

## Wandering Aloud About Membercare and Missiology:

### What are/should be/could be the roles of behavioral health sciences?

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It seems in my journey through life, I find myself walking in areas that not many of my kind walk. As a trained and licensed clinical psychologist I have led a pre-field orientation program with a linguist and an anthropologist that has put me into missiological, cultural and linguistic arenas far more than the average clinician. I like to think of it as expanding my horizons. Some of my more pure brethren probably think of me as being perverted by this multi-perspectival approach! Be that as it may, I have regularly asked questions about how does membercare and specifically the behavioral health sciences, which would include psychiatry, sociology and psychology, fit in better with the missional task and more specifically with the integrated discipline of missiology. This is the purpose of this article.

Perhaps a couple of definitions would be useful. A. Scott Moreau gave me the following as a definition of missiology:

Missiology is the academic study of missions, mission, and *missio Dei*. Missiology has three central concerns: 1) the identity or nature of mission, 2) the goal of mission, and 3) the means or method of missions. To get at those concerns missiology includes the study of the nature of God, the created world, and the church and the ways they interact. Thus, missiology and the social sciences both play important roles in missiological thinking.

This is his recollection from *Introducing World Missions*. Wikipedia has the fol-

lowing definition:

Missiology is the area of practical theology which investigates the mandate, message, and work of the Christian missionary. Missiology is a multidisciplinary and cross-cultural reflexion (sic) on all aspects of the propagation of the Christian faith embracing theology, anthropology, history, geography, theories and methods of communication, comparative religion, Christian apologetics, methodology, and interdenominational relations.

Both of those are useful definitions, but I don't see anything that speaks

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**For me, membercare is an all-inclusive activity that is not focused exclusively in clinical work.**

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about the behavioral sciences, specifically the arena of membercare. I am certain any omissions are due to the fact that the field of "membercare" is new and not researched very well and can mean literally anything to anyone. My definition of membercare is "the care that an organization provides its members." That is admittedly an all-inclusive definition but I find that there are a number of reasons for me to keep this definition as broad as it is. For me membercare is an all-inclusive activity that is not focused exclusively in clinical work.

Early attempts at development of membercare services within organizations typically grew out of missionaries becoming hurt or getting hurt as a result of their membership in a mission orga-

nization or their performance of the missionary call. One early result of this is that people who most often worked in this arena were the clinicians themselves. Unfortunately some membercare efforts started as kind of a reaction to some of the perceived problems or failures within the organizational structure. As a result, this reactive stance tended to work very well within the clinical framework, in that victims were identified and solutions were posed that didn't necessarily take into account the more sociological perspectives of group membership, or organizational structure and climate.

Member care has continued to grow with the most active participants up until the last few years being people in clinical work; that is psychologists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, psychiatrists, and the like, who have seen

themselves as providing a professional clinical service to the mission organization and the missionaries. Oftentimes it was focused mostly on the missionaries. Recently other categories of people have gotten involved, those more of the coaching perspective. My broad-based definition is an attempt to draw all of these into the arena of providing care but care that is directed towards specific goals. The diagram on page 3 will hopefully aid in understanding my perspective on "flow of care" in membercare:

I envision membercare as being made up largely of six dimensions or arenas. On the left is master care, which is the all-encompassing spiritual care and nurturance that our Lord gives us as part of being His children. The next arena is self

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care, and for me this gets at the understanding that everyone is responsible to carry part of their own load (Galatians 6). That is, we must be responsible for taking care of ourselves in terms of diet, exercise, sleep, the obvious things that we can't ignore if we are to be effective. The next arena is one-another care. This gets at the expectation or the understanding that we exist as a community of people, such as a missionary team, a group of outsiders on an insider's turf, or whatever. We have a responsibility to provide each other with a communicational place, a place to share and pray and grow. Without this resource we are going to be sorely lacking. The next three arenas are kind of specialist types of caring people. The first is the pastoral care, and this is a spiritual encourager who helps us as we attempt to understand and apply the principles that we

the more serious consequences of not managing their behavior.

What is the core value of Member-care? For me it's not about counseling or healing or helping. It is about effectiveness. I see effectiveness as a very missiologically informed concept. In other words, everything that I do should move the missionary closer to the people that they are called to serve. As a clinician I need to help people understand how to live well and live effectively in a place where they don't belong. If they are hurting as a result of living there, my treatment should not further insulate them from that context. Wherever possible I need to understand their context to be able to help them in a way to live well where they are. I call this my incarnational effectiveness imperative.

Does member care have a larger role to play in missions and missiology? I

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receive through our master care component. Then comes the coaching care specialist. This refers to the fact that many times in our missionary career we do need the help of specialists, specialists in language acquisition, specialists in leadership development, specialists in technological understanding. All of those people play an important role and their goal is to help us to be more effective. Finally, there is clinical care, and that is someone like me, a clinical psychologist, who is there to provide the kind of specialist care that typically occurs through therapeutic treatment modalities. All of the arrows point back towards the dotted circle, which I call the community arena. I see my major responsibility as a clinical resource person is to provide training towards the community arena as much as I can. I think it can be a misuse of resources to simply sit and wait for people to get mentally ill and then try to help them. A better task would be to understand and identify ways in which people become emotionally vulnerable in the normal practice of daily living and help them understand how to avoid some of

think that's a very appropriate question to ask, and I believe depending on how it is answered could really determine the future effectiveness of member care in the larger mission enterprise. I would answer no to that question if membercare seeks to apply a culturally-limited role of professional or quasi-professional relationships to the broader global community. If membercare were to define certain behaviors or relationships as only within its realm then I think that membercare would be relegated to an ancillary role. I am not suggesting that I oppose competent clinicians providing counseling, psychotherapeutic, and psychiatric services where necessary and where needed. The question I am raising is wondering whether that is enough. I think member care is much broader than that. I would answer yes to the question if member care sees caring as an incarnational activity and seeks to contextualize its caring to the particular arena in which the person is living, witnessing, and working.

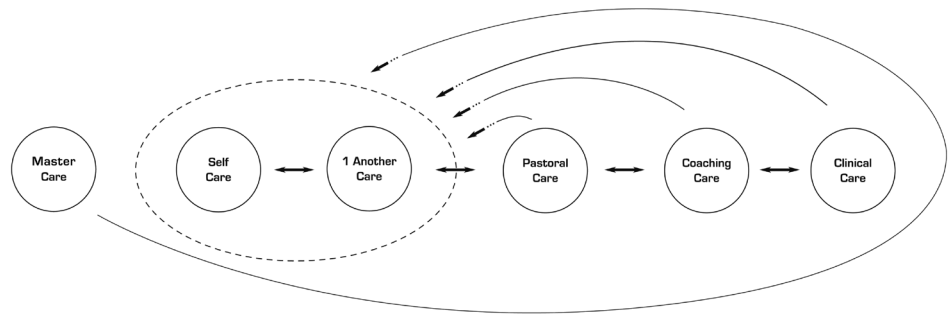
The question that immediately becomes apparent is how and why that is

such an important issue. I operate from the perspective that there is very little that is value free in the world today. We bring tremendous cultural baggage along with most everything that we do. Missions training and missiological understanding accept that as a given. However, I think in some of the more pure counseling arenas there is a naive feeling that counseling is counseling no matter where it is performed, and especially so if it is “biblical” counseling. Something as simple as a communicative event is very different and is expressed differently in the cultures around us. Anyone who has tried to understand anthropological and cultural insights knows this. However, a mental health professional who maybe hasn’t had much experience in another cultural context may not understand that and may apply his or her training in ways that may not be necessarily helpful.

In addition, the way in which we look at our roles as givers of membercare has great potential to determine the kind of care that we give. If we see our role as protection, that is, to protect the person from the culture surrounding them, then we’re going to be providing lots of insulating ideas, which will prevent the person from developing an incarnational relationship with those around them. If we see our major role as diagnosing and treating following the appearance of illness, we’re probably going to have a tertiary role than a primary prevention role and waiting in effect for people to exhibit problems. Certainly much of the western primary health and behavioral health model is made up of diagnosis and treatment. But that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t keep striving for preventative roles. If we see our role as preparing or enhancing I think we open up the role of membercare into a much wider variety of options to help and also to bring the other allied disciplines such as missiology to the forefront as well. For example, the field of positive psychology has come into being only over the last ten years perhaps and focuses on studying issues like hope and faith and joy. They’re doing this in a fairly academic setting and conducting research. I find a lot of joy myself in understanding how they approach the development and re-

**Table 1: Flow of Membercare**

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finement of hope, for example. Post-traumatic growth is the other side of post-traumatic stress. Often we get focused on post-traumatic stress and try to treat that. I like to move beyond that and ask how do we help people develop effectiveness or a new life in the aftermath of major traumatic events. Too often I think we operate from a western model of a crisis followed by a resolution of crisis before another crisis comes along. The majority world has a series of crises occurring with very messy boundaries between crises, and with little opportunity for resolution. I believe that focusing on helping people develop resources and learn to grow in the midst of unresolved crisis will be a more realistic reflection of life in many contexts.

How can the reader as a practicing missiologist, help the practicing membercare resource person to understand how missiology can benefit and enhance the practice of membercare? I think it would be very naïve for me to assume that my limited understanding of the dynamic field of missiology would allow me to offer many answers to this question. However, I can pose some questions myself that may give the reader an idea of what to do in order to facilitate this process. Hopefully, this will also stimulate more discussion and potential answers!

Make friends with a membercare resource person. This is an obvious possibility but I think too often we do not know each other in ways that would be mutually beneficial. Included in the arena of making friends is the ability to dialogue over basic issues. Perhaps in an academic setting the missiology department could sponsor integrated lunch times on a regular basis to present a case

from a missiological perspective and seek input from the clinicians who attend. Perhaps that would facilitate or encourage the development of clinically-based scenarios for which the missiologists could then provide input. I find that when I do this, there is a tremendous sense of “ah-ha” both in the missiological perspective and the clinical perspective. For me this underlies a major feeling that I have in that the disciplines are not in opposition to each other. It’s simply that we don’t know enough about each other. Once we find out about each other there is plenty of room for growth and connectivity.

Attend and even present integrated papers raising these issues at mental health and membercare events. There aren’t many of them concerned with missions so it’s not too hard to find them. The trick is to come up with a topic that would be accepted. I tend to lead with rather outrageous titles and some examples of recent presentations are “Missional Issues in Member care Delivery” and “Wholistic Issues in the Psychological Assessment of Missionaries” Also I will be presenting in the fall at the Mental Health and Missions meeting “The Art of Stone Soup: Feeding the Lord’s Flock.” I find that creative titles stimulate thinking even before we get together and we typically have a lot of fun looking at different disciplinary viewpoints in those times. I see my role in these events as pushing participants to think outside of their disciplinary boxes.

Think about how missiological concepts might inform the typical treatment strategy involved in membercare. For in-

Continued on page 8

# The Psalms as Mission

Michael Landon

**I** once began an adult Sunday School class with the question, “What do you think of when you hear the word Psalms?” The class responded with numerous associations: praise, repentance, song, prophecy, poetry, prayer, elegant, thanksgiving, confidence, and sorrow. As I wrote these on the blackboard, it occurred to me that these words reflected both what the Psalms were and how they affected people. I reorganized and linked them together with a minimum of connecting words to form this statement: “The Psalms are elegant poetry, songs and prophecies to cause sorrow, repentance, praise and thanksgiving in order to arrive at confidence.” What surprised me

form the second part. The third part explains how some Psalms are specifically missionary in purpose, and the fourth section outlines some possible implications of this missionary nature of Psalms for Christians and churches today.

## Objections to the Psalms as Missions

The Psalms do not appear to have a missionary nature because we have probably experienced the Psalms as praise, personal weeping and confession, or Israelite poetry.<sup>4</sup> Once we have interpreted them one way, it is hard to see them as another.<sup>5</sup> Also, Western society has a strong tendency to dichotomize perceptions of reality.<sup>6</sup> If something is personal, it is not public. If the Psalms are Israelite poetry, they are not about Gentiles.

## Perhaps the Psalms can lead us to a more effective way of doing missions in postmodern America.

even more was that these word associations with Psalms were an excellent description of what missions ought to be.

Instead of reading Psalms as Jewish literature intended to edify only the Jews of that time and Christians today, I began to read them as an outsider; as a Gentile of the Old Testament times or as a searcher today. I found that reading thrilling. Several commentators have made passing mention of the universal and missionary implications of the Psalms.<sup>1</sup> Recently Wetzel made a similar case for the apologetic use of the Psalms<sup>2</sup>, but the most complete and useful comments have been made by Hedlund, Peters, and several contributors to *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to further the word done by these authors. This discussion will proceed in four stages. In the first stage, several objections to the missionary nature of the Psalms will be discussed. Two brief arguments for the missionary nature of all the Psalms

If they are emotional, they are not rational. Below are four initial reactions that many Christians might have to this claim of a missionary nature of the Psalms and responses to them.

**1. “The Psalms Are About God’s People, Not Gentiles.”** It is true that most of the Psalms are directed to the Israelites, but in the process an amazing number address or make significant reference to the peoples of the world. Peters claims to find 175 examples of universalistic concern for the nations of the world, but did not list them.<sup>7</sup> I have found about thirty Psalms that make significant reference to Gentiles being called to worship or obey God: 1, 2, 22, 24, 33, 40, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 58, 66, 67, 68, 72, 82, 86, 87, 95, 96, 97, 98, 105, 108, 115, 117, 135, 138, 145, 146, and 148.

Psalms 47 displays the Israel-centric view of many Psalms that can lead interpreters to ignore missionary implica-

tions. The authors mention Abraham (47:9), clearly state that God chose Israel (47:4), and proudly proclaim that “He subdued the nations under us” (47:3). Yet the purpose of the Psalm is to call “all you nations” (47:1) to come and praise God! Why? “For God is the King of all the earth” (47:7)! As Stuhlmüller put it “The prayer of Israel reached outward to the nations principally in the hymns of praise.”<sup>8</sup>

While the emphasis on Israel seems to contradict a missionary intent, compare it with the Apostle Paul’s arguments in Romans. A psalm emphasizing Israel as God’s chosen people does not preclude a possible missionary theme! God chose Abraham and his seed in order to bless all mankind (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:16).

**2. “Psalms Are About Praise and Devotion, not Evangelism.”** Peters boldly called the Psalter “one of the greatest missionary books in the world”<sup>9</sup> because he clearly understood:

The sole purpose of the writers of the Psalms is to praise the God of Israel...Ya[h]weh deserves the praise of the whole creation; this is the thought that is voiced in more than one Psalm. It is not only the nations that are to be summoned by the faithful among the chosen people. The heavens, the earth, the rivers, and even the sea must also applaud the God of Israel.<sup>10</sup>

For example, in Psalm 66, the text is easily divided into three main sections based on the topic and people addressed. In verses 1-7, the author addresses “all the earth” calling it to praise God because God’s power over the earth was demonstrated in Exodus. In verses 8-12, he addresses “O peoples,” calling for them to praise God because “He has preserved our lives,” and then addresses God, acknowledging that “You, O God, tested us....But You brought us back to a place of abundance.” In verses 13-20, the speaker comes to the front as an individual, using the pronoun “I” instead of the plural “us” or “our.” The speaker first addresses God, declaring his devotion through promising to “come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to You.” He then addresses the audience, saying, “Come and listen, all you who fear God, let me tell you what He has done for me.”

All of this looks to me like a very

good testimony, suitable for the temple courtyard, the assembly of the church, and conversations on the bus or subway. In this Psalm, God's active power and love in the Exodus and in one person's life are revealed and proclaimed and reacted to, which is exactly the purpose of missionary preaching and teaching.

**3. "The Psalms are About Personal Crises, not Preaching."** Psalm 49 is an existential look at life and death. Its missionary theme is seen from the beginning when one of the sons of Korah entreats "all you peoples," "all who live in the world" (49:) to listen. The problem he deals with is two-fold. First, "man.... Does not endure" (49:10) and "is destined for the grave" (49:14). Second, not even the wealthiest person can avoid this (49:7-9)!

Yet the author confidently proclaims "but God will redeem my life from the grave, He will surely take me to Himself" (49:15). He doesn't explain how he will be saved, not why he is so confident in God, but he certainly has piqued my interest! Psalm 146: 5-9 responds to the needs of the oppressed and poor, but does so by repeatedly emphasizing who it is that can help them.

The entire Bible tell us wonderful

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## Perhaps a part of the evangelistic power of the Psalms is its "soft" medium: symbolism and poetry.

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things about God (His power, creativity, anger, beauty, mercy, patience, etc.) so that we could know Him, but especially in the Psalms and Wisdom Literature. God draws near—near to our fear, powerlessness, pain, and sorrow. When I cry out, the Psalms talk back! And they speak my language! Most of the time I have a hard time understanding Psalm 18, especially verses 4-9, but I suspect that a Chinese Christian in prison understands both the pain and the glory.

Another example is Psalm 40 where David tells the story of crying out to God to help him "out of the slimy pit." The result of God's merciful care however, is not just praise, He put a new song

in my mouth" (40:3), but also evangelism "I will proclaim righteousness in the assembly" (40:9) and "many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord" (40:3). These Psalms communicate the good news in a way that a logical argument never can.

**4. "Psalms are Emotional, Not Rational."** Psalm 32 has a long history of being considered an "intimate" penitential Psalm. It is obviously an emotional outpouring, as illustrated by his description of denying guilt—he moans, "my bones wasted away" ...groaning all day long...my strength was sapped (32:3-4). "Then I acknowledged my sin to You.... and you forgave the guilt of my sin (32:5). But the Psalm's primary purpose is not to express the author's pain, but to teach. According to Breuggemann, it begins in a didactic tone (32:1-2)<sup>11</sup> before turning to the psalmist's personal experience. Returning to his lesson at the end, then psalmist calls out "Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you" (32:6) and "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go" (32:8).

Despite the emphases of our modern training in scientific thinking, perhaps a part of the evangelistic power of the Psalms is its "soft" medium: symbolism

and poetry. Louwen explained "Most Protestant missionaries depend almost exclusively on clarification and exposition to stir the people, forgetting that most people tend to be stirred by symbols"<sup>12</sup> Wetzel tells the dramatic tale of an anonymous Russian couple moved by music and art to believe in God.<sup>13</sup> Colin Dexter's "Inspector Morse" said he believed in God "sometimes—when I hear beautiful music."<sup>14</sup> And Siemon-Netto recently described the role of music alone in bringing people to faith in Japan:

Now 250 years after his death, at the birth of a new century, an enormous Bach resurgence is underway—particularly in Japan. There, in one

of the most unreligious countries in the world, thousands of people are converting To Christianity after listening to Bach's cantatas.<sup>15</sup>

Shoun explained that "song possesses a power beyond that of language."<sup>16</sup> She lists three reasons for this power: music can harmonize mind and heart on the same message, it can strengthen the bonds of community, and music helps us transcend out temporal perspective.<sup>17</sup>

While each of these reactions to the missionary nature of the Psalms has an apparent basis, further examination of individual Psalms tends to discredit them. Israelite poems often do address Gentiles. Accounts of personal crises can teach dependence on the One true God. A call to worship is also a call to believe and obey. And emotion is a powerful part of conversion.

### The Missionary Nature of the Psalter

This section presents three factors in the discussion of the missionary nature of all the Psalms. First, the Psalms as a whole are missionary because they were written by a missionary as a record of his mission. Second, all the Psalms are missionary because they teach about God and expect faith and praise in return. Third, they are missionary because they are an instrument for continued outreach.

**1. Psalms As a Record For Missions.** Bosch succinctly expresses the concept of *Missio Dei* (Mission of God):

If there is a "Missionary" in the Old Testament, it is God Himself who will, as His eschatological deed par excellence, brings the nations to Jerusalem to worship Him there together with His covenant people.<sup>18</sup>

Stott explained that the call of Abraham to bless all the nations of the earth necessarily leads to the recognition of a missionary God.<sup>19</sup> Kaiser also used Abraham's call to prove the point, and added the call of Israel to be the world's priests (Ex. 19:4-6) and Psalm 67 as a description of how that blessing was coming to fruition.<sup>20</sup> Verkuyl appeals to the table of nations (Genesis 10), the liberator motif, and the book of Jonah to support the point.<sup>21</sup> The discussions on Psalm 32, 33, 40, 47, 49, and 66 above dem-

onstrate that the Psalms repeatedly record appeals to peoples of the world to come to the Lord.

Hedlund presented three other reasons why the Psalms as a whole are relevant to contemporary missions 1) the Psalms clearly called humans to serve God whole heartedly, not admitting idolatry, nor a nominal relationship, 2) the Psalms commended and demonstrated the disciplines of spiritual nurture so necessary in the young churches, such as "confession of sin, affirmation of faith, petitions and praise," 3) the book of Psalms was particularly suitable for use in congregational worship," especially for memorization in preliterate societies.<sup>22</sup> In other words, the Psalms fit the needs of young Christians and new churches in the mission areas of the world, just as they fit the needs of generations of Israelites and Gentiles coming to faith.

**2. Psalms as Missionary Theology.** The Psalms as a whole are mission-

and weak mankind; without God, the only alternative is eternal death (Rom. Ch. 1-2; 3:23; 6:23).

**3. Psalms As An Instrument of Continuing Missions.** The formation of the Bible has often been viewed as a theological activity and only corollary with occasional missions, such as Jonah and Paul. When viewed in this way, we tend to associate missions with only a few New Testament passages and isolate ourselves from the richness of biblical missions. As Scheiter put it,

To direct one's motivation wholly to the Great Commission of Matthew 28 without looking into the complexity of experience attested to us by Paul in Romans 9-11 makes for a superficial missionary activity. A sensitive reading of both testaments makes it clear that Scriptural testimony to the mission of salvation is not a solo voice, but a chorus from the many communities and persons which make up the Hebrew and Christian communities.<sup>24</sup>

The New Testament was more than a corollary activity of first century missions.

Peters plus Psalm 67, 68, 87, and 96.<sup>26</sup> This section briefly presents two types of Psalms that are specifically missionary; those that make an apologetic for the existence of God and those that prophesy about the Messiah.

**Apologetics of God.** As discussed above, Psalm 135 ridicules idols and defends the God of Israel as the only true, living God. His defense rests on the acts of God—our God is the god that controls nature (135:6-7), and He is the God of the Exodus (135:8-12). These are common arguments for God's existence and power and are used in Psalm 8, 95, and 135. Psalm 19, 33, 65, 89, 94, 146, and 148 proclaim God as the mighty Creator. Psalm 44, 47, 66, 78, 80, 105, 106, and 114 use the Exodus as a reason to believe and trust in God. A third argument for believing and trusting in God is because He is the God who has made a difference in my life, as seen in psalm 32, 34, 40, and many others.

**Messianic Promises.** Once again this argument for the missionary nature of the Psalms covers well known material, but asks for a reminder of its purpose. Much has been written on the Messianic prophecies of the Psalms precisely because the Psalms are used so frequently by the New Testament writers to explain Jesus.

Psalms with Isaiah is one of the OT books most quoted in the NT. Though numerous Psalms are quoted, only a small number are used often. These include Psalm 2, 8, 16, 22, 34, 69, 110, and 118. These Psalms are particularly cited in reference to Christ.<sup>27</sup>

Hedlund discusses Psalm 2, 22, 72, and 110 in his section on Messianic expectations in Psalms.<sup>28</sup> Quotations from Psalm 110 in the New Testament are well known: "The LORD said to my Lord" and "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizekek" (Ps. 110;1,4). Both refer to Jesus' priesthood and His ministry which extended beyond the Old Testament code to include all the earth. Psalm 2, and 22 also include familiar quotations and refer to Jesus' rejection and suffering, but Psalm 2 exhorts, "be warned you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear" and Psalm 22 promises "All the end of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and

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## The Psalms as a whole is a missionary book, but **specific Psalms may have special interest to missions.**

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ary because of the theology they teach. Van Generen summarizes the theology of the Psalms when he writes that they reveal 1) the names, perfections, and acts of God, 2) the hope of redemption and righteousness 3) the kingdom of God 4) the Messiah 5) wisdom.<sup>23</sup> These are all missionary topics! Often in the settled churches and lengthy discussions, we tend to forget that theology is just a means to an end. God revealed His nature, love, and wisdom in the Psalms expecting humans to react in faith, repentance, obedience, and praise. Not only do the Psalms reveal truth, they also uncover lies (Ps. 135:15-18).

Psalm 18, 97, and 115 make similar attacks on idolatry and call for all to worship the true God. This theology necessitates mission. Mission is necessary because it is part of God's character; He loves sinners and wants them to be saved. Mission is necessary for sinful

It both recorded first century missions and is an instrument of God's continued mission. That's why the four narratives of Jesus' life on earth are called Gospels, not biographies. Their purpose was not to simply record what happened, but to continue to cause humans to come to faith and life (John 20:30-31). In the same way, the whole Bible is a divinely inspired product or report of God reaching out to humans and also one of the instruments for that outreach.

### **Specifically Missionary Psalms**

The Psalms as a whole is a missionary book, but specific Psalms may have special interest to missions. Peters listed Psalm 2, 33, 66, 72, 98, 117, and 145 as examples of whole Psalms dedicated to missionary concerns, but only expounded briefly on Psalm 86.<sup>25</sup> Hedlund gave a brief exposition of eleven missionary Psalms including the seven listed by

all the families of the nations will bow down before Him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and He rules over the nations." In these Psalms and other Old Testament passages such as Isaiah 49:6, the Messiah is necessarily linked with a worldwide ministry, not simply an Israelite kingdom.

## Implications of the Missionary Nature of Psalms

The next step in this discussion of the missionary nature of the Psalms is to ask "So what? What difference does a missionary emphasis in the Psalms make?" There seem to be at least four important implications relating to Bible study, the Christian life, missionary training, and mission theory.

**1. Bible Study.** A mission emphasis even in such personal and emotional literature as the Psalms re-emphasizes the centrality and necessity to understand the Bible. The Bible was written to make a difference in the Christian's life. While deriving comfort from the Psalms is a God given gift, they also prick one's heart and guide one further in God's will and work (Heb. 4:12). Like the psalmist, interacting with God naturally leads to an exuberant proclamation of what God has done! In the same way that Bible study that does not lead to praising God is in vain, Bible study that does not lead to evangelism is barren.

**2. Christian Life and Worship.** What we often fail to recognize is that Jesus did not choose 12 apostles; He chose 12 missionaries. In the same way that a transliteration has disguised the true meaning of Jesus' intent, we often misinterpret Jesus' purpose for the Church. There are a few texts that explicitly say why the Church exists (Eph. 2:10, 14-16, 3:10; 4:13; 1 Pet. 2:9-12), and none of them say evangelism is the primary purpose of the Church. What they do say is that evangelism is the natural result of doing God's will. I believe 1 Peter 2:9 is the foundational text, and according to it, the purpose of the Church is to praise God. But the result of such praise is to cause others to praise God as well (1 Pet. 2:12)! Ephesians 2:14-16 declares that Jesus wants the Church to be a place of reconciliation—reconcilia-

tion of man to man and of man to God. Ephesians 3:10 explains that the Church is to demonstrate to the devil that God knew what he was doing—how can we do that if we ignore those whom he has enslaved? Piper best summarized it when he declared:

Missions is not the first and ultimate: God is...All of history is moving toward one great goal, the white hot worship of God and His Son among all the peoples of the earth. Missions is not that goal. It is the means. And for that reason it is the second greatest human activity in the world.<sup>29</sup>

**3. Missionary Training.** If the Psalms are an instrument of mission, then missionary training needs to change in at least two ways. First, we need to give all missionaries a strong introduction to art, especially on the power of symbolism in most cultures, and how to recognize indigenous art that can be used for evangelism. As Amaladoss recently put it, "If the goal of mission is the creation of the a new world of human-divine communion, then are has an indispensable role in it."<sup>30</sup> Second, Christian artists need a good theological understanding in order to communicate truth, and a good missiological understanding of how to use it effectively.

**4. Mission Theory.** The fourth implication of missionary Psalms is that they may not be just examples of mission, but a possible paradigm for missions. Our current mission methods emphasize reason and strategy because they have been highly influenced by the Enlightenment.<sup>31</sup> As Webber put it, "As Enlightenment individualism began to take root, it shaped evangelism in its own image"<sup>32</sup> In a postmodern world, this Enlightenment-shaped evangelism is losing its effectiveness. Perhaps the Psalms can lead us to a more effective way of doing missions in postmodern America, not only through the use of the emotional, intuitive, symbolic, and poetic, but also through refocusing missions on God. As Piper declared; "The most critical issue in missions is the centrality of God in the life of the Church."<sup>33</sup>

## Endnotes

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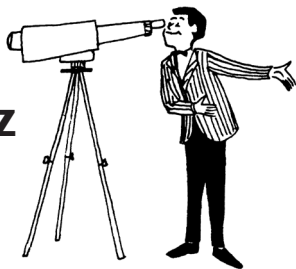
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## As seen through the LENZ



Missiology and missions, along with the behavioral sciences! Are these strange bedfellows, or perhaps a necessity in putting together the whole missiological man? Dr. Brent Linquist argues for the latter in his thinking, which we have made our featured article in this edition of *OB*. Brent, a clinical psychologist, and good friend, member, and attendee of EMS conferences, makes the case for member care to be included in missions thinking. Agencies are turning to this aspect of health in order to prepare missionaries for service, as well as to help those who would be considered as missionary casualties without this type of care. But Linquist insists that we should act sooner rather than later to prevent these casualties by including better preventive health methods. To use an illustration from a nursery rhyme: it is better to prevent Humpty Dumpty from falling, than having to piece him together after he falls. Brent would like further interaction from anyone interested in this subject and wishing to dialogue with him.

—**Bob Lenz**, editor

## Wondering Aloud about Membercare and Missiology continued from page 3.

stance, why couldn't there be a "Missiologist on Duty" at conferences like there are counselors. Why couldn't the missiologist speak on topics of adjustment, and provide insight into how stress can be managed by understanding missiological concepts in their context? It could happen.

I am very interested in continuing this dialogue with whoever else is interested. Perhaps this could morph into a presentation at a future EMS event. I am especially interested in feedback from Missiologists regarding the following questions: What is membercare missing in terms of Missiology? What are some key missiological issues which membercare can speak to? What troubles me when I see membercare at work in the cross-cultural context? What question have I always wanted to ask a membercare resource person, but have not felt the openness on their part to engage in such a discussion?

I am available to engage in dialogue with you. Please connect with me via email ([brentlindquist@linkcare.org](mailto:brentlindquist@linkcare.org)).

Thanks for walking down a path less trodden with me for awhile. I hope this excursion stimulates you to think outside your box, in an area where we both can learn and grow!

—**Brent Lindquist**, Ph.D. is a licensed Psychologist and President of Link Care Center.

## The Psalms as Mission continued from page 7.

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