

Transformational Cross-cultural Partnership

Mobilizing Mission Resources for an Urban Context

Roger L. Trautmann

Over the last ten years, I have had contact with a number of individuals and organizations from other countries that are in the United States seeking to form cross-cultural partnerships to resource ministries. Formation of cross-cultural partnerships is a major trend in missions, and transformational cross-cultural ministry partnerships may be an answer to the major shifts in the focus of missions. In this article I would like to state why and how transformational cross-cultural partnerships can be effective.

Trends in Missions that Raise Attention toward Cross-Cultural Partnerships

1. A growing interconnection of the global church.

Timothy C. Tennent (2010) points out that there is a shift from “West-Reach-the-Rest” to “multiple centers of Christian vitality. The statistical center of gravity refers to that point on the globe with an equal number of Christians living north, south, east, and west” (p. 31-34).

We are experiencing a time when ministry leaders are collaborating for missional purposes. Networks are formed in use of shared wisdom and resources to promote an interdependent strategy in obedience to the “great commission.” One organization I have connected with has formed a partner organization in the United States to share resources for mutual mission ministry.

2. Globalization opening connectivity of global mission issues. Michael Pocock (2005) writes, “Globaliza-

tion matters because it fundamentally changes the contexts in which we minister, the way people and cultures perceive each other, how people think, and

the means available to reach them. We cannot dismiss the effects of globalization on ourselves as communicators of the gospel message” (p. 5).

People are more readily aware of human situations and have more individualized missional enterprising networks. There is a trend toward decentralization and national corporate identity. Tennent (2010) writes, “Globalization has fostered dramatic changes in immigration, urbanization, and technological connectivity. The result is that

the traditional sending structures and geographic orientation that have dominated missions since the nineteenth century are no longer tenable” (p.42).

The challenge for Africa, where I have served, is a growing need for added networks and partnerships, particularly in the area of leadership and community development.

Michael Pocock (2005) documents the challenge in the African continent:

Theological and pastoral training programs abound at every level in Africa, though more are needed to keep pace with the rapid growth of the Christian movement. At 3.2 percent annual growth, Christian growth outpaces Africa’s overall population growth. More than 17,000 expatriate missionaries are still present and needed in Africa, but increasingly their roles are in partnerships with Africans in education, relief, development, and theological education.

People are more readily aware of human situations and have more individualized missional enterprising networks.

Missionaries deal with AIDS victims, war-ravaged communities, child soldiers, and prostitution. (p. 135)

3. The rise of “hands-on” short-term missional engagement. There seems to be a new wine movement as churches and individuals are bypassing institutions and agencies and connecting mission work with direct involvement.

Roger Peterson, Executive Director of STEM (Short-Term Evangelical-

cal Mission), notes, “If we could point NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope back toward planet Earth, we’d observe a steady flow of not less than two million people moving around God’s globe every year on what has come to be called short-term missions (STM).”

4. The presence of mission leaders from other continents going to resource rich continents seeking training and cultivating cross-cultural partners.

In recent years, Africans from these ministries have come to the west to solicit partners. Others have been sponsored to come to the United States, to gain advanced theological education. While at Multnomah, I have observed that many of these students, if they choose to return to their homeland, cast ministry vision among United States churches. They form support organizations. For example, MBS graduate, Pastor Charles Buregeya, founded Africa New Life Ministries in 2001 (www.africanewlife.org). They cultivate partnerships to provide resources (shared wisdom, manpower and financial support) for their Rwandan based ministry.

5. The changing motivation for missions. The emphasis of missions has changed from concern for eternal destiny issues to demonstrating the glory of God in the human situation. While the thrust of this paper is not to deal with the theological elements of eternal destiny, it seems (from this writer’s viewpoint) that currently greater emphasis is placed on contemporary real life. As Christ brought an incarnational Gospel of healing, help, and hope to the New Testament world, contemporary Christians are emphasizing a living apologetic in this troubled world. Demonstration precedes proclamation. This has led to a greater emphasis on social justice and social engagement ministries.

The global church can be an amazing tool to make a difference in particular regions like East Africa. In the countries that I have had the privilege of serving with biblical training (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi), it is noted: “Corruption and graft is by rulers and officials who enrich themselves and their ethnic group. Some estimate 25% of Africa’s com-

bined national income is lost through corruption—amounting to \$150 billion per year” (Van Rhee, 1996, p. 31).

It is noted by David A. Livermore (2006), “Americans make up 5 percent of the world population, but consume 50 percent of the world’s resources” (p. 22). Observing the wealth of the Western church and the disparity of resources of their own ministry context, it is only natural for African pastors to seek partnerships. Collaborative partnerships definitely enhance the capacity to implement their missions’ vision and strategies to deepen and expand the church.

Cross-Cultural Partnerships: A Present Reality as Part of the Missional Mosaic

Partnerships are one of the emerging methods of cross-cultural missions. “Cross-cultural partnerships are on the rise. They have become a primary method in which churches and organizations are engaging in global missions. Partners from different cultures and contexts start working together with the hope of accomplishing great things

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for the kingdom of God” (Lederleitner, 2010, p. 21).

On the positive side these partnerships expand and sustain cross-cultural ministries. Partnerships multiply the missions’ impact of ever-expanding and extending the Body of Christ and create a new innovative paradigm for doing missions.

On the negative side these partnerships are met with cross-cultural and ethical challenges. The challenges are articulated as creating dependency, paternalism, and ethical conflict, leading to fractured relationships and broken promises.

Gailyn Van Rheenen gives interesting insight in a series of monthly missiological reflections (#2, #13, & #15) on his website (www.missiology.org). He makes a distinction in the use of money in support of traditional church

beyond that conversation. The emphasis of this paper is developing relationally-based cross-cultural partnerships which are transformational in nature and developmental in purpose. I propose we look past the western values system which focuses on task accomplishment and financial management.

Douglas McConnell (2005) writes a chapter in *The Changing Face of World Missions* titled “Working Together—Beyond Individual Efforts to Networks of Collaboration.” He emphasizes the relational core to ministry community when he writes:

As those who have been redeemed by God’s divine plan of salvation found in Christ Jesus, we are commanded to love one another on the basis of God’s love for us. It is difficult to dismiss this fundamental aspect of Christian theology. When asked about the greatest commandment Jesus stated first that we are to love God above everything else and second that we

task-transactional partnership may measure vision of success by numbers of baptisms and clean financial record. This may not be a viable measurement of deeper issues within the partnership.

Biblical/Theological Rationale

Biblical texts (ESV) that lead us to a think in relational and collaborative terms for cross-cultural partnerships in mission ministry, particularly applied to the global church, are as follows:

- Jesus prayed that his followers, hearing the message from the apostles, would be set apart by His truth and live harmoniously as one, “just as you Father, are in me, and I am you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:6, 14-21). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct personages, but relate harmoni-

By “transformation” I mean a core change where each culture learns from the other leading to a new paradigm of missional engagement.

planting and partnerships. I would like to quote Van Rheenen to help define the nature of this paper:

The partnership model is significantly different from both the *personal support* and *indigenous models*. The partnership perspective recognizes that there are certain contexts in this internationalizing world where foreign money, if appropriately used, can empower missions without creating dependency. This money, however, rather than going directly to the recipient, should go through a local accountability structure of mature Christian leaders....”

Effective partnerships require churches, agencies, or consortiums of national leaders who have the maturity to oversee the developing work. The leaders within the partnership mutually decide the duration of the partnership, accountability for use of money, and methodologies for their specific mission tasks. Without such dialogue or “mutual complementation” partnership eventually breaks down because trust erodes and interest wanes. (#15).

However, the issue of this paper, while related to the use of money, goes

are to love others (Matt. 22:37-39). The reality of putting God above all else should be primarily observable in our relationship with other believers (John 13:4-35; 15:12) and, shockingly, with even our enemies (Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35). (p. 268).

In this paper I want to focus on the value of relational aspects in the formulation of cross-cultural partnerships. While the outcomes of these partnerships are to collaborate resources for cross-cultural ministries, they are only as effective as relationships are fostered that are transformational in nature and redemptive in purpose. By “transformation” I mean a core change where each culture learns from the other leading to a new paradigm of missional engagement. By “redemptive” I mean the aspect where God is at work bringing freedom from the bondages of contemporary culture that hinder His movement among people. For instance, a

ously as one in the redemptive mission for which Jesus was sent.

- The apostle Paul emphasized relational qualities in his letter to the Ephesians that was circulated among churches in Asia: “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility, and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” These admonitions are based on indicative statements of certainty that “there is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:1-6). Paul at the start of his epistles measured churches by their expressions of “faith, hope, love (1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thes. 1:2-3; 2 Thes. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3-5; Eph. 1:15-18).”

• Peter emphasized corporate identity to those in diaspora residing in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:5,9-10). These communities of faith existed in a common reality and purpose.

There is a strong relational component necessary for these passages to be exhibited in real life. The church is global—the whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world. The church is also a local contextualized ministry—a living apologetic of the Gospel (Newbigin, 1989, p. 152). As the church expands and matures in countries and local contexts, and as it is united together in Christ as His People globally, it seems logical that we would partner together with our God-given resources in the mission of Christ.

Definitions

Transformational cross-cultural ministry partnership is a collaboration and cooperation of divinely given resources by two ministry entities (individuals or organizations), in differing cultural contexts, that increase the capacity of each other to extend the Gospel of Christ beyond the limitations of each entity as individual units.

These partnerships are transformational through healthy relational attributes exhibiting those qualities and manifesting a union and communion with the living triune God. Sustaining these partnerships is only necessary for a viable demonstration and declaration of the Gospel mission.

These partnerships are transformational as each entity brings their unique cultural ways to be blended

into a new paradigm of Gospel expression and expansion.

Daniel Rickett (2003) defines partnership as “a complementary relationship driven by a common purpose and sustained by a willingness to learn and grow together in obedience to God” (p. 13). Rickett further adds, “By focusing on development, we are forced to ask whether our involvement makes our brothers and sisters better able to serve God according to their own gifts and calling” (p. 15).

Challenge—Cultural Realities Conditioning Cross-Cultural Partnerships

Cultural anthropologists studying the variations among people groups through interviews, surveys, and observations report a range of distinguishing features. The following tables demonstrate a particular issue related to “cross-cultural” partnerships—the issue of collectivism and individualism.

Geert Hofstede (1991) wrote the monumental work *Cultures and Organizations—Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance of*

Survival (p. 21). The table below, taken from that book, adds understanding related to cultural challenges of sustainable cross-cultural partnerships.

Cultural anthropologists point out, “nothing that we think, say or do is exempt from the influence of our culture. Nothing we believe is exempt from the influence of our race, class, age, and gender. Faith does not free us from culture, because culture is the environment in which what we believe takes shape” (Adeney, 1995, p.21).

Mary T. Lederleitner (2010) writes,

What is fascinating to me is how we can find support for both worldviews in Scripture. When it comes to personal accountability and individualism, there are parables that teach these themes...With regard to collectivistic worldview, we see passages supporting that way of thinking as well (p.28-39).

Lederleitner also points out that both collectivistic and individualistic cultures are challenged to not live on the edge of the extreme, but to learn from each other’s perspective and appreciate centrist thinking.

Group-Oriented Societies	Individual-Oriented Societies
People are born into extended families or other in-groups which continue to protect them in exchange for loyalty	Everyone grows up to look after him/herself and his/her immediate (nuclear) family only
Identity is based in the social network to which one belongs	Identity is based on the individual
Children learn things in terms of “we”	Children learn to think in terms of “I”
Harmony should always be maintained and direct confrontations avoided	Speaking one’s mind is a characteristic of an honest person
High-context communication	Low-context communication
Trespassing leads to shame and loss of face for self and group	Trespassing leads to guilt and loss of self-respect
Relationship of employer-employee is perceived in moral terms, like a family link	Relationship of employer-employee is a contract supposed to be based on mutual advantage
Hiring and promotion decisions take into account employees in-group (extended family group)	Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on skills and rules
Management = management of groups	Management = management of individuals
Relationships prevail over tasks	Tasks prevail over relationships

Key Interrelated Issues for Cross-Cultural Partnership Formation

Transformational cross-cultural partnerships are a step to bringing our theological orthodoxy and orthopraxis to a living reality. How do we move forward? How do we create transformational partnerships that are truly “living out” the redemptive and restorative movement of Christ? How do these cross-cultural partnerships function with integrity regarding the nature and character of the incarnate Son of God?

I want to propose seven critical topics for cultivating transformational cross-cultural partnerships.

1. Base partnership in a dialectical conversational model that creates a “transformational” partnership. It is my hypothesis that each culture related through a cross-cultural part-

only exploitation, fear and suspicion” (p.184). Cross-cultural partnerships are a unique opportunity for theology to be worked out in praxis: what we say we believe is lived out in real life.

Now (between promise and consummation) we are broken people in the process of transformation (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:17) through the Word of God, by the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit in the context of the Body of Christ, and in relation to the greater world of all humanity. We labor with unquenchable optimism because of our living hope through the resurrected Christ (1 Peter 1:3-6; 2 Peter 1:3-11). The apostle Paul admonished his partnering church to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or questioning that you may be

tional in nature, calling participants to move beyond their individualized capacity to a vista beyond themselves—to a new capacity and synergy of collaborative performance that, while defines a vision of success, trusts the ultimate outcomes to the power of God (1 Cor. 3:6 “God causes the growth”). The measurement is the ability to develop a core sense of mission and adjust the outcomes to the changing context.

How does this process work? Both parties must be connected to the redemptive work of Christ and clothed with the attitude of Christ, “doing nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves (Phil. 2:3 ESV).” Cross-cultural partnership becomes the greatest learning context where these words of God are actually lived out. Each person of the partnership joins together with others to develop a com-

People think about things, have feelings about them, and make judgments concerning right and wrong based on their thoughts and feelings.

nership learns from the other and recognizes God is at work in both. God is “supra-cultural.” The challenge effectively engaged becomes transformational to both cultural groups. The trends of urbanization and globalization add another feature as multi-cultural realities have shaped many missional contexts. The missional community has faced, and will continue to face, the realities of differing systems of thought, forces at work, and catalysts of change at an ever increasing pace. NT Wright (1999) writes, “Our task, as image-bearing, God-loving, Christ-shaped, Spirit-filled Christians, following Christ and shaping our world, is to announce redemption to the world that has discovered its fallenness, to announce healing to the world that has discovered its brokenness, to proclaim love and trust to the world that knows

blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world (Phil. 2:12-16 ESV).”

This transformation process takes time (maybe a lifetime) of engagement between partners. When the objective is the creation of a sustainable partnership that is redemptive in process and transformational in nature, it calls each partner to move beyond a transactional contract to a developing relationship with the partner. Bush and Lutz use the metaphor of a “marriage” (Bush & Lutz, 1990, p.44-54). This is critically important in working with a “collectivistic culture” that values relationships above tasks. The transactional partnership is based on a contract generated and defined by quantifiable measuring instruments. Transformation is rela-

tion devotion to partner with the triune God in His redemptive work in a particular context with a particular group of people for a “God-shaped” mission. They share a devotion to a common belief system accompanied by a holy devotion to Christ. Each partner shares a common goal of glorifying God in common mission goals.

Duane Elmer writes, “If God connected with us as a servant that becomes the way we too connect with the people of this world. While it runs counter to our natural desire, we have no choice. We are never more like Jesus than when we serve others.”

A relational dialogical process is established where the individualistic, task-rational-oriented culture joins in a dialogue with the collectivistic, relational-experience-oriented culture. The individuals or groups meet in union

and communion with the redemptive-transformational work of God. Through that interactive process a ministry partnership is formed in concert for the purposes of God. The people involved form a unique relationship where, by valuing each other equally and complementing each other harmoniously, they grow beyond their natural tendency and humbly live as servants of Christ.

2. Cultivate conversational understanding of collaborating partnership for a common mission-vision. I base my thinking on the scholarly work of the late Paul Hiebert. He notes, “the three dimensions of worldview: cognitive, affective, and moral, which we distinguish for analytical purposes. In reality all three operate simultaneously in human experiences. People think about things, have feelings about them, and make judgments concerning right and wrong based on their thoughts and feelings. The moral includes people’s concept of righteousness and sin and their primary allegiance—their god” (Hiebert, 2008, p. 26). Worldviews are shaped through the culture context beginning at birth. The believer’s life and

Odendaal presented a paper “From Kitchen Table to Boardroom Table: Diversity Issues in Global Missions Leadership.” The paper impacted me regarding the type of relational conversations Saddleback Church (Forest Lawn, California) learned to hold while doing community development through “in-country” partnerships in Rwanda, when implementing their PEACE plan initiative.

This dialectic requires three tables of conversation: *The Kitchen Table* (symbolizing interpersonal relational development of understanding and communication), where relationships are cultivated; the *Communion Table* (suggested by Dr. Richard White—symbolizing the dynamic transforming union in Christ), where a community of Christ-followers center (cultivate and celebrate) on redemption and transformation in the Gospel; and *The Board Room Table* (symbolizing policies, procedures, and processes), where decisions are made regarding strategy for bringing the person and work of Christ into a particular context for ministry-mission (Odendaal, 2010).

er as an offering unto Christ in a particular context.

4. Maintain accountability without degenerating to paternalism. Accountability is a biblical reality (1 Cor. 3:11-14 & 2 Cor. 4:9-10) but understanding and communicating with accountability moves beyond training, development, processes, and procedures. It must also consider cultural intelligence issues.

In my experience, I have observed that collision occurs between the Western culture and the African culture regarding leadership, power, and position.

Ralph Schubert (2008), who served in Tanzania with SIL International, studied the relationship of leadership, ethics, and the cultural issues between the Western missionaries and leaders in Tanzania. Related to the use of power and distance he notes that Westerners relate to their “subordinates in a friendly manner, but keep some distance... Leaders in Tanzania are expected to be always accessible and friendly...in Tanzania it is paternalistic” (as related to their tribal group) (p. 150-151).

Areas of conversation in forming

In my experience, I have observed that collision occurs between the Western culture and the African culture regarding leadership, power, and position.

relationships become reshaped by the redemptive transforming work of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, utilizing the Word of God and the community of faith. When two cultures join together in partnership with God, then that relationship becomes transformational over the process of time.

3. Form a relational dialectic, connecting the work of the triune God through His word, Christian community in differing cultural contexts, and the formulation of a transformational partnership for His mission purpose.

At the Northwest EMS Regional meeting (March 2010), Dr. Gil

- Begin with core basis of the cross-cultural partnership—common belief, common sense of mission-vision, and core values and virtues.

- Bond together with partners as mutual servants of Jesus Christ—see each other in an egalitarian (equals in value and relationship with Christ) and complementarian (unique in talents, gifting, and life-experience) way.

- Build a collaborative ministry model with common sense of outcomes.

- Blend—know and understand cultural realities in the context of relationships with partners that blend together

and developing partnership understanding are:

- Leadership accountability—ethics and strategy

- Financial accountability—systems and structure

- Educate, train, mentor, coach—develop systems and structure that meets contextual realities and stimulates growth and development. In that development there are four features:

- Educate, focusing on new information needed for mission-vision accomplishment.

- Train, focusing on use of the information as related to common mis-

sion, vision, and strategy.

—Mentor, focusing on experiential learning processes to implement education and training in relevant mission life.

—Coach, focusing on progress development of the one trained to achieve desired outcomes of mission-vision.

5. Forge and foster dignity and mutuality. Each partner contributes to the partnership without it degenerating into dependency and paternalism. This is the hardest challenge.

Daniel Rickett (2003) states that “healthy dependency is characterized by reciprocity and responsibility...each enters the relationship with a clear picture of what each has to offer and what

ety of “ordinary human beings” resulting in a variety of outcomes.

• Abide in the presence and power of Christ as a branch to the vine (John 15).

6. Develop capacity and sustainability. Capacity development happens when partners learn, grow, and are transformed through cooperative and collaborative engagement in the mission of Christ. It is both a process and an outcome. When the partnership is no longer developmental, it should be re-evaluated, and then be renewed, re-focused, or rejected.

Because of globalization the world is coming together in ways never before imaginable. Multi-cultural realities

knowledge. (Chaffee qtd. by Elmer, 2002, p.171).

7. Communicate through conflicts and misunderstandings. Normal interpersonal relationships sustain a certain amount of conflict. When you add cross-cultural and or multi-cultural realities to the communication mix, the potential for conflict escalates. Communion is critical; silence adds to suspicion and division. Scripture admonishes the people of God to manage conflict differently. Peter writes, “Finally, all of you have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were

Effective interaction means giving of yourself— trying to see the world of others and respect their life ways. It means not forcing your ways on them.

each stands to gain. Each maintains its independence and capacity to instruct, correct, and refuse the other. Each honors and upholds the unique and divine calling of the other. Each makes a distinctive and complementary contribution to the partnership. Each conducts itself in a manner that safeguards one another’s integrity and honors Christ” (p. 27).

In keeping with the dialogical process:

• Affirm complementary roles and responsibilities.

• Assess worldviews in relation to missional context. Be sensitive to issues of dominance and development.

• Aim at a compelling vision that seems to be the best use of complementary assets. Determine what you could do better by being together rather than apart.

• Accept the “real outcomes” with a pursuit of ideal outcomes. Remember this is a discipleship-based developmental relationship. Look at Jesus and the disciples as a model—Jesus, the ideal “God-Man,” worked with a vari-

ety of “ordinary human beings” resulting in a variety of outcomes. Because of this, dynamic partnerships in a formal sense need to be evaluated and processed in a way that is both honoring to Christ and to the body of Christ.

• Create conversation that expands and extends assets within cross-cultural, multi-cultural contexts.

• Cultivate a process that communicates mutual ownership of a compelling vision.

• Communicate with commitment to good understanding, yielding capacity development

• Commit to a process that enhances partnerships—recognize it takes TIME—maybe even a lifetime.

Effective interaction means giving of yourself—trying to see the world of others and respect their life ways. Yet, at the same time, it means being true to yourself and your ways. To be really effective, interaction must be a two-way street or of course, it is not interaction at all. That is, all interacting individuals should be doing so from a basis of awareness, understanding, and

called, that you may obtain a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9-12).

In a world of finite men, conflict is inevitably associated with creativity. Without conflict there is no major personal change or social progress...conflict management then becomes crucially important. This involves accepting or even encouraging such conflict as is necessary, but at the same time doing everything possible to keep it to the minimum essential to change, to confine it to the least destructive forms, and to resolve it as redemptively (mine added) and constructively as possible. (Seifert & Clinebell Jr., 1969, p.174)

• Treat all parties with dignity and respect.

• Train your ear to listen for understanding.

• Track the critical nature of the conflict—amoral, moral, programmatic, etc.

• Tune in to the emotions in the conversation. Seek to pursue wisdom or mediation.

• Track the substantive issues of the conflict and be tender to the emotion-

al issues.

- Transact decisions based on the substantive issues, yet be in tune to the emotional challenges.

- Translate analysis into a process of redemptive understanding and character transformation through pathway formulation.

- Triumph by an assessment process that fosters growth and accountability.

and partnerships with Western supporters. Currently training sites are in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Burundi. The leadership has transitioned to African nationals through international director Stephen Miori, a Kenyan. ICMUSA serves as a collaborative partner also seeking to develop educational resources and partnership networks for these training cen-

Boardroom Table: Diversity Issues in Global Mission Leadership. "In *Reflecting God's Glory Together—Diversity in Evangelical Missions*. eds. A. Scott Moreau and Beth Snodderly. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.

Peterson, Roger. 2009. "Missio Dei" or "Missio Me?" Using Short-Term Missions to Contribute toward the Fulfillment of God's Global Purpose" in *Perspectives on the Word Christian Movement* reader—4th Edition, eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.

The strength of this training mission is the transformation of two cultures creating a new paradigm through sustained partnership toward a common God-given mission.

The organization I have worked with since 1994 is International Christian Ministries (ICM) www.icmusa.org. I began an association through a short-term mission. ICM invited and facilitated short-termers to be involved in their training programs. President and Founder Dr. Phil Walker and co-founder Dr. Myron Goodwin moved to the rural city of Kitale, Kenya East Africa over twenty-five years ago. This is a city with an estimated population of 220,000 in 2007. Walker observed the flourishing indigenous church and their suspicion of biblical education. He and Myron Goodwin formed relationships with pastors through itinerant teaching of "Walk-Thru-The-Bible" materials to meet the need for biblical-theological education for these pastors and ministry leaders. The itinerant format brought biblically based leadership training to their context. Suspicions were abated and trust was gained. The ministry flourished. Walker and Goodwin developed an in-service, cohort training model in Kitale. Pastors and ministry leaders come to Kitale for four to six weeks of biblical, theological, and practical training. They return to their ministries to implement the training in their ministry contexts.

Over the last ten years ICM has multiplied teaching sites through African graduates of the Kitale program

ters. ICM's mission is to train African leaders to create African solutions to African challenges. The strength of this training mission is the transformation of two cultures creating a new paradigm through sustained partnership toward a common God-given mission.

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Smither's Review of *The Facilitator Era*: A Response

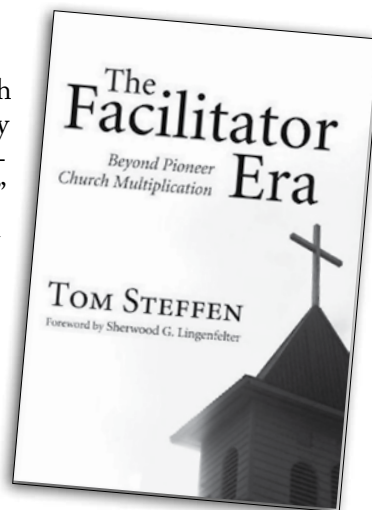
Tom Steffen

In that my good friend Ed Smither's book review is the first I have seen regarding *The Facilitator Era*, I would like to respond to some of his critiques in that I believe he has missed the core question of the book. Bill and Bev Beaver had just returned to the U.S. after two years working with a Filipino church planting team in the Philippines. When they mentioned that they would like to return and work in a pioneer church planting setting the Filipino team leader told the couple that that was not a good idea. This confused the Beavers. They wondered if they, or other westerners, had any future role in pioneer church planting globally? This is the question the Beavers brought back to the States, and the reason the 10 weekly sessions were set up with the professor (pp. 3, 38, 331, 352, 371, 374-377). Just how do westerners now serve in today's missions? What is their role?

Dr. Smither's call to expand the book to include Majority World players to replace McGavran and Townsend, and for Majority World case studies, hence, goes beyond the scope of the book. Ralph Winter's three eras deal specifically with missions launched from the West, as does the Fourth Era developed in *The Facilitator Era*. The book deals with the three mission initiatives launched from the West (Carey, Taylor, McGavran/Townsend), asking if the West has moved beyond these major players. Note the following quotes: "Dr. Winter identified three eras of Western Protestant missions" (p. 27). "But for our current discussion, I am focusing strictly on Western missionaries who plant churches cross-culturally" (p. 32). "During our nine weeks together, I've tried to consider holistic church multiplication primarily from a North American perspective, rec-

ognizing that the North and South are tightly interlaced in the global missions enterprise" (p.377). "The Fourth Era redefines Western missions" (p.378).

If readers allow the book to set the parameters for the 10-week discussions between the main characters (Dr. Nobley and the Beavers), it automatically limits the McGavran's/Townsend's replacement(s) to someone(s) from the West. It would be outside the scope of the book to suggest my longtime friend Luis Bush or any other Majority World leader as key figure(s), or include Majority World case studies, even though all of



majority World missions? We need answers written by Majority World Christian workers (and Westerners) from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. This would give the global missions community multiple leaders (there will always be key leaders with multiple followers and followers becoming new leaders) from around the globe who promote both pioneering and facilitating church planting, as desired by Dr. Smither. May their numbers increase, and also the number of Ma-

majority World responses to the West's Fourth Era.

Why choose Warren over Piper to replace McGavran/Townsend? This certainly is up for debate (and a legitimate critique in the review) as we are still early in the era, as noted in the book (p. 36). I went with Warren.

The purpose of *The Facilitator Era* is not necessarily to propose a new era for the West (even though it does), but to describe one that is already upon us—the Fourth Era.

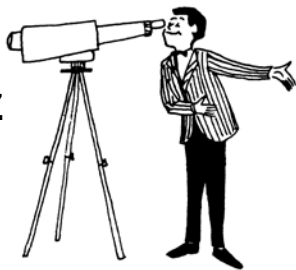
the 16 case studies include global aspects of missions (compassion, compromise, critique, cooperation, collaboration). Note also, the Sudanese return to their home country and Latin Americans go to the Mediterranean area.

My hope, along with, Dr. Smither's is "that this work will be a catalyst for further reflection for the global church." But to do so, it must be tied back to the core question of the book. I would script a follow up question this way: assuming the Fourth Era is alive and well in the West, what are the implications for the Ma-

Why? While Piper definitely has major missions influence in the West, it pales to that of Warren's holistic model encapsulated in the PEACE Plan, and his ability to network churches to participate in its proclamation, mainly through short-termers. Saddleback and associates have already put teams into every country of the world.

No Church Growth book comes close in sales to his *Purpose Driven Church*. You will find other reasons mentioned in the book. We should have a firm answer to this in another decade. Warren personifies a major missions shift from the previous era—support Majority

As seen
through
the LENZ



Roger Trautmann brings to the table a methodology for integrating cultures (primarily western and non-western) that become partners, both of whom are transformed to carry out the Great Commission. After presenting the framework for his thesis, he gives us seven key interrelated issues to lay this foundation for this approach of cross cultural partnerships to succeed. Roger does an excellent job in presenting the “why and how transformational cross cultural partnerships can be effective.”

In our last issue of *Occasional Bulletin*, Ed Smither’s reviewed Tom Steffen’s new book *The Facilitator Era*. We have given Tom an opportunity to respond to Ed’s comments. The ideal would be to have them both side by side in the same issue and not have to peruse the previous edition. Missions is moving into the paradigm of facilitating the work of God abroad, and Tom’s book has some significant insights into this model. Thanks to both Ed and Tom for their friendly interaction.

—Bob Lenz, editor

Continued from page 9

World churches. In other words, facilitate so they can pioneer!

The purpose of *The Facilitator Era* is not necessarily to propose a new era for the West (even though it does), but to describe one that is already upon us—the Fourth Era. The 16 case studies demonstrate the breadth of this new phenomena. This is what makes the book groundbreaking—it articulates what is transpiring in Western missions but nowhere articulated in print from this perspective or depth. Missions has shifted again for the West in relation to holistic ministry, as outlined in the chart on p. 30. Yes, this is a “bold claim!” and meant to be so.

In relation to definitions, it seems Dr. Smither has read his definition of facilitator into mine, and therefore found it wanting. He rightly notes that the roles of a facilitator are quite varied. Key to the difference between a pioneer (Third Era) and a facilitator (Fourth Era) is the goal. The West has moved from reaching the unreached to reaching the reached to reach the unreached (pp. 30 chart, 31-32, 39, 41, 47-48, charts on pp. 66, 71, 101, 110, 150-151, 298-304). This is the major paradigm shift that the West finds itself, something that includes, but is much more than “a spirit, attitude, or perspective on missions.” Moving from pioneering (starting churches) to facilitating (working with existing churches) is a paradigm shift that moves the West from one era to another. Right or wrong, good or bad, and there definitely some of each, this is what is happening in Western missions—because, as Jenkins notes, we and others were successful! See the charts on pp. 66 and 71 that contrasts pioneers from facilitators. This is new news. The era of the Western missionary is not dead—but it has changed—facilitate (follow and support) Majority World believers so they can pioneer new church planting efforts.

This paradigm shift (or era shift) has multiple implications for selec-

tion, training, evangelizing, discipling, community development, translating, creation care, partnering, and so forth. Many agencies now find that they must reset but find little help in the existing church planting literature. Why? Because it focuses primarily on pioneer church planting and often lacks a holistic focus (Week 1, “So What Do the Books Say?”).

By missing the perspective of analyzing missions from the West, and not using the definition of facilitator presented in the book, Dr. Smither would naturally “struggle to follow Steffen’s logic” or grasp the relevance of the discussion of past and present short-term missions, and the movement promoted through the PEACE Plan (pp. 74-99, Week 5, “Who Unleashed the Megachurch?”). This chapter begins to highlight some of the issues short-term facilitators will run into, and possible consequences. Throughout this chapter and others an underlying critique of the Fourth Era can be found, some of which are not so subtle. And, do not overlook Week 9, “So Why Do You Still Teach Pioneer Church Multiplication?”

Dr. Smither’s review makes me wonder if propositional trained reviewers (most of us) who are use to finding things laid out sequentially in books find textbooks written in the narrative genre (may they increase) harder to catch things embedded in the ongoing discussions?

I agree that the book is over priced (let Wipf & Stock know), even though “the sixteen case study chapters alone were worth the price of the book.” To help with cost, do not overlook the free PowerPoint presentation of *The Facilitator Era*, see p. xvii: <https://sites.google.com/a/biola.edu/the-facilitator-era/>

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