ.

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DISCIPLE MAKING IN ASIA'S BUDDHIST CONTEXT

Chansamone Saiyasak

After over 2000 years of Christ's blueprint for advancing His kingdom, Christians all over Asia and the rest of the world remain fervent as ever to fulfill this great command of making disciples. Today, Christianity has grown to be the largest religion in the world as well as the most widely practiced and influential religion on the globe.¹ Yet, Evangelical Christians still regularly debate regularly the meaning of this last command, which is the master plan of world evangelization. Nevertheless, with all their differences, all parties agree that salvation can only come through confessing the Name of the only Son of God, Jesus Christ. However, not all parties are persuaded that making disciples (or disciple-making) is the crux of the command. A couple of question begs a response. Is the conversion of the unsaved the primary goal of the Church? Or is disciple-making of the converts the goal? If so, why and how should disciple-making be done?

In this paper, the author postulates that disciple-making is the crux of Christ's command and thus the goal of the Church and mission in Asia's Buddhist context, Christianity urgently calls for serious discipleship and disciple-making. Christ's mandate, known to us as the Great Commission, is to make disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20 RSV)

THE MEANING OF DISCIPLESHIP AND DISCIPLE-MAKING

The well-known missiologist David J. Hesselgrave defines disciple-making: "To disciple means to make followers, students, learners."² He further states: "Discipling is to be accomplished by going, baptizing, and teaching all things Christ commanded."³

Senior Vice President of Missio Nexus, a network of evangelical mission agencies, churches, and training centers in North America, Marvin Newell agrees,

*All three activities – going, baptizing, and teaching – are essential components to making disciples of all people. When done correctly, lives are changed for the better. This is the ultimate objective of making disciples. Transformed lives, in turn, transform communities, cultures, and even whole countries.*⁴

1. "Largest religions: Christianity," CREDON.org, <http://www.credong.org/christianity.php> (accessed August 2, 2013).

2. David J. Hesselgrave, "Essential Elements of Church Planting and Growing in the 21st Century," EMQOnline.com, <http://www.emisdirect.com/emq/issue-127/472> (accessed August 6, 2013).

3. Ibid.

4. Marvin Newell, "Making Disciples—Go, Baptize, Teach,"

Newell further describes the disciple-making process:

*The making of disciples, on the other hand, is the process whereby mature believers build personal relationships with new believers for the purpose of producing growing and maturing followers of Jesus. The process develops over a period of time and demands the context of nurturing. These new believers evidence genuine faith by showing progress in spiritual maturity, which transforms beliefs, behavior, and worldview.*⁵

The German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book *The Cost of Discipleship* made a compelling statement of the demands of sacrifice for true discipleship. He articulated, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."⁶ Those who are following Christ in discipleship should have a discipleship mentality – self-sacrifice/self-denial – which is a requirement for disciple-making. In his post *The Cost of Discipleship*, the founding pastor of the Mars Hill Church, Mark Driscoll, asserts:

*Salvation costs you nothing, but discipleship will cost you everything. Salvation occurs in a moment, but discipleship takes a lifetime. Jesus asks whether or not you truly want to live a life of discipleship. If you are a disciple, do not quit. Everything that matters is hard. Everything that matters is costly. Do not quit. Don't waste your life. Make your death count. Do not raise your hand unless you're ready to see it through to the end.*⁷

The heart of disciple-making is a reciprocal relationship. Greg Ogden, the executive pastor of discipleship at Christ Church in Oak Brook, Illinois, who formerly served as director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Fuller Theological Seminary, in his book *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, defines disciple-making: "Discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well."⁸

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLE-MAKING

The importance of disciple-making cannot be overstated. The Center for Transformation and Development (CTD) affirms: "For if we fail to make Christ-centered disciples who are obeying the

EMQOnline.com, <http://www.emisdirect.com/emq/issue-313/2472> (accessed August 6, 2013).

5. Ibid.

6. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 1138

7. Mark Driscoll, "The Cost of Discipleship," Mars Hill Church, <http://marshill.com/media/luke/the-cost-of-discipleship> (accessed August 12, 2013).

8. Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003) Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 1325-1326.

commandments of God, rightfully speaking, we can say that we have not accomplished the Great Commission even if we have a massive attendance every meeting.”⁹ Bonhoeffer strongly argued that “Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”¹⁰

Relating to Church Planting

In their book *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow*, Eric Geiger et al firmly express,¹¹ “The fundamental reason your church exists is to make disciples of Jesus.” The author of *Building the Discipleship Culture*, Mike Breen accurately concurs: “If you make disciples, you will always get the church. But if you try to build the church, you will rarely get disciples.”¹² Breen further observes:

The reason the missional movement may fail is because most people/communities in the Western church are pretty bad at making disciples. Without a plan for making disciples (and a plan that works), any missional thing you launch will be completely unsustainable.”¹³

Relating to Syncretism

The avoidance of syncretism is another important reason for disciple-making. In the northern part of Burma (Myanmar), the Karen people turned to Christ in masses. However, due to the omission of disciple-making, a syncretistic form of Christianity developed and permeated the Karen Church. The church planters’ trainer Doug Foltz warns of the danger from the absence of disciple-making:

I pointed out that many church planters have never been discipled. They have grown in their faith void of spiritual fathers and been “discipled” through the worship service. It is hard for someone who hasn’t been discipled to disciple others. Without discipleship, contextualization is void of transformation and bends towards syncretism.”¹⁴

Larry Dinkins, an OMF missionary serving in Thailand for over 30 years, sternly warns: “Discipleship is key; Jesus commissioned us to make disciples and apart from it many groups will fall into syncretism”¹⁵

THE URGENCY OF DISCIPLE-MAKING IN ASIA’S BUDDHIST CONTEXT

Apart from fulfilling Christ’s command to make disciples, why should disciple-making receive the highest priority in the mission of the Church in Asia’s Buddhist context? How should disciple-making be carried out?

The continent of Asia consists of strong traditional religious and Buddhist contexts as well as political and governing environments and restrictions that necessitate a thorough, delicate plan for evangelism and disciple-making. As a non-Christian region of the world, Asia is experiencing the rapid rise of the Christian faith amidst religious pluralism and political and social repression. Although Christianity originated in Asia, it is often viewed as a newcomer to the religious scene of Asia. Christianity’s message and intention are grossly misunderstood and rejected due to its perceived alliance with politics and Western imperialism.

Nevertheless, in the midst of surmountable obstacles, the Christian faith has shown resilience and prevailed. Asia’s peoples are turning to Christianity from largely animistic backgrounds and some from other major religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. The Asian converts’ new experiences with Christian faith is crucial to the sustainability and indigenization of Christianity in this region of the world. As such the essentiality of discipleship and disciple-making cannot be overestimated. Observable conditions requiring intense, intentional discipleship and disciple-making of the converts are as follows:

First, the predominately non-Christian cultures of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Folk Religions prevail in all of Asia. These religious traditions deeply penetrate every fabric of society and culture in every country in Asia. The established social norms and customs have its base in these religious ideas and beliefs. Ancestral honoring and worship often have become integrated and survived through these religious practices. In Southeast Asia, the proof of one’s faithfulness to the ancestors is generally determined by one’s observation of their religions. A person’s worth and right to live in the community is oftentimes conditioned by his or her conformity to the prevailing religious beliefs and practices.

Second, the peoples in Asia are generally ignorant of the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith. Christianity is usually associated with colonial, imperialist power, and it is mostly referred to as the religion of Western foreigners. Asians, including the Asian converts, are generally uninformed of the common knowledge, beliefs and practices of the Christian faith. Their view of Christianity fills with either suspicion or disinterest.

Third, due to totally non-Christian backgrounds, Asian converts normally inherit religious elements from former religions. In Southeast Asia, primarily elements from Buddhism and Folk Religions (animism) are naturally and necessarily carried over into their new Christian faith. Asian Christians often struggle in reconciling and maintaining the continuity

9. “The Great Commission and Discipleship,” Centre for Transformation and Development, <http://centrefortransformationanddevelopment.com/2013/03/26/the-great-commission-and-discipleship> (accessed August 1, 2013).

10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Location 696.

11. Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 1, Location 136.

12. Mike Breen, “Why the Missional Movement Will Fail,” *Mike Breen’s Blog*, September 12, 2011, <http://mikebreen.wordpress.com/2011/09/12/why-the-missional-movement-will-fail/> (Accessed August 8, 2013).

13. Ibid.

14. Doug Foltz, “Why Contextualization is Important to Church Planting and Missions,” *Dough Foltz’s Blog*, January 31, 2011, <http://plantingchurches.org/2011/01/why-contextualization-is-important-to-church-planting-and-missions/> (Accessed July 26, 2013).

15. Larry Dinkins, “Biblical Validity,” *Simply The Story*, <http://simplythestory.org/oralbiblestories/index.php/biblical-validity.html> (Accessed July 29, 2013).

of their two faiths.

Fourth, Asian converts have undoubtedly experienced the clash between the old and new religious systems, worldviews, and practices. These conflicts arise from incompatible and irreconcilable attributes of the two religions. Because of the “harmonizing” nature of Asians, the struggles from the clash continue for most Asian converts without dissenting one or the other religion.

Fifth, due to the above factors, high probability of religious syncretism exists for Asian converts. This therefore leads to major compromises of the Christianity and strange mixture of the old and new, hindering the Christian faith from taking root in the Asian converts.

Sixth, because most of Asia is ignorant of the Christian faith, along with their perception of the possible threats that Christianity may pose to the harmonious existence of the present social, cultural and religious structure, social ostracism and religious persecution often follow. These acts of ostracism and persecution generally include members of the group who decided to embrace the new faith (Christianity).

Seventh, the support for spiritual growth for Asian converts generally is either extremely minimal or nonexistent. The absence of a favorable environment for growth has led to the instability and unsustainability of the Christian faith in the majority part of Southeast Asia’s Buddhist countries. Strong outside Christian networks provide provisional support for converts in Buddhist contexts. However, sustainable internal infrastructures for survival and growth have yet to be developed.

Finally, the prospect of reverting to old religious beliefs and practices remains high for converts in many parts of Buddhist Asia. Social, economic and political causes resulting in the seven factors above are primarily responsible for the relapse.

CULTURAL CONFLICT

Under the current conditions faced by converts in Asia’s Buddhist context, strong contextual disciple-making efforts are imperative for the stability and sustainability as well as the growth of the Christian faith. These efforts should include a comprehensive disciple-making process that comprises of more than biblical content of their Christian faith. The different areas of cultural conflicts between the convert’s culture and the biblical beliefs and practices should be addressed in the disciple-making materials. Cultural conflict involves (1) cultural differences, (1) value and worldview clash, and (3) social, political and economic restrictions should be dealt in disciple-making of the converts in Asia’s Buddhist context.

Cultural Differences That Impact Disciple-making

Major cultural differences impacting disciple-making of Asian Buddhist converts should be considered and handled carefully. Recognizing these differences is extremely significant especially when the discipler is approaching disciple-making from a perspective other than the convert. A great chasm exists in terms

of communication, methodologies and approaches as well as perception and worldviews between the Asian convert and the discipler along with his beliefs and practices. These cultural differences include different ways of looking at things, of dressing, and of expressing personality. An influential Dutch organizational sociologist, who studied the interactions between national cultures, Geert Hofstede named four dimensions of culture: Power Distance, Collectivism vs. Individualism, Femininity vs. Masculinity, and Uncertainty Avoidance.¹⁶ These dimensions define our identity (as a discipler) and relationships with others (as disciples) in society.

The disciple-making process should (1) separate the biblical culture and biblical truths, (2) identify discipler’s culture, and (3) determine the convert’s culture. In disciple-making, the discipler is tasked with nurturing the convert to internalizing the biblical truths, resulting in the transformation of his whole person, and to live out the internalized biblical truths in his cultural context. The disciple is never disciplined out of his culture but disciplined to live a transformed life in the Asian Buddhist cultural context.

An example of disciple-making that imposed the discipler’s culture on a Thai-Lao convert occurred in a ministry in Northeast Thailand years ago. A Western couple was discipling a Thai-Lao female convert to mature in the Christian faith. They disciplined her on the subject of freedom in Christ and freedom to choose one’s service to the Lord, stating that once the convert turns 18 years of age, she is not under authority and can make decision individualistically regardless of the desire of those in authority. From a low-power distance culture, the Western couple was discipling the convert from their Western context. However, the convert grew up in a high-power distance culture and expects decisions and direction from those in authority. Today, that Thai-Lao convert struggles relationally and with being accepted in the Thai-Lao communities due primarily to her Western-acquired cultural outlook that is now different from original Thai-Lao culture. She was disciplined out of her culture.

Cultural anthropologist Jack Scarborough in *The Origins of Cultural Differences and Their Impact on Management* describes:

Power distance represents the degree to which people accept unequal distribution of power. In a large-power-distance culture, people feel dependence on those in authority and expect direction from them. Those in authority exercise power in an autocratic or paternalistic manner. Subordinates avoid crossing the large power distance; they are less willing to challenge or even approach their bosses. They learn strict obedience as children, which carries forward into adulthood. Those in authority are assumed to be there because they have a right to it, either by virtue of inheritance or because of superior expertise...In a low-power-distance culture, people expect to have more control and expect their bosses to involve

16. Geert Hofstede, *Culture’s Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2001), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 198.

them in decision making in a consultative or even participatory manner.¹⁷

Cultural differences in communication could be another challenge for disciple-making. In High-Context/Low-Content cultures, such as Buddhist in Southeast Asia, disciple-making reaches maximum results when discipling is done in collective manner where converts can experience community life rather than individualistically where the acquisition of material content is primarily stressed. Jesus' disciples were developed in a collective context in which he interacted and engaged them on all of life issues and they were transformed together. Therefore, in High-Context, Large-Power-Distance, Strong Uncertainty Avoidance and Collectivist cultures found most in Buddhist Asia, it is likely that disciple-making models reflecting and incorporating these cultural dimensions, especially in communicating biblical content, would have the greater chance of reaching the disciple-making goal.

An example of a breakdown in communication due to cultural differences can be seen in a ministry in Northeast Thailand. Problems developed when a Western couple was interpreting that the national disciples were being forced against their will by a national discipler (leader) when they did not express their opinions or input regarding different issues raised in the disciple-making meetings. Viewing the absence of verbal expression of the disciples as indication of fear and being coerced, the High-Content, Low-Power-Distance, Individualist-culture Western couple charged the national disciple of being a dictator and launched a rescue mission to deliver the disciples from being victims of coercion. Later, it was revealed that the disciples did not verbally respond to issues raised in the meetings because they were in consensus with them. The lead disciple in the group responded to the Western couple, "If issues are well handled and we are in agreement with them, why do we need to say anything?" In this case, silence means agreement. The Western couple allowed their cultural bias—of verbal expression as indication of the person's intention—to influence the disciple-making process that resulted in further cultural conflicts. Instead of discipling converts to be disciples who can disciple others to relate culturally to others in the community, the couple has insisted that the disciples adopt Western model of communication.

Katie Rawson of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in her training entitled "Cultural Factors in Discipling: Critiquing Cultures Together" at ACMI 2013 Conference points out that the discipler's culture influences the discipler himself and that the discipler's culture also influences the content included in disciple-making of the converts. She further identifies that cultural differences impact disciple-making: analytical/objects vs. holistic/relationships, individual vs. group, propositional thinking vs. concrete or intuitional, rules define reality vs. relationships define reality, learn knowledge/books vs. wisdom/life.¹⁸

17. Jack Scarborough, *The Origins of Cultural Differences and Their Impact on Management* (Westport, Conn.: Quorum Books, 1998), Kindle Electronic Edition: Locations 153.

18. Katie Rawson, "Cultural Factors in Discipling: Critiquing

Disciplers who understand these implications of culture are in a better position to relate to and effectively make disciples of converts for Asia's Buddhist cultural context. Given the conditions of converts living in Asia's Buddhist context as mentioned at the beginning of this paper, it is extremely critical that disciple-making recognizes differences in culture—of the bible, discipler, and the converts, distinguishing those different cultures from biblical content, and incorporate them in the disciple-making process. The goal of disciple-making is the transformation of the converts into Christ's likeness so that they might be able to maturely relate to God, himself, other believers, and the lost world with the transformed biblical values and worldviews.

The Clash of Values & Worldviews

Another cultural conflict among Asian converts involves the value and worldview clash which occurs considerably frequent in Asia's Buddhist countries. Asian converts mostly inherit their values from their non-Christian cultures. Their current deeply held value systems and beliefs have been passed down from their ancestors and they serve as norms for regulating family, community, and societal life. American social psychologist Milton Rokeach considers values to be "standards that guide ongoing activities" and value systems to be "general plans employed to solve conflicts and to make decisions."¹⁹

In Asia's Buddhist context, the clash between the essentially Western values/worldviews of the disciplers and the Asian values/worldviews of the converts is immense. In addition, the biblical values/worldviews based largely on ancient Mediterranean cultures with later Greek (Western) influence also clash with convert's values/worldviews as well as the discipler. In comparison, the Asian values are closer to the biblical values than Western values.

The challenge in disciple-making lies in the person of the discipler. The task of the discipler in distinguishing his own default values/worldviews from the biblical values/worldviews and in maturing in those values/worldviews is the most significant initial stage in the process of disciple-making. The transference of the values/worldviews of the Bible to the converts, while withholding the non-biblical values/worldviews of the discipler, is a later stage of importance in disciple-making. In view of Rawson's assertion that the discipler's culture naturally influences the content included in disciple-making of the converts, great precautions should then be taken in developing the culturally contextualized, disciple-making content.

Disciple-making involves transferring of values and worldviews of the Bible to the convert with the goal of transforming him through those values and worldviews. A main task of disciple-making is to assist the converts to develop Asian biblical worldviews and value systems in order to serve as standards that guide the converts in solving conflicts and make decisions.

"Cultures Together," a paper presented at the Association of Christian Ministering among Internationals 2013 Conference (Columbus, Ohio: Capital University, May 30-June 2013), 11.

19. Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), 5.

Working through value/worldview clash with the converts and confronting areas of conflict in practical Christian living are essential in the early stages of disciple-making. Writing on the urgency for worldview transformation in the discipleship process in the context of African evangelical churches, Vernon E. Light cautions:

Since worldview shapes culture, changes in culture called for by the Gospel will not be permanent unless the African worldview is changed where necessary. This means that if new converts do not fully embrace Christianity's worldview there will be little chance for growth in Christian belief and behavior that avoids syncretism. Thus if discipleship fails to accurately compare the two worldviews, demonstrate where ATR[African Traditional Religions]has to be changed to make it compatible with Christianity, and establish the role of worldview in the creation of culture, converts will partially (often secretly) or totally return to ATR and its ministrations.²⁰

Light further enlightens, "The great challenge then in discipleship is to intentionally work at worldview change – a most important part of discipleship."²¹ Donald K. Smith of the Institute for International Christian Communication in his presentation at Asia Missions Association's Ephesus Conference, November 7-10, 2006, entitled "Doing As Paul Did: Discipling In the Asian Context," emphasized, "Discipling in the Pauline manner considers the differing assumptions and beliefs of the disciple, and confronts those with God's Revelation."²² In his doctoral thesis entitled "A Discipleship Model for Missionaries Establishing Churches in Thailand," a Korean mission leader Young Woong Lee suggested two important points for effective disciple-making in the Thai churches (in Buddhist context):

1. Missionaries should help native church leaders nurture disciples. Although missionaries can disciple Thai Christians, there are limitations in communication because of inevitable cultural differences. It is better to do discipleship training by providing materials and seminars on discipleship for native leaders for pastoral training and publications.
2. Discipleship programs from Western countries should be contextualized to Thai situation, without losing the focus on a changed life. Pastors should be sensitive and wise in contextualization. Lee further stressed that missionaries tend to reflect the biblical view of their home churches and denominational background on issues. Some issues are not a problem of biblical principle but a problem of context. If this is the case, Thai church leaders' opinions should be considered more important.²³

20. Vernon E. Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa: A New Contextually-Relevant Discipleship Model* (Bloomington, Ind.: Author House, 2012), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 6210.

21. Ibid.

22. Donald K. Smith, "Doing As Paul Did: Discipling In the Asian Context," a paper presented at the Asia Missions Association, Ephesus Conference (Ephesus: Asia Missions Association, November 7-10, 2006), 4.

23. Young Woong Lee, "A Discipleship Model for Missionaries Establishing Churches in Thailand" (DMin thesis, Liberty Baptist

Matured disciples of Christ, being transformed biblically through values/worldview change, functioning and effectively witnessing in the context of Asia, are the disciple-making objective.

Social, Political and Economic Restrictions that Hinder Disciple-making

Apart from conflict involving cultural differences and value/worldview clash, converts in Asia's Buddhist context are expected to face social, economic and political repression and strongholds. Southeast Asian Buddhism exists as a predominately non-Christian culture with peoples' attachment to the ancestral traditions due to moral obligation. Peoples reside in general ignorance of the Christian faith, where Christianity is viewed as an extension of the imperialist power of Western foreigners and a threat to the existing political and religious structures. In the Asian Buddhist context, the satisfaction of one's moral obligation to the inherited ancestral and religious (animist and Buddhist) traditions is indicated by one's rejection of the Christian faith. The adverse effects of conversion to the Christian faith are detrimental socially, economically, and politically as well as psychologically.

Frequent social ostracism, including shunning and banishment from participating in central community and family life, serves as deterrence for further embracement of the Christian faith. Evangelical Christians, refusing to abandon the new faith, Christianity, or declining the mixture of Christianity to the old religious faith, must expect and be prepared to count the cost of following Christ. In some areas of Southeast Asia, Christians are accused of being social criminals who create divisions and destroy the moral and social structure of society. The difficulty in finding marriage partners and establishing functional families and the denial of government services commonly experienced by converts in the Asia's Buddhist country of Thailand have partly kept the response to the Christian faith to less than one percent of the population.

The political climate on Asia's Buddhist context generally disfavors Christianity. The official stance toward Christian conversion generally comprises of one of toleration, discouragement, restriction, or persecution. Strong nationalism and ethnocentricity tied to national and traditional religions have successfully prevented the change in religious affiliation among Asia's Buddhists and religious conversion to the Christian faith. In the country of Laos, persecution against conversion to the Christian faith frequently occurs in the form of arbitrary detention and arrest, confiscation of properties, expulsion from homes, or public shaming. For example, recent incident took place on September 30, 2013, when fifty Christian believers in Laos were ordered to recant of their Christian faith or face property confiscation and expulsion from their homes.²⁴

Theological Seminary, 2003), 112, 119.

24. Sirikoon Prasertsee, "Fifty Christians Facing Eviction Order for Embracing the Christian Faith," Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom, <http://www.hrwlf.net/pages/Fifty-Christians-Facing-Eviction-Order-for-Embracing-the-Christian-Faith.html>

The economic impact resulting in personal and family hardship likewise is expected among Christians living in Asia's Buddhist context. Limited access to economic resources and networks essential for sustaining livelihood is often experienced by Christ's converts and disciples. Denial of job advancement and some education opportunity has been the outcome of Asians who are associated with the Christian faith. A large number of Christian converts have to relocate in order to maintain their Christian faith, which results in economic hardship.

CONCLUSION: Suggestions for Disciple-making Model for Asia's Buddhist Context

Disciple-making is the most sustainable means of spreading the gospel and fulfilling the Great Commission. In view of the condition of Asia's Buddhist context and the cultural conflicts, the author of this paper suggests a contextualized disciple-making model that preserves biblical content while producing faithful disciples in Asia who stay truly Asians. The contextualized model should include these eight points.

1. International Disciple-making as the goal of every church and missional undertaking;
2. Developing reciprocal relationship between the disciplers and disciples;
3. Discipleship must be closest to the convert's culture;
4. Wrestling through the tensions of cultural differences, value/worldview clash and social,

- economic and political restrictions;
5. Cultivating a mentality of sacrifice and self-denial ;
6. Discipling for living in social ostracism, religious repression context with little or no support;
7. Discipling to produce transformed life which serves as a primary motivation for Christian conversion;
8. Disconnecting from former religions while maintaining former relationships

When the Church spreads the gospel through discipleship and disciple-making, it truly obeys the Great Commission. When we contextualize disciple-making to the situation of Buddhist Asia, we can expect the goal of the Church realized and Christ's kingdom indigenously expands in these predominately Buddhist nations.



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WHEN DID HUMAN CULTURE BEGIN?

Marvin Newell

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

There is much confusion and many wrong assumptions today about the origin of human culture. Secular anthropologists would have us believe that as mankind evolved, more complex and developed cultures emerged with him. Therefore, man's cultural origins began to develop as he evolved from his primate state into humanness. Since man continues in developmental ascent, he is also experiencing progressive cultural ascent. This is the prevailing view of the majority of secularists who would dismiss any reference to God in cultural consideration.

But that view is a far cry from what scripture tells us about culture. For those who take the Bible seriously, it is not difficult to discover the divine account of the origin of human culture. The book of Genesis is the book of origins. An explanation for the origin of everything in the universe is found there in – including the origin of mankind and with him, human culture.

The book of Genesis is the book of origins. An explanation for the origin of everything in the universe is found there in – including the origin of mankind and with him, human culture.

Since, as we have already seen, culture is innate to human beings, and since there has never been a person who has lived who did not possess culture, human culture had to have been an integral part of Adam and Eve's created makeup. But the question arises: "How is that so? How was culture ingrained in mankind's first parents? How is it that culture was part of the makeup of Adam from the very moment he was created?" We don't need to look far in scripture to discover how that came about. Genesis 1:26-27 gives us the answer.

The Plurality of God

Considering plurality in the nature of God is the place to start. The plurality of the creator God is unmistakable in this passage. It is first evident by the word that is used for God. In these two verses Moses, the writer, refers to God with the word *Elohim*

three times. *Elohim* is a plural form of the word for "God." Moses wants the reader to know a basic truth about God's personhood that would eventually develop through scripture into the fuller doctrine of the Trinity. He wants us to know that God is one, yet there is plurality in his oneness.

A second evidence of God's plurality comes from the phrases, "let us make... in our image... after our likeness." Again, these three phrases are striking because of their reference to a divine plurality by the repeated use of the personal plural pronouns *us* and *our*. The prestigious position of man over the previously described created order (Gen 1:1-25) cannot be missed. The creation of man is of such importance that Moses portrays God as conferring in his plurality about his final and crowning creative act before he does it.

Although it defies full explanation, the plural unity of God is nevertheless revealed throughout the Bible. Biblically based Christianity is unique in this view of monotheism. It sees God as a plural unity consisting of three distinct persons. Although it is a complex doctrine to understand, its origins come from scripture, beginning with the very first verse at Genesis 1:1, where God is mentioned in the plural (*Elohim*) at the very outset of his creative work.

"So," one might ask, "how does the plurality of God relate to the origin of human culture?" The answer is that the origin of human culture is embedded in this reality of God's plurality by strong inference. Since God is a plural unity comprising three distinct persons, then it follows that there must exist a "culture" of such among these three personalities in order for them to function perfectly in their unity.

Consider this simplified definition of culture that helps us understand the basics of what comprises culture:

Culture is the distinctive beliefs, values and customs of a particular group of people that determines how they think, feel, and behave.

Within his own nature, God as plural must also contain distinctive beliefs, values and customs. And since he does, he has the capacity to endow them on mankind as well. That being the case, it could be said that in keeping with his nature, God had the capacity to bequeath culture upon man at the moment he created Adam.

From Capacity to Actuality

But just because God had the capacity to bequeath culture on man, how do we know that he did? Looking again at verse 26 it becomes clear that he did. The double modifying phrase, "in our image... after our likeness," signifies that he did so act. These

two phrases aim to assert with emphasis that man is closely patterned after his Maker. The first phrase *image* has the root meaning, “to carve,” or “cut from.” The second word *likeness* refers to “similarity.”¹ These two conjoining phrases are used, among other things, to show that a God who himself possessed culture, created mankind with it as well.²

It can be asserted that the unseen spiritual and inner side of the image of God was bestowed on man’s spirit, or immaterial part, that included a degree of divine culture. God not only had the capacity in and of himself in keeping with his nature to impart culture to humans, but he actually did it. He did it when he created man in his image and likeness. Man was endowed with a free self-conscious personality, a creaturely copy of the divine life. This included a cultural component.

It can be asserted that the unseen spiritual and inner side of the image of God was bestowed on man’s spirit, or immaterial part, that included a degree of divine culture. God not only had the capacity in and of himself in keeping with his nature to impart culture to humans, but he actually did it.

Culture at its Best

As a result of this divine act, it could be inferred that in their perfect, pre-fallen state, Adam and Eve lived their lives in a harmonious, unadulterated culture in its highest form. Since their minds were permeated with truth, they had perfect beliefs. Since their pattern for living was modeled after God’s, they practiced perfect values. And since they knew no evil, they exhibited perfect customs. Theirs was an unimaginably rich, full, satisfying culture at its very finest. It was absolutely perfect! No other humans who have lived since have experienced the high degree of cultural perfection that Adam and Eve lived and practiced. The zenith of cultural perfection was theirs.

The Deterioration of Culture

But subsequently, man’s concrete essence of divine likeness was shattered by sin. Genesis 3 relays how this tragic degradation came about. Adam and Eve’s fall from perfection included their cultural degeneration and its subsequent sliding deterioration. By their act of disobedience, human culture became corrupted and has been in decline ever since. There is no place on earth (under heaven) nor any society anywhere (given among men)³ where this is not

1. Leupold, 1942.

2. By repeated use of the phrases “image” and “likeness of God,” the author of Genesis emphasized man’s distinction from the rest of the created beings. He reminds the reader of this creative act at the beginning of the first genealogy (5:1), and mentions it again in a discourse on the sanctity of human life (9:6).

3. In reference to Peter’s sermon found in Acts 4:12.

true. The myth of the “noble savage” tucked away somewhere in a remote corner of the earth is just that – a myth. Man’s cultural degradation is universal and comprehensive.

During fifteen years of ministry on the island of Papua, Indonesia, I never encountered people of a newly reached tribal group that were not anxious to free themselves from their degraded past cultural practices. The light of the gospel redeemed not only them, but also their community’s beliefs, values and customs, and they were grateful.

Redeeming Culture

It is only through Christ, the representation of the glory of God and the expression of his holy essence (Heb. 1:3), that an individual’s nature, and then by extension his godly influence in his community, that his culture can be transformed for the better (Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24).⁴ One of the beauties and benefits of the gospel is that degraded human culture can be transformed. Wrong beliefs can be corrected. Misdirected values can be altered. Abhorrent customs can be changed. It has been demonstrated throughout history that a ground swell of redeemed believers in a society can have a transforming impact on a deviant culture.

So, contrary to modern cultural assertions and secular humanist assumptions, mankind is not in cultural ascent, whereby human culture is improving and increasingly better each passing day. Rather it is just the opposite. Sadly man is in cultural descent – in a downward spiral – that is taking him further away from the perfect beliefs, values and customs that were once his through Adam.

Those now lost perfect cultural elements were God’s original ideal for human existence – for Asians, Africans, Americans, and Europeans. Only by the light of the gospel penetrating into and transforming these cultures, do humans gain a tiny glimpse of their perfect cultural past.

**This article is from Newell’s forthcoming book, Crossing Cultures in Scripture. Not to be reproduced without permission. Contact: marnewell@gmail.com.*

4. Keil and Delitzsch, Vol. 1, p. 64.



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Dr. Dale Kietzman, One of the Great Unsung Heroes of the Church, Celebrates his 90th Birthday

Dr. Dale Kietzman, who on Saturday, July 19, 2014, with the help of some 100 friends and family, celebrated his 90th birthday at his Pasadena home, and yet many around the world don't realize the incredible role he has played in the global Church during those nine decades of his extraordinary life.

He was the US director of Wycliffe Bible Translators, helped to start non-profits in the US for Brother Andrew, Corrie ten Boom, ASSIST Ministries, to name just a few, and now works with the indigenous people of Latin America

"Dr. Dale," as his friends call him, was a Bible translator in Peru and Brazil, also helped to co-found Wycliffe Associates, and even has a university in Douala, Cameroon, named after him - The Dale Kietzman University (www.dkuniversity.org)

He also was the co-founder of Latin American Indigenous Ministries (www.laim.org), and his birthday party was held to help support some of their latest projects.



Dan Wooding with Dr. Dale Kietzman following the interview



Dr. Kietzman surrounded by some of his many friends at his 90th birthday party

So before the celebrations began, I sat down with "Dr. Dale," to do an interview for my Front Page Radio show, and began by asking him to share about his early life.

"I was born in Gary, Indiana, and didn't move far from that place for a long time until I went to Wheaton College and then down to the University of Oklahoma in Norman Oklahoma. That was my first big trip," he said with a huge smile on his face.

He then explained how he felt God's call to work as a missionary with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

"In my junior year in college, I had never considered the possibility of being a missionary so I went and talked to a medical doctor who, at that time, was the professor of missions at Wheaton College, and asked him what should I do? He finally said, 'Well, if you really want to learn more about missions, you ought to go to the Summer Institute of Linguistics [SIL] in Norman, Oklahoma, because there'll be 40 different mission boards and 40 different countries represented so you can gain understanding in missions.

"So, that's what I did between my junior and senior year. Cameron Townsend [the founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators] came for a brief visit but the thing that really got to me was a talk by Ken Pike, who was the director of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. He'd just been to Peru and had gotten a letter of invitation from the Peruvian government. So they were emphasizing about getting started there.

"Ken Pike then had a meeting for anybody interested and the room was packed. He started off by just looking at us and then said, 'So you want to go to the Amazon as a missionary. Let me tell you in two years, one-third of you will be dead, one-third of you will be invalided home and only one-third of you will be left on the field suffering from malaria trying to get something done on the language.' Well that was the kind of challenge you know I couldn't avoid.

"It was then the early days of Wycliffe, and I was in the first class at Jungle Camp in Chiapas, Mexico, where we had a rather primitive existence, which was good because it got us ready for going down to Peru."

Dale said that he was still single at the time, but was engaged to his wife-to-be Harriett, and he moved to Peru in May 1947, and Harriett arrived in November of that year, and they were married a month later.

"We were married in Lima. That included both a civil ceremony, followed by a religious marriage ceremony, which took place outdoors in the famous Olive Groves in Lima," he said. After their wedding, they began their new life with the indigenous Amahuaca people.

"We lived with them in three different situations," he said. "The most dramatic I suppose was up the Sepahua River, because I wanted them to build a separate house for us, but the chief decided we should all live together. So he made his house longer and gave us a section right in the middle so that we would learn the language quickly.

"There was no privacy at all. Everything we did was visible."

Dale explained that they had to learn by listening and also by mimicry, in reducing the language to written form, before they could start translating the New Testament.

"You have to go back to your days as a baby and learn the language exactly that way. You mimic everything they say. You get the pronunciation of it and then you write it down. Now quite often, they didn't want you to write while they're talking as they think you're somehow putting their words in a magic formula on the paper and it'll do them harm. So you would talk with people and then you go back to your room and write it down or record it (but we didn't have tape recorders then)."

After a while, Dale and Harriett faced a terrible situation, when she nearly drowned in the Sepahua River.

"We were still living with the chief, and I came down with a fever," he explained. "We did have a two way radio with us and we apparently were the first missionaries anywhere in the world to have this. It was a radio taken out of a tank from World War II and we could talk to the base, which was several hundred miles away.

"When I explained the symptoms, the doctor told me, via the radio, that it sounded like I had typhoid and told me that I had 'better come out quickly as I could,' and he added that he was sending a plane to meet us at the mouth of the river. The plane could not land on the Sepahua because it was too small, with no straight stretches.

"Well the problem was we didn't have a canoe available as the chief had just borrowed it the week before to go down to another river where he knew that there were oranges that he could bring back to the village. But because of rains the river was swollen and he couldn't come back up stream, so the people made us a raft and the next morning we got on it and started downstream.

"Harriett and our young daughter Ruth was with us and I was worried about places where there were small waterfalls, but the water was so high you just couldn't even see the waterfall and there'd be a little drop in the river level, maybe a foot, but that was over a 20 foot waterfall. One place there was always a big whirlpool, but that wasn't a problem; we went straight through.

"We came out finally at a long straight strip and I felt we would now be ok because soon we would be at the mouth of the river. But that straight stretch was the trap. The high waters had undercut the bank on both sides of the river and trees had fallen into the river itself. So the Indians traveling with us had to try to maneuver the raft around this tree and then around a tree from the other side and they were just pulling hard one way and then the other trying to maneuver a raft which isn't very maneuverable.

"But then, the oar at one end broke and then almost immediately the one at the other end broke so there was nothing to guide the raft. The Indian said, 'Get down low, because we'll go right through this tree top ahead. And what happened was we hit the trunk of that tree and the raft stopped dead in the water and water began to pile up on the back end of the raft pushing it down. All of a sudden we just went straight up into the air and of course everything came loose.

"I was lying along one edge of the raft, weak with fever, and I was able to just kind of roll over the edge and come back up on the bottom side to safety. But my wife with the little baby had been sitting right in the middle of the raft and they went down and you could see all the baggage we had go down right on top of them. I got back up on the raft and called to the Indians to help my wife, but they had leapt to the center of the river to avoid this whole thing and they were being swept downstream. So they couldn't help; they were trying to get out to dry land themselves. I just looked

around and couldn't see any sign of Harriett for a long minute.

"And then, all of a sudden, I saw back a couple hundred yards upstream right where we'd come round the bend into this stretch, there was Harriet swimming down to the raft with the baby in one hand. She was fortunately a certified lifeguard so she could handle herself. How she got back upstream we have no idea."

Believe it or not, that baby, now grown up, was born on the same birthday as her father, and was one of the honored guests at the party, but sadly Harriett passed away some years ago.

Dale also served in Brazil with Wycliffe and his present work is with Latin America Indigenous Ministries, which began after he met an extraordinary Totonac Indian called Manuel Arenas, who was born in the mountains east of Mexico City as you go down to Vera Cruz.

"Even as a small boy, Manuel had been very embarrassed by the fact that he couldn't speak Spanish," said Dale. "He tried to go to school, but he didn't understand the teacher. So in his mind he had formed the notion that he needed to start a school in the Totonac language. And it just happened that, at age 12, he encountered Herman P. Aschmann, who was the Wycliffe translator trying to learn the Totonac language. So he became that helper to Herman, helped him learn the language and then helped him to translate the New Testament into Totonac.

"But he wanted to complete his own schooling and so with the help of Herman, he went to Mexico City and in four years he did all of the work through high school in the school system – in Spanish.

"He was living at the Wycliffe headquarters in Mexico City, so he encountered a lot of English and he learned some English as well. Manuel then wanted to go on for more education and some friends helped him get up to Canada to Prairie Bible Institute where he spent a long semester just improving his English. Then he went to Dallas Bible College for four years and got a bachelor's degree there. Because it was an unaccredited degree, he decided to go to University of Chicago, of all places; and finish an accredited bachelor's degree. And he had to work his way through. He worked at the Hilton Hotel in Chicago as a salad chef. How he learned that skill I'm not sure.

"Anyhow, he had German classes at the University of Chicago and did so well that he was given a scholarship to go study in Germany at the University of Erlangen where he got a Master's degree in education in German. So he was well educated and he came back to his people."



Class in Dale Kietzman University,
Douala, Cameroon



Harriett Kietzman and her children
at Wycliffe's Lima House, enroute to Brazil, 1956

By then, Dale said, Manuel Arenas could have made a lot of money in the business world, but instead he went back to his own people and started the Totonac Bible Center in the remote mountain town of La Union. "The students learned very quickly and very well. They were being trained heavily in the bible because the only text book they had actually was the New Testament in Totonac," he said.

"Manuel Arenas' primary assistant and a teacher in the school was Felipe Ramos, another Totonac, who had gone to school in Spanish and had been trained in seminary so he was the principal teacher. He started a radio program called The Totonac Cultural Hour. It was just once a week but it became quite a phenomenon, and continues to this day. They would always have some information or tip about the culture, but then they would go to a bible verse and preach a sermon."

After Manuel's death from cancer in 1992, Dr. Kietzman became president of the Totonac Bible Center board in the United States. Increasingly, the support activity focused on other tribes,

following Manuel's vision. As a consequence, in 1996, the Board voted to change the name of the corporation to Latin American Indigenous Ministries (LAIM) - www.laim.org - and today LAIM is continuing the vision by helping the Totonac people and the work among this tribe which is now being spearheaded by Totonac Christian leader, Felipe Ramos.

Dale explained that his 90th birthday party in Pasadena was being held as a benefit for LAIM, which is now being headed up by his grandson, David Andrés Kietzman.

"Well there are two projects actually that we are trying to help today," he said. "One is down in Peru which is funded and that's developing school materials for all the bi-lingual schools down there. But in Mexico among the Totonacs, we have realized there is a problem, with perhaps 500 churches having been formed in the last five years, all as a result of the radio program. It reaches into some new group of houses back in some valley and they write in usually, or sometimes they'll get to a telephone, but they all want Felipe to come and visit.

"They say, 'We're listening and we want to believe so please come and visit us'. Felipe can't do it all, so others are helping out as well. Congregations are forming, usually around an extended family unit or two families, and they grow quickly. We're constantly hearing from them that they've gotten a place to build a church -- it just looks like any other house in town -- but it's dedicated to the meetings of believers; and they are recognizing themselves as churches. But there is no trained pastor for them. So we've decided we have to train people right where they are.

"We have the training materials all in digital format and the cheapest way we have found to do it is the trainers will take a digital projector and a laptop. They can carry that even if they have to get in walking on the trail. And so they will gather those who are in the leadership in this group or maybe several groups in the area and teach them going through the materials. Now the problem with that is the expense of the laptops of course and the video projectors but that's relatively minor. It's the cost of travel around to all these learning centers. Right now we have eight identified learning centers and there probably will be more as time goes on."

I have to let you into a secret, and that is that it was Dr. Dale Kietzman who sponsored myself and my family - Norma, and our two sons, Andrew, and Peter - to move to Southern California back in 1982, so I could work as media director for Open Doors USA, the ministry he helped to start for Brother Andrew. When we felt the call to start ASSIST Ministries, and later the ASSIST News Service, it was again Dr. Dale who helped us with the non-profit papers and became our first Board Chairman. As I mentioned before, he helped Corrie ten Boom in her move to Southern California, and my son, Andrew, even worked with him and Corrie for a while.

It was Dr. Dale who also helped me to visit North Korea with his friend, Dr. David Cho, shortly after the death of Kim il-Sung, and he was also instrumental in helping to arrange the historic visits to North Korea of both Billy Graham and Jimmy Carter, which began during one of his visits to North Korea.

Dale has four children, Ruth, Mark, Robin and Pamela. The girls live with him and care for him at his Pasadena home. He also has three grandchildren, David, Laurie and Scott, and two great grandchildren, Marco and Daniel.

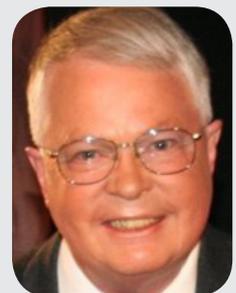
Dr. Dale Kietzman is, without a doubt, one of the great unsung heroes of the Christian Church, and I hope and pray he will continue for many more years to come. (I am hoping the story means he is no longer unsung!)

If you would like more information on Latin American Indigenous Ministries, just go to www.laim.org, and the mailing address to send any gifts is: LAIM, P.O. Box 2050 Orange California 92859, USA.

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CHILD LABOR IN INDIA

In the Dimension of Child at Risk of 4/14 window

Joseph Oun Ho Cho

In the 10/40 mission window we can be informed that there are very rarely evangelized areas where people are living without Jesus. These areas are mostly composed of countries whose religions are Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Communism which cover mostly the whole of Asia. According to Bryan Nicholson almost 70% of the world's 4/14 years old (833,378,750 as of 2010), are included in the 10/40 window.¹ The 10/40 window is the geographical area with the greatest need and opportunity for missions. The 4/14 Window is the demographic group that is the most open and receptive to every form of spiritual and development input. But the 4/14 window, shows many children are at risk because they are mostly living in poor and critical conditions spiritually, physically, and psychologically. So, to win the children for God's kingdom, it is needed to preach, teach and serve them in words and deeds through the holistic mission approach with the Gospel and international development. Globally there are some types of children who are at risk within the 4/14 window. They are as follows; child soldier, child labor, children who are killed through genocide, those who are sick with sexual diseases, like HIV/AIDS, and lastly, children living in poor economic condition.

Out of these types of children at risk, the writer would like to deal with one very important type, those belonging to the child labor. To limit the contents of the topic and study the issue in detail, the writer thinks that it is better to study the CHILD LABOR in India, where children laborers are severely treated and its related issues. Moreover, for the removal process of child labor in India, we look also at how much the UN organization, and international and local NGOs and governments of India have been working. And last of all, the writer tries to present the challenges of child labour for Christian ministry in India.

THE POPULATION OF CHILD LABOUR IN THE WORLD, ASIA AND INDIA

Globally, out of an estimated 211 million children between the ages of 5 and 14, 186 million children fall within the accepted definitions of child labour. The Asia Pacific region harbours the largest number of child workers under the 5-14 age group: 127 million, constituting 19 percent of the total population of children.² Around 171 million children between the ages of 5 and 17, work under hazardous conditions. Among the developing regions, South Asia region

1. Luis Bush (2009) *The 4/14 Window, Raising Up a New Generation to transform the world*, (Colorado springs: Compassion International), p. 4.

2. Helen R. Sekar (2005), "Child Labour: Forms, Determinants and Consequences in Seventh International Programme on Labour Administration and Employment Relations in Global Economy", *Journal of V.V. Giri National Institute of Labour*, September 12-30. p. 9.

accounts for the largest concentration of child labour.³

The India National Child labour survey in 1996, found that there were 21.6 million children aged between 5 and 14 years working in South Asia out of the total of 300 million children in this age group (Government of India 1996). The estimation of child labourers for 2001 has been projected as 12.66 million (Census of India 2001). According to UNICEF's "The State of World's Children, 2006", about 14 percent of the total children in the age group of 5-14 years were engaged in child labour activities in 2004, with the percentages for boys and girls almost similar at 14 percent and 15 percent, respectively.⁴

Table 1
Incidence of Child Labour in India 1961-2001 (5-14)

year	child population 5-14 (million)	child population (5-14)					
		workers		enrolled students		nowhere children	
		no. (million)	%	no. (million)	%	no. (million)	%
1961	113.9	14.46	12.7	34.52	30.4	64.92	57.00
1971	150.7	10.69	7.1	50.65	33.6	89.36	59.3
1981	179.5	10.94	6.1	79.97	43.3	88.59	49.3
1991	209.9	11.28	5.37	104.02	49.65	94.40	44.98
2001	242.11	12.66	5.00	172.99	70.00	56.26	23.24

(source: Zutshi, Bhupinder (2001), "Worst Forms of Child Labour in India: Dimensions and Prospects", Paper presented in IDPAD International Conference on Child Labour in South Asia, Conference Papers - Vol. II, Organised by CSRD, JNU, New Delhi and ASSR, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 15-17 October 2001.)

TYPES OF CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

There are many types of child labour, which can be broken down into a few major types in India. These are domestic service (child domestic labour - CDL), children working in hazardous industries, forced and bonded labour, commercial sexual exploitation, industrial and street work, work for the family, etc. some of these types are explained below:

Child Domestic Labour (CDL):

In India child domestic labour (CDL) is culturally

3. Jayati Srivastava (2003), *Child Labour in South Asia, Are Trade Sanctions the Answer?* New Delhi: Centre for Contemporary Studies, p. 3.

4. There are wide conventional differences on child labour as described by various national and international organizations. For example, UNICEF and ILO consider a child as belonging to the age group of 5-14, whereas the World Bank and UNDP define a child as one in the age group of 10-14 years. Due to this definitional difference of various organizations with respect to child labour, the data are not strictly comparable. However, they give some idea of the long term trends. Moreover, as the child labour is mainly employed in unorganized sector, data are based on different surveys, which further, reduce the comparability among them.

accepted and commonly practised. Child domestic labour refers to situations where children are engaged to perform domestic tasks in the home of a third party or employer where child domestic labour is exploitative and includes trafficking, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, carried out as hazardous.

In India, 20% of all children under 14 years working outside the family home are in domestic service.⁵ And more often, sexual abuse is regarded as part of the employment terms by the employers. The most common adjectives used to describe child domestic workers are 'timid' and 'listless'. Childhood has been stolen from these children.⁶

Children Working in Hazardous Industries:

There is a scientific rationale behind the age of entry to employment. The rationale lies in the fact that any person who enters the world of work should be skilled and should be physically, emotionally, and psychologically mature and capable to absorb the stress and strain of work while being able to contribute his/her very best to that work.⁷ But, the ILO convention No. 182 (Article 3d) defines hazardous child labour as work, which is likely to harm the health, safety and morals of children.⁸

Forced and Bonded Labour:

Many of the forms of child labour practised in the world are 'forced' in the sense that children are taught to accept the conditions of their lives and not to challenge them. But the situation of some children goes far beyond the acceptance of poor conditions. They find themselves in effective slavery. In India, this has taken an institutional form known as bonded 'child labour'.⁹ Forced labour, primarily in the form of debt bondage, is found among low castes, minorities, and migrants, who suffer additionally from discrimination and social exclusion.¹⁰ Most of them are kept in captivity and tortured and made to work 18 to 20 hours. Even the child in a 'womb' is pledged to the factory loans for consumption and maternity expenditures are obtained on the undertaking that the child born, girl or boy, would work.¹¹

Commercial Sexual Exploitation:

Commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially among girls, is common.¹² No matter how high the wages or how few the hours, the children involved have to confront serious health risks every day, including respiratory diseases, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and drug

addiction. But they are also plunged into a distorted reality in which violence and distrust, shame and rejection are the norms.

The traffickers, agents and intermediaries profit from the sale of children. There are the professional criminals and syndicates that run brothels. There are entrepreneurs who organize sex tours or who produce tourist brochures encouraging the nation that young girls or boys are sexually available. And there are people, including corrupt or apathetic officials, who look at child sex on a commercial angle.¹³ Child trafficking is an increasing rate of unsafe migration, weak law enforcement, insufficient household income, ill-treatment and physical abuse, alcoholism, lack of food, and forced marriage.¹⁴

Street Work:

In contrast with child domestic workers, some children work in the most visible places possible on the streets of cities and towns. They are everywhere hawking in markets and darting in and out of traffic jams, playing their trade, at bus and train stations, in front of hotels and shopping malls. They share the streets with millions of adults, many of whom regard them as nuisances, if not as dangerous mini criminals. What most of these children actually do on the streets? Of course, work! The street is a cruel and hazardous workplace, often jeopardizing even children's lives. On the street they shine shoes, watch and guard cars, carry luggage, hawk flowers and trinkets, collect recyclables and find a myriad other ingenious ways to make money. The amount they earn may be small but is sometimes more than what they would receive from formal sector work.¹⁵ Inevitably these children became more prone to engage in marginal and illegal work, such as begging and petty thieving. Many are led into illicit, thrilling and dangerous crime syndicates that run rings for pick-pocketing, burglary, drug trafficking and prostitution. The subculture that envelope the lives of the children is marked by aggression and abuse, exposing them to extreme hazards.

Causes and Consequences of Child Labor:

Causes of child labour: There are many causes of child labour. Some of the principal causes are: (1) Poverty (2) Unemployment of parents (3) illiteracy (4) Other reasons.

Poverty: Poverty remains the single biggest cause of sending children to work. In India broadly thirty percent of the population lives below poverty line (32.9 percent in rural areas and 18.1 percent in urban areas).¹⁶ A child is forced into employment because of the need to supplement the meagre family income. A Report compiled by the labour, social welfare and education ministries in collaboration with UNICEF reveals that almost 40 percent of households have one-third to half the family income supplemented through children's contribution and around 31 percent have

5. ILO (2006), Child Labour and Responses in South Asia, Pakistan: Sub-regional Office for South Asia, p. 3.

6. Y.S. Reddy (ed. 1999), Child Labour, (New Delhi: Anmol publication Pvt. Ltd.), p. 11.

7. L. Mishra (2001), Economy and Labour, (Delhi: Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd), p. 285.

8. ILO(2006), p. 4.

9. Y.S. Reddy (ed. 1999), p.12.

10. ILO (2006a), Child Labour Situation India – Child Labour and Responses in South Asia, p. 6.

11. Zutshi Bupinder, Mondira Dutta, Sudesh Nangia (2002), In the Name of Child Labour (Eradication and Evaluation Programme), Delhihipra Publications, p. 11.

12. Zutshi, et al. (2002), p. 26.

13. Y.S. Reddy (ed. 1999), p.13.

14. ILO (2006a), p. 5.

15. Y.S. Reddy (ed. 1999), p. 15.

16. Mahaveer Jain and Sangeeta Saraswat (ed. 2004), Child Labour from Different Perspectives, Delhi: Manak Publications, p. 257.

21-30 percent share. Furthermore, due to poverty the children start working too or begging and this cycle keeps passing on from one generation to the next.¹⁷

Unemployment of Parents: Sometimes children seek work because of their unemployed parents or adult relatives in the family. The agricultural workers are engaged in the fields for a maximum of 290 days in different agricultural and allied works, and are idle for the remaining period, which compels them to engage their children for small sums.¹⁸

Illiteracy: Children who join the workforce at an early stage do so without any formal education or skills that will help them move upward. In most cases they are involved in monotonous and laborious tasks. They grow up as illiterates devoid of any skills for further development. Consequently they get into some low paid unskilled work when they become adults. As adults when they marry and have children, they are already in a poor economic condition and are forced to send their children for work.¹⁹ Thus, illiteracy is also an important factor in perpetuating child labour. Meanwhile, it is more important to know in a way that child labourers are related to the nexus of restriction, exploitation and harm to health and development, physically, mentally, spiritually, and morally.

CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR

Child labour directly affects children and their health and education. It gives rise to many factors, which in turn perpetuate child labour. Breton codified the prime consequences as follows.²⁰

1. Absence of a harmonious family life,
2. Insufficient spare time for play and cultural activities corresponding to the child's age,
3. Exposure to social risks,
4. Health risk, because the resistance and muscular strength of a growing child are inferior to those of an adult.
5. Mostly lack of opportunities to acquire the basic general and professional knowledge necessary for their normal mental and intellectual development and to permit them to be successful in their entry into their future professional and social lives.

The most destructive consequence of child labour is that it affects the long-term quality of life. It permanently damages the social development skills of the concerned children.

Psychological Damages:

A child who starts working at an early age faces many adverse consequences because they are not suited for

17. S. Pandiaraj (January-March 2006), "Elimination of Child Labour in India: Towards a Glorious Illusion? Indian Journal of International Law, 46 (1), p. 10.

18. Parachi Shirur and Srinivas Shirur (2007), Education, Child Labour and NGOs, Delhi: Shipra Publications. p. 13.

19. Helen R. Sekar (2005), "Child Labour: Forms, Determinants and Consequences in Seventh International Programme on Labour Administration and Employment Relations in Global Economy", Journal of V.V. Giri National Institute of Labour, September 12-30, p. 192.

20. Francois Breton (1981), Child labour and its Exploitation in Developing Countries Amsterdam: IWGCL, pp. 14-15.

long hours of strenuous and monotonous work. These consequences are seen in the form of psychological damage. Psychological damage is more devastating and depends on environment in which they are oppressed.

Separation from families, continuous work for long hours for five to six days (sometimes seven days a week) without holidays and poor treatment at workplace lead children to physical disorder and make them psychologically unstable.²¹

Physical Hazards:

Children who are forced laborers suffer the effects of fatigue and exertion much more quickly than those of adults. Many of them are already suffering from malnutrition, which makes them more vulnerable to diseases due to weak immunity.²² Carrying heavy loads or sitting for long periods in unnatural posture can permanently disable growing bodies. Hard physical labour over a long period of years can exploit children's physical stature by up to 30 percent of their biological potential, as they expend more energy.²³

Economic Exploitation:

The exploitation of children is not only physical and psychological but also economic. Usually they work for long hours beyond their capabilities and get very low remuneration and sometimes receive no wages.²⁴

India provide a very disadvantageous environment for child labour where an unorganized sector dominates market structure and is the largest source of urban employment. This sector is characterized by "low remunerative employment, poor working conditions and frequent violation of labour laws, permits children to work beyond the time permitted even in nights, without any wage security".²⁵ Now we see how much Indian government and UN organizations and international NGOs and local NGOs, church of India has been working for the removal of child labour.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS IN INDIA

The National Child Labour Project (NCLP): In 1988, the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) scheme was launched in child labour epidemic areas in India to rehabilitate children released from child labour. The scheme envisages the running of special schools for children withdrawn from child labour.²⁶ The National

21. VVG NLI (1993), *Child Labour in the Carpet Weaving Industry of Jammu & Kashmir*, Child Labour Series, NOIDA: VVG NLI, p. 25.

22. Ihsan Dogramaci (1994), "Child Labour: An Overview", in David Pitt et al. (ed.), *Child Labour: A Threat to Health and Development*, The Iketseng Series on the Health and Welfare of Children No. 1, Defence for Children for the Iketseng Project of WHO, p. 9.

23. UNICEF (1995), *The State of World's Children*, New Delhi: Oxford. p.10.

24. ILO (2002), *A Future Without Child Labour*, Geneva: ILO, p.12.

25. B.K. Sharma and VishwaMittar (1990), *Urban Informal Sector and its Origin*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publication, pp. 24-26.

26. Government of India (2009), *Initiatives towards Elimination of Child Labour –Action Plan and Present Strategy*, [http:// childlabourinfo.bldspot.com](http://childlabourinfo.bldspot.com), p. 1.

Child Labour Project (NCLP) aims to reduce the rate of child labour in the project area, thereby encouraging the elimination of child labour progressively. In each of the project, strategy is to solve the problem through a package comprising the following elements:

1. Stepping up the enforcement of Child Labour Act, 1986 and the Factories Act, 1948.
2. Coverage of families of child labour under the income employment generation programmes under the overall aegis of anti-poverty programmes.
3. Where there is a concentration of SC/ST families with child labour, a concentration of special component and tribal sub-plans by the state governments in each project area.
4. Formal and non-formal education of child labour and adult education of the parents of the working children.
5. Coordinating the activities of different departments/ministries of the central and state governments to benefit child labour.
6. Setting up of special schools for child workers together with provisions of vocational education/training in such special schools, supplementary nutrition, stipend for the children taken, withdrawal from prohibited employments, and healthcare for all children attending such special schools.²⁷

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR (IPEC)

IPEC is a global programme launched by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in December 1991. India was the first country to join it in 1992 when it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ILO. It reaffirmed that national efforts in the country would be aimed at eventual elimination of child labour, and this objective could be attained only through vigorous action of the State Governments, the involvement of NGOs and trade unions.

The direct target groups are:

1. Bonded child labourers.
2. Children employed in formal and non-formal manufacturing sectors.
3. Children working in agricultural sector.
4. Children working in commercial trade and service industries.(Subramanian 2005)

The ILO has made an allocation of \$ 4.15 million between 1992 and 1996 for the

IPEC Programme in India

As per the Memorandum of understanding between the Government of India and the ILO, the IPEC programme was to continue till December 31, 1996. The MOU was extended on January 8, 1997, until December 1997 in the first instance. Thereafter, the MOU continues with mutual agreement (Statement of problem).²⁸

27. S.P. Gomango (2001), *Child Labour, A Precarious Future*, Delhi: Authors Press, pp.182-3.

28. Statement of problem, http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003 & context=pankaj_singh.

Child Labour Action and Support Programme (CLASP)

CLASP, the other ILO programme, originated in response to the initiatives taken by the Indian Government in the mid 1980s to deal with the problem of child labour. The CLASP's aim is to enhance the Central Government's policy, planning and implementation capacity to increase its capability to provide support for ongoing and future projects and sustain a community-wide movement on behalf of the working children, and facilitate a more efficient use of government resources. When CLASP was conceived as a project, it was not foreseen that another ILO project, IPEC, would come into operation. As a result there are several activities of these projects that overlap (Gomango 2001: 193-94).²⁹

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has also been assisting the Indian Government to deal with the problems of child labour. UNICEF acknowledges the need to seriously address child labour as a key component of its policy to advocate implementation of UN Convention on the rights of the child. The initial focus shall be on the elimination of child labour in hazardous industries.³⁰ In addition, it has provided financial and technical support for legal enforcement, studies on child labour, workshops and discussions on child labour at the national and state levels.

UNICEF assists central and state governments to develop and implement programmes and action plans for the release and rehabilitation of children from labour in various industries and occupations. In addition to supporting government, UNICEF also seeks to develop and strengthen alliances with NGOs, industry, external agencies, trade unions, media and academics to promote the elimination of child labour. It focuses on programmes to rehabilitate children released from labour into the educational systems and to improve the livelihoods of their families through support from anti-poverty programmes.

World Bank

The World Bank has also recently started taking serious note of child labour as an issue of development concern in India. Moreover, the India Country Assistance Strategy has included child labour as an important issue for the bank in India. The bank has indicated that it would be prepared to assist India in addressing issues related to child labour through new initiatives aimed at combating its harmful forms. The Bank would support initiatives at providing education to children who are workers or are likely to become workers. The Bank would also promote easier access to school as a means of reducing child labour. The Bank is also likely to consider projects for employment and income generation for the households from which

29. S.P. Gomango (2001), pp. 193-4.

30. Government of India (2001), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Department of Women & Child Development, Ministry of Human Resources Development, India periodic report.

the child workers come. Measures that would reduce the demand for child workers in specific sectors and in industries could also receive the Bank's support. World Bank support usually takes the form of lending programmes. The on-going lending programmes could be refocused to have greater impact in reducing the incidence of harmful child labour. This is particularly important in countries like India where it may not be immediately possible to achieve the goal of ending child labour in its entirety or of universal primary education. This could mean not only redesigning conventional lending activities but also new projects aimed specifically at reducing harmful child labour.³¹

NGOs

NGOs in western industrial countries have realized that pressure can be exerted on Indian exporters via public opinion and by raising awareness at the consumer level in order to stop the use of children in the production of goods made for export. Following this idea the social label "Rugmark" was created in cooperation with Indian exporters. It assures that the goods were made without child labour. The final price includes a contribution of two or three percent through which rehabilitation measures for former child labourers, economic improvements of workplaces and monitoring of factories are financed.

Critics of this practice argue that pressure can only be exerted via Indian exporters delivering into western countries. Goods often are made at home-based workplaces which are difficult to control and are spread out in regions which are sometimes hard to access.

NGOs have realized the limited effect of inspection. In the light of about 200,000 production units, inspections and monitoring are defective. NGOs try to protect children from being drawn into mobilization on a local level that means via the inclusion of parents, teachers and administrative bodies into the controls.³²

CHALLENGES OF CHILD LABOUR FOR CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN INDIA

The issue of child labour in India should be examined challengingly at their theological strictness. It is very much needed to perceive children labourers as the full images of God and full humans who claim full attention in the church. While this claim sees them on the same level with adults in many fronts, child labourers' experiences of exploitation are unique and not to be homogenised with adult exploitation. Their vulnerability due to their physical and mental condition should allow the methodology of engaged epistemology where children are independent for knowledge formulation. The epistemological impact helps in reinterpreting Soteriology, Christology and Ecclesiology from the point of view of children. In such position, the aspirations and dreams of child labourers provide points of beginning for concrete

31. L. Mishra (2001), *Economy and Labour*, Delhi: Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd, pp. 245-46.

32. Child Labour in India (2008), http://www.corecentre.co.in/gnest/articles/article_170_cto8-4.asp.

actions for their deliverance from stereotyped concept. One should recognize the emergence of movements to address child labour in India. Child Theology Movement, Global Alliance for Holistic child development and similar forums have laid new foundations for innovative ways of doing theology with children at the centre. The method emphasized here is a dialogical approach, in which the resources of adults and children are placed for an ongoing discourse. The dynamics include the insistent influence of children's experience of oppression and vulnerability on adult experience in the church and society calling for intergenerational discourses. If theology is a reflection of the life lived here and now, this dialogical method should seep down to every context. This is where children's views can be participatory in a multi-experiential context. On the other hand, theologies project their objectives based on their understanding of God and the value they attach to God's creatures. It is this notion that must therefore, be respected in the relations human beings establish with one another and with other kind of beings in the world. This provides a vantage point from which the inter-generational theological interaction and dialogue could be initiated. The dialogue is imperative because the Creator labour patiently to bring creation to perfection and the Creator is the one who is in dialogue with creation at its different stages. It is dialogical effort that reshapes even our understanding of God, the image of God and therefore makes us think over as the body of God. Child right movements for the removal of child labour are strongly established and spreading all over the world and especially in India. However they are still knocking on the doors of their evangelical theologies. Theologies have been enriched by movements and movements can be treated as powerful evangelical theological texts. Our experiences of childhood challenges, which are deeply embedded in us and have moulded our background, can give thoughts to our biblical doing theology with child labour in the dimension of child at risk of 4/14Window.³³

33. Rohan P. Gideon (2001). Child Labor in India Challenges for Theological Thinking and Christian Ministry in India, (Delhi: ISPCK/NCCI) pp.103-108.



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NATIONAL REPORT: NIGERIA

Reuben Ezemadu

The Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF) has just concluded its Biennial Missions Convention (interestingly tagged Africa's Deliverance Convention -ADC- from 32 years ago) which was held at the conference center facilities located on the CMF School of Missions Campus in Idere, Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The first phase of the main convention started on August 13 and ended on August 17, while the second phase which was a leadership retreat ended, August 21.

I am hoping that this report will inform you of the updates in our ministries in Nigeria, as well as throw more light on how the current health and security challenges might have been affecting the work of the Gospel in Nigeria, especially with the recent outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). The Lord has been gracious to us and we seek your prayers that the EVD and the Islamists insurgency in Northern Nigeria will not affect our service for the Lord!

Overcoming the Initial Threats

As would be expected, the uproar generated by the Ebola outbreak and the increasing spread of its impact across the West African sub region (and particularly when it struck the shores of Nigeria few days before the ADC was to kick-off), the Convention came under strong threat of not holding as there was a rash of internal and external cautions and bans on travels and public gatherings. The brethren that were to come from Sierra Leone and Liberia could not even make any attempt to step-out because of the state of emergency that was declared in their countries. Those from Gambia and Cote D'Ivoire whose flights were to hold on the kick-off date of the ADC were caught up with the suspension of flights which took effect the previous day. However, a couple from The Gambia and a brother from Cote D'Ivoire whose flights were one or two days earlier than the effective date of the travel ban were able to make it. These threats however engendered serious attention towards intercession and putting in place strategic measures to tackle this scourge. Coupled with this was the challenge of having sufficient funds in hand to cover most of the pre-ADC preparations and to meet the budget of running the Convention, including travel subsidies for most of our missionaries coming from outside Nigeria and remote/distant fields within Nigeria.

The serious security issues around the country and especially in the North-Eastern parts of Nigeria aggravated the situation and increased our concerns and the threats to holding the ADC. We plodded on, looking unto the Lord, reviewing the situation and putting several measures in place to manage the developments.

Impressive Attendance and the Upcoming Generation

The Lord really has been our Helper and we have never had it so wonderful in any of the past ADCs. The attendance was so impressive as eventually we had missionaries and disciples of Christ from seven (7) out of the ten (10) African countries of our operations as well as from our fields in all the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria (including the North-East with the highest security threat factor). For the first time we had a high turn-out of young people, majority of whom were Missionary-Teenagers (previous MKs of our missionaries) numbering about 50 who acted as ushers, protocol, technical and media assistants, some of them covering the costs of the materials that were used for services they rendered. We had 209 children between ages 2 to 10 who were organized into four age groups and had their own parallel convention teachings and studies on the theme of the Convention: "*Contending for the Faith: Reaching the Nations*". Ten of them from the four age groups who came on top of the Bible Quiz in their respective age groups were awarded token cash rewards of Five thousand Naira (N5,000) each for their next term's school fees.

"Uction from Above"

The morning sessions featured mainly a plenary presentation on the theme by the Guest Speaker, Rev. Tor Ujah of Mission House, Makurdi, Benue State, whom the Lord used so tremendously to rebuke, refine and re-fire us towards *Contending for the Faith* and re-dedicating ourselves to the task of *Reaching the Nations* against all odds. The afternoon sessions were used for participatory Bible discussion and studies on the theme while three of our leaders handled the application series during the evening sessions on the theme based on II Timothy 2:1-7 as follows: '*Contending For The Faith As A Good Soldier*'; '*Contending For The Faith As A Disciplined Athlete*'; and '*Contending For The Faith As A Hardworking Farmer*', respectively. The sessions were interspersed by moments of high praises, intercessions, hearing and telling of God's goodness and doings in and from the fields, as well as hearing from the Lord as He spoke words of comfort, assurance, rebuke, correction, and direction, as of old.

Launching Further

Two families (*The Sholotans for Malawi and the Amos' for The Gambia*) were commissioned for the strengthening of our work in the respective countries, while Rev. Sinpore Lassana Timothee, the Chairman of the Board of the newly inaugurated *Christian Missionary Foundation in Burkina Faso* (which also has been formally incorporated with the Burkina Faso government) was also prayed for. The new field the

Lord is leading us to initiate in *Mali* was also formally endorsed by the International Council at its session on Sunday during which the family anchoring this initiative was also prayed for. We have filed in the papers for formal incorporation of **CMF-Mali** with the Malian government, a process that has reached an advanced stage and we believe that God will formally inaugurate and place some staff on ground soon. Senegal was the third new field which was proposed to have been endorsed during the International Council meeting but was put on hold because both the Regional Coordinator of the North-West Africa Mission Center under whose jurisdiction Senegal falls and the anchor-person for the proposed *CMF-Senegal* field could not come because of the reasons associated with the travel bans. We hope that this will soon follow.

Celebration of God's Faithfulness and Reunion Dinner for Past and Current Missionaries

On Saturday, morning and afternoon sessions witnessed special occasions as a number of our partners/friends joined us plus what is now becoming a regular feature of the ADC as the *Onidere of Idere* (the amiable Christian Traditional Ruler of our host community) led a retinue of his Chiefs and other Royal Fathers from neighbouring communities to join in the celebrations. The climax of the Saturday session was a *Family Re-union Dinner* at which missionaries and staff members who had left CMF and those who are currently still serving under CMF had a time of reflection, reconciliation, healing of past hurts and renewal of relationships.

All Round Provisions and Divine Favours Pertaining to Life and Godliness

Other highlights of the main CMF CONVENTION included the presence of a well stocked medical center with a team of three doctors, a senior Laboratory Technician and several nurses and health service attendants who were at hand to attend to any medical challenge that came up, as well as providing several routine and incidental medical services for the participants. The Catering team did marvelously well by ensuring that meals were ready as scheduled and adequate to feed the teeming number of participants thrice a day. We can testify too that the miracle of multiplication of the little supplies we had at the beginning of the Convention took place as the quantity and quality of meals served never diminished, nor did we skip any of the meal times and these continued till the end of the post-ADC programmes on Thursday, August 21 with the feeding of 150 leaders and some 59 children during this post-ADC period. We were overwhelmed by the kind of generosity the Lord inspired in the hearts of the brethren as we had food items and cash donations flowing in from the fields, zones, chapters and our partners. The Lord also granted us very fine weather throughout the duration of the main and post-ADC sessions for which we are eternally grateful.

Leadership Retreat for Resharpener and Re-Tooling for Greater Efficiency

The post-CMF-ADC leadership training and retreat which commenced on August 18 had a total of 150 participants (including 14 from countries outside Nigeria) and made up of a Regional Director, National Directors, Zonal Directors, Liaison Officers, Heads of Departments, and Field Team Leaders. The aim of this retreat was to sharpen our leadership skills and to retool every level of leadership within the CMF with Biblical and contemporary leadership and discipleship principles for greater effectiveness and efficiency in the face of the increasing ministry challenges of our time. It also provided avenue for orientation and proper integration for those coming newly into leadership positions at various levels within CMF. I facilitated most of the sessions using mostly the Development Associates International (DAI) Leadership Development materials and other useful materials garnered from several insightful sources. We also decided to make such leadership training and re-tooling exercises a regular phenomenon in our capacity building efforts to cope with the increasing expansion of our work.

We are very grateful to the Lord who so much helped us, provided for us, protected us, spoke to us like a Father to His Children, renewed our strength, re-envisioned us, held the skies that they did not interrupt the good weather we enjoyed, and has granted safety in all the travels to and from the Convention. We are also appreciative of the numerous channels He used to make the above possible through their willingness and submission to be used by Him, and this includes YOU!

"MAY THE GOD OF PEACE, WHO THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE ETERNAL COVENANT BROUGHT BACK FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, EQUIP YOU WITH EVERYTHING GOOD FOR DOING HIS WILL, AND MAY HE WORK IN US WHAT IS PLEASING TO HIM, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER, AMEN"
[HEBREWS 13:20-21]



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Reuben Ezemadu is the Founding and currentl International Director of the Christian Missionary Foundation Inc. He served as the pioneer General Secretary and later as the Chairman of NEMA, the General Coordinator of the Third World Missions Association and currently the Continental Coordinator of MANI as well as the Nigeria Ministry Center Director of the Development Associates International (DAI).

MINISTRY REPORT: Life Concern Ministries, India

Aliba Imchen

My name is Aliba Imchen from the district of India called Nagaland (North East India). I am working as a Pastor from Medziphema Ao Baptist Church, Nagaland India.

Since 2004 I've been working in LIFE CONCERN MINISTRIES, a ministry for church planting and counseling. LCM's Focus is to reach the unreached one by one, imitating Jesus in simple ways to let the people understand the love of God, and to care for the sheep as a shepherd, as Jesus did in His teaching of searching one lost sheep while 99 sheeps was with Him.

Youth Ministry

LCM organize events for adult teachers and youth and motivate them especially the youth because this generation are very intelligent and smart. For LCM, the youth is one of the most important people group that must be won for Christ. We are also praying to God to have some training for the youth for the ministries so we can reach more of them and disciple them effectively. What LCM wants to do is to motivate the energetic youth and reach out to their needs.

Cell Groups

LCM also focuses on small cell group meetings in houses. Group members are gathered to study the Words of God and have fellowship with one another in the comfort of their homes.

As fishermen use different kinds of net to catch the fish we want to use different ideas to catch men. Everyday we think for new ideas to deal with different people. And we acknowledge every time that God is the main source of ideas to reach them.

Home Churches

Currently, God gave us the idea to reach and disciple people in the houses where we can have small kind of house church or prayer cell. Many believers and also non believers have problems in their lives or in their families. In this kind of family small gathering, we are doing the ministries for the Lord. As of now we have four house churches. We are planning to create a big church as the spirit leads us in the future.

We have some success in having house churches. One of them happened in India where I live. The place name is Bangalore South India. I have learned from childhood that the home is the first university for children. I really say Amen in this wisdom, it is not only a saying, but it is practically the truth. As I grew up I also learned from my parents that those who are weak must be guided and cared like small trees. We find and learn good things by reaching out to their

homes and work places for the cell group.

What we do with our home cell groups is we invite them casually. We ask them about their works and businesses and make friendships. We discuss and share problems, and we encourage them through prayers and counseling. By sharing each others needs and experiences we become friends and we start to share lives together.

In our mission field here in India, it is difficult to reach the wealthy with the gospel. But we are trying to do our best. But the ministry with the middle and lower income peoples is doing good. One of our ministry's concern right now is financial resources. Our ministry needs partners to support us so we can expand our ministries. Kindly pray for the ministries' need.

Prayers

Prayer is the only way to bring His children back to the home where there is no sorrow. When we share the love of God to Indians, they always get the idea to compare the love of Jesus and their gods. The Lord is to be praised because He works in us and with us in many amazing times. Even non-believers also get inspired when we share the love of God through acts that talks about the love of God. Please pray for us to be useful servants who can show who our Lord Jesus Christ is and who can imitate His work for His missions.

Sharing Love

One of my Christian friends accepted a homeless boy to his home who knocked at his door and asked him if he can stay there tonight. Although hesitant, my friend said yes and let him stay for the night. He gave him food to eat and bed to sleep. When the morning came all the food they've stored in the refrigerator was eaten by that boy, but with love, my friend did not get angry and he booked his flight ticket to send him home.

God loves is never ending and is more than what we can do. If we are God's servant in this generation let us do God's works, coupled with our preaching and evangelism. We should be a refuge also to those who need our shelter, in the same way that our Lord is a refuge to us (Psalm 71:1)

In God's Will

God does not answer our prayers according to what we desire. In Jesus' Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said to His father "if it is your will take away this bitterness". (Matt. 26:39) But His Father did not answer this particular prayer. Because it was His Father who planned to let Him suffer and die on the Cross.

Every servant of God promised to serve Him on earth on His behalf. This is the greatest honor and sacrifice we can give our Savior and Master Jesus Christ. LCM is trying our best to IMITATE Christ idea for the missions as we reach out for the singles and abandoned ones. Please pray for each other and let us submit each other to the Lord for THE MEANINGFUL WORKS OF GOD. If we do our work faithfully, He will enable us to follow His path. The Bible says we are the light and salt of the earth. Salt alone is no use if its saltiness is gone. But if the salt retains its saltiness we can mix with meat or vegetables so that it can make curry and people will enjoy eating the curry.

Likewise salt alone has no meaning. Salt should go and mix with meat, so that it can cook a good curry. Therefore let us go and reach the unreached one.

Rev. Aliba Imchen

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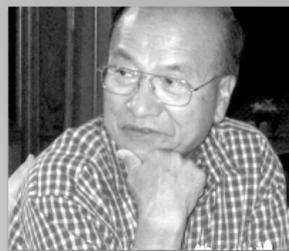
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