



Steve Moore, President (L) and Dr. Marv Newell, VP of Missio Nexus present the Lifetime Award to Dr. Hesselgrave.

A Tribute to David J. Hesselgrave

Craig Ott

At the joint EMS and North American Mission Leadership Conference on September 21, 2012 in Chicago David J. Hesselgrave was honored with a lifetime achievement award. Few evangelical missiologists can be credited with the breadth of influence that Hesselgrave has had over the last fifty years through his teaching, writing, and leadership in the evangelical world of missions.

Born in 1924 in Wisconsin, at age eight he became a Christian in large part due to the miraculous healing of his brother in answer to prayer and the faithful witness of his family. He prepared for Christian ministry at Trinity Seminary and Bible College in Chicago, where he met and married his wife of 68 years, Gertrude Edith Swanson.

After six years of pastoral ministry in Wisconsin and Minnesota, Gen. Douglas McArthur's call for missionaries to Japan became a deciding factor in their choice to serve there from 1950 to 1962 with the Evangelical Free Church Mission. In Japan he was deeply formed in his desire to cogently communicate and defend Christian orthodoxy in the face

of cultural hurdles, religious pluralism and theological liberalism.

This experience in Japan led Hesselgrave to pursue studies at the University of Minnesota majoring in Philosophy (B.A.) under Paul Holmer (later to become dean of Yale Divinity School), speech (M.A.), and the then emerging discipline of intercultural communica-

tion (Ph.D.) writing his dissertation on the propagation of Soka Gakkai in Japan. The study program allowed him to explore a variety of academic disciplines which became the foundation for his now classic seven dimensional communication framework described in *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*. This eclectic and interdisciplinary background would become a hallmark of Hesselgrave's work as he continually sought to bring the best of learning from a wide variety of fields to bear on the task of biblically informed Christian mission.

In the early 1960's Kenneth Kantzer became Dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School with the vision of transforming it from a small denominational school into a world class seminary. As he built the faculty Hesselgrave came to his attention as the man to lead a mission and evangelism department. The decision to leave Japan for Deerfield, Illinois in 1965 was a momentous one, as it launched his academic career spanning nearly four decades and influencing thousands of students. Hesselgrave would in turn recruit to Trinity a stellar missions faculty including J.

Herbert Kane, Arthur Johnston, Paul Little and others establishing Trinity as a leading center of evangelical missiology—just one of his many enduring legacies.

His academic position also afforded him the time and resources to eventually author some thirteen books and over eighty journal articles and book

printings within the first few years. The breadth of Hesselgrave's writing and interests reflect the breadth of missiology as an interdisciplinary field: theology of mission, cross-cultural communication, church planting, cross-cultural counseling, world religions, contextualization, and seemingly any topic of concern to biblically focused and effective mission

When Hesselgrave wrote people listened as he became recognized as one of the most reliable, sensible and biblical voices in evangelical missions.

chapters. As his writings not only became standard textbooks, but were also translated into numerous languages, the impact of Hesselgrave's missiological thinking took on global proportions. The first edition alone of *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (1978) went through fifteen printings. *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally* (1980) set the standard on that topic selling an unprecedented 43,000 copies. *Paradigms in Conflict* (2005) went through five

work. His writings were always marked by insightfulness, clarity, careful theological grounding, and practical usefulness. When Hesselgrave wrote people listened as he became recognized as one of the most reliable, sensible and biblical voices in evangelical missions. Even in his "retirement" he has remained tireless in his writing and advocacy for biblically grounded missions.

Hesselgrave had observed developments in conciliar missions that had

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lost their roots in the authority of scripture and the necessity of world evangelism. The vision for an academic missiological society fully committed to the authority of scripture and fulfillment of the Great Commission became Hesselgrave's passion. He led in the restructuring of the Association of Evangelical Professors of Missions (AEPM) and from 1984 to 1986 edited a supplement in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* "AEPM News and Views". With the encouragement of Donald McGavran he traversed the country enlisting support from mission leaders and academics for a new academic society for missiology with evangelical convictions. This led to the birth of the Evangelical Missiological Society in 1990, which Hesselgrave served as founding executive director until 1994.

In conclusion I offer these reflections of Hesselgrave's life and work.

Theological conviction. Two theological convictions are foundational to Hesselgrave's missiology and are evident in all his writing: the authority of scripture and the primacy of evangelism. The fatal failure of Edinburgh 1910 was, in his judgment, the failure to lay a biblical theological foundation for cooperation in mission. He had witnessed the devastating influence of theological liberalism on conciliar missions, reaching even into Japan. This led him to become been a man of unwavering commitment to the centrality of Christ and Scripture as the guiding authority in mission. For Hesselgrave nothing less than unwavering commitment to the full authority and complete truthfulness and reliability of the Bible (inerrancy) can serve as the foundation for the theology and practice in church and mission. On the one hand he has frequently warned of the consequences when mission movements neglected their theological foundations. On the other hand he has consistently sought to root his own missiological writings in Biblical teaching.

The second central conviction to Hesselgrave's missiology grows out of the first. His understandings of the lost-



Unveiling of Dr. Hesselgrave's portrait drawn by artist James Mayer and presented to Trinity University. Left to Right: Dr. Tite Tienou (TEDS), Steve Moore, President Missio Nexus, Dr. Marv. Newell VP Missio Nexus, Dr. G.Craig Williford, President Trinity University.

ness of sinful humanity, the uniqueness of the person and work of Christ, and the centrality of the Matthean formulation of the Great Commission have lead him to become a tireless, if controversial, advocate of the primacy of gospel proclamation and church planting in the task of missions. Whatever good work the church may do, evangelism leading to the planting and growth of

Planting Churches at Home and Abroad, and *Counseling Cross-Culturally* have for decades served as standard works in missionary training. Hesselgrave could bring a wide range of disciplines to bear on the various practical tasks of missions. He could make the best insights from the social sciences, religious studies, and philosophy fruitful for effective mission work. Yet he sought to always

Hesselgrave is a man of strong convictions,

not reticent to vigorously argue his position. Yet he seeks to understand representatives of opposing opinions and treat them fairly.

the church among all people must remain central. Thus the Apostle Paul is for Hesselgrave the missionary par excellence in the New Testament.

A balance of the practical and theological. Hesselgrave's years of work as a field missionary in Japan, his mentoring of students, and his extensive travel have never allowed his academic missiology to become separated from the practice of mission. Works such as *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*,

frame such endeavors biblically. Conversely, when one reads his more theological works, the reader senses that the practical import of his theology is never far from view. Theology matters!

Commitment to fairness and respect. Hesselgrave is a man of strong convictions, not reticent to vigorously argue his position. Yet he seeks to understand representatives of opposing opinions and treat them fairly. Though

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Tributes to Dr. David Hesselgrave

influential

When most people think of David Hesselgrave today they think of the influential missiologist who authored numerous books and provided leadership for the Evangelical Missiological Society. But David was also a missionary in Japan for twelve years right after World War II, and helped to establish the Japan Evangelical Free Church. I had the privilege of serving as a Free Church missionary in Japan for ten years and I was able to appreciate the legacy David left in Japan. Three things in particular strike me about David's approach as a missionary in Japan. First, he emphasized the priority of church planting and evangelism. Second, he saw the importance of careful study of Japanese culture and religious traditions. Third, he developed close personal friendships with Japanese families, with some of these relationships continuing today. This is a wonderful model for anyone involved in intercultural ministry.

—Dr. Harold Netland, Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Intercultural Studies, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

contributor

Dr. Hesselgrave has been a wonderful contributor to the purposes of God in mission in so many ways: through his personal field ministry, through his challenging writings, through his key role in the formation of the Evangelical Missiological Society, through the early years of the EMS in which he carried the weight of it almost single-handedly, and in the mentoring and encouraging role through his teaching and friendship from which so many of us have benefited. He is a treasure which we value greatly, and we wish him every blessing as he carries on for Christ and His Kingdom. Keep looking up.

—Gary R. Corwin, Missiologist, serving with the Int'l Office of SIM, Associate Editor, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*

Dr. David Hesselgrave: a committed follower of Jesus,

colorful lecturer, precise author/debater, faithful friend to my late husband Ralph D. Winter, dedicated board member of the U.S. Center for World Mission, always a gentleman with a servant heart. With gratitude to the Lord for the intersection of my life with this man of God.

—Barbara Winter

servant

faithful

David J. Hesselgrave is one of my heroes because of his faithful missionary service in Japan and being a pioneer in missiological studies including the publication of key texts. Other aspects of his major contributions to kingdom service is in the training of a new generation of practitioners/missiologists and the founding of mission entities including EMS. In recognition of being one of the most influential missiologists in the past half century, he was awarded the "Lifetime of Service Award" at the North American Mission Leaders Conference on Sept. 22, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois.

—Enoch Wan, President, Evangelical Missiological Society

I appreciated Dr. Hesselgrave's wonderful balance between staying faithful to Scripture and yet communicating cross-culturally. I was one of the first students to take his course on cross-cultural church planting at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His vision for Pauline methodology has been a help to me ever since. Thank you for all your help.

—Dr. Robert J. Vajko, TEAM International Church Planting Consultant

impact

No missiologist has made a greater impact on my life than Dr. David Hesselgrave. First, as a student of his and then as an avid reader of his many books and articles throughout the past decades, I have continued to be mentored by this passionate scholar who has always kept the centrality of Scripture at the center of missiological thought and practice. The entire North American missiological community is indebted to his vision and passion of keeping missiology on a true course. For this he is rightly honored.

—Marvin Newell, Senior Vice President, Missio Nexus

Those committed to the advance of a biblical notion of God's mission in our day are immeasurably indebted to God for the life, writings, leadership, and example of David Hesselgrave. I believe the most important statement he has written for our generation of missiologists is unless we "dialogue canonically, both theological and missiological dialogues are as apt to compound confusion as they are to dispel it" (Paradigms in Conflict, p. 352). And the greatest thing he ever said to me personally, and which has stuck with me all these years, is that "when we have doubts about what to do and where to go in mission, then follow the Apostle Paul." But perhaps the greatest compliment that could be paid to such an admired person as Dave is to pray that God would be pleased to increase his tribe among us.

—Christopher R. Little, PhD, Professor of Intercultural Studies, Columbia International University

visionary

example

A Tended Tether:

The Heritage and Hope of Missio Nexus and the Evangelical Missiological Society

David J. Hesselgrave

In his 1988 dialogue with the Anglican liberal, David L. Edwards, John Stott contrasts liberal and evangelical ways of thinking and theologizing. He says,

The liberal seems to me to resemble (no offence meant!) a gas-filled balloon, which takes off and rises into the air, buoyant, free, directed only by its own built-in navigational responses to wind and pressure, but entirely unrestrained from earth. For the liberal mind has no anchorage; it is accountable only to itself.

The Evangelical seems to me to resemble a kite, which can also take off, fly great distances and soar to great heights, while all the time being tethered to earth. For the Evangelical mind is held by revelation. Without doubt it often needs a longer string, for we are not renowned for creative thinking. *Nevertheless, at least in the ideal, I see Evangelicals as finding true freedom under the authority of revealed truth, and combining a radical mind-set and lifestyle with a conservative commitment to Scripture.*¹

To be truly evangelical theological/missiological kites must be “tethered” to the “stake” of Scripture by confessional/creedal declarations that systematize and summarize orthodox faith. John Leith writes, “From the beginning Christianity has been theological, involving men in theological reflection and calling them to declarations of faith. A nontheological Christianity has never endured....”²

The Theological Fracturing of American Protestantism

In the emotionally charged religious atmosphere of the nineteenth century—especially the last decades of that century—significant theological defections and doctrinal schisms (even chasms!) developed within Protestant denominations, schools and missions. Yale historian Williston Walker catalogues some of the results: (1) The formation of cults such as Adventism and Mormon-

ism with their departures from Protestant orthodoxy; (2) The emergence of Dwight Moody and the Bible Conference movement with its “greater rigidity” on biblical infallibility and fundamental doctrines; (3) The emergence of the “social gospel” movement under the leadership of “liberal ministers” such as Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch; and, (4) The “bitter fundamentalist-modernist controversy” involving J. Gresham Machen, Harry Emerson Fosdick and numerous other prominent theologians.³ This latter controversy especially openly displayed a division within Protestantism that was almost as deep and wide as had

ars such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Horace Bushnell, B. J. Longfield writes that many scholars

... contended that experience and feelings, not creeds or doctrine, provided the foundation of Christianity. The ultimate authority for faith was the self-evidencing testimony of the heart to the individual believer. Liberals insisted that Christianity was a growing and changing life rather than a static creed, ritual or organization. Doctrines, which were nothing more than the tentative and historically limited expressions of abiding religious sentiment, necessarily required periodic reformulation to adjust to the ever-expanding knowledge of mankind. Modernists thus deplored the continuing division of the church over anachronistic doctrinal disputes and became enthusiastic supporters of efforts for ecclesiastical reunion.⁴

The Theology/Missiology of Twentieth Century Conciliarists

Most historians would agree that the biggest mission story of the early twentieth century was the World Missions Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910, the fountainhead of the World Council of Churches. Planners pri-

Most historians would agree

that the biggest mission story of the early twentieth century was the World Missions Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910.

been the earlier division between Catholics and Protestants.

Early on in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and following the lead of the Church Fathers and Reformers, fundamentalists in general—and Dwight L. Moody and leaders of the mission-minded Bible Conference and Bible School movements in particular—“staked” and “tethered” missions theory and practice to a fully authoritative Bible and to clearly articulated statements of faith. This, I assume, is what Walker has in mind when he speaks of the “greater rigidity” of Moody and the Bible Conference movement. On the other side of the ledger and following the lead of schol-

marily represented the missions of the large mainline denominations and were even thought by some to be dismissive of leaders and missionaries of the independent, so-called faith missions. John R. Mott and many if not most of his fellow planners had both a passion for Christian mission and a commitment to orthodoxy, but they seemingly had an almost equal passion for the kind of unity apart from which they thought that the mission of the church could not really go forward. It was this passion for unity that led to what I have termed “the Edinburgh Error.”⁵ Namely, a decision on the part of planners that they would disallow any doctrinal discussion and consideration of the sta-

tus of Protestant missions in geographical areas with a strong Roman Catholic presence. What I have termed that the “Edinburgh *error*” Stott categorizes as a “fatal *flaw*.” He writes,

Theologically, the fatal flaw at Edinburgh was not so much doctrinal disagreement as apparent doctrinal indifference, since doctrine was not on the agenda. Vital themes like the content of the gospel, the theology of evangelism and the nature of the church were not discussed. The reason is that Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury, as a condition of participation at Edinburgh, secured a promise from John R. Mott that doctrinal debate could be excluded. In consequence, the theological challenges of the day were not faced. And, during the decades that followed, the poison of theological liberalism seeped into the bloodstream of western universities and seminaries, and largely immobilized the churches’ mission.⁶

The story is familiar to students of twentieth century missions/missiology. Out of Edinburgh flowed, not one, but three interchurch organizations—the International Missionary Council (1921), the Conference on Life and Work (1925), and the Conference on Faith and Order (1927). Subsequently, Life and Work and Faith and Order together formed the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948. And the IMC was integrated into the WCC as its Division of World Mission and Evangelism in New Delhi in 1961. In half a century, conciliar had come full circle. Out of Edinburgh they had evolved a movement dedicated to changing the world but largely devoid of the biblical verities essential to the task. They became more occupied with unity, the nature of mission, and the relationship between church and mission than with world evangelization.

Jesus linked unity with mission when he prayed that “they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and love them even as you loved me” (Jn. 17:23). But the real “unity problem” in conciliar churches and missions was the failure to forge a solid biblical link between Jesus’ prayer for unity and his prayer, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent

them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in the truth” (Jn. 17:17-19).

Edinburgh’s willingness to purchase unity at the expense of doctrine continued to be widely shared in the WCC as it evolved. Upon its formation, the faith statement of the WCC consisted of but one affirmation: “Jesus Christ is Lord.” Only at the insistence of the Eastern Orthodox Church and as the price of its participation in the WCC was the phrase, “according to the Scriptures” added at New Delhi in 1961. While most WCC leaders of the time exulted in the inclusion, it would have been more appropriate to grieve over its exclusions.

As the twentieth century progressed the missional results of all of this became increasingly apparent. The influential Student Volunteer Movement formed in 1888 as a result of the work of Dwight Moody, John R. Mott, Robert Wilder and others grew in influence until shortly after World War I. Then, gradually succumbing to higher critical

lical mission had practically died. The great mainline denominations that had provided eighty percent of the North American Protestant missionary force at the beginning of the twentieth century provided but six percent of the missionary force at its close.⁷ In effect, the book had pretty much closed on liberal Protestant missions.

The Theology/Missiology of Twentieth Century Conservatives

Building on the work of conservative theologians involved in the conservative-liberal debates, independent “faith missions” leaders took action after World War I. Partly in response to a perceived denominational elitism at Edinburgh, and partly in response to the inroads of theological liberalism, a meeting of “faith mission” leaders was scheduled for Princeton, New Jersey, September 1917. Chaired by Henry W. Frost, leaders of the Africa Inland Mission, China Inland Mission, Sudan Interior Mission and several other mis-

Jesus linked unity with mission

when he prayed that “they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and love them even as you loved me.”

thought that undercut biblical authority, the SVM became dedicated to social endeavors of various sorts. By the time of World War II it was no longer a force for world evangelization. Finally, in 1959 the SVM merged with mainline Protestant agencies to form the National Student Christian Federation; in 1966 that organization merged with Roman Catholics and others to form the University Christian Movement; and in 1976 that movement voted itself out of existence.

By the close of the twentieth century in the mainline denominations that comprised the bulk of WCC membership orthodox doctrine had pretty much yielded to liberalism and bib-

sions organized the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America (IFMA; more recently CrossGlobal Link and now part of Missio Nexus). While Edinburgh left matters of doctrine and discipline to represented (largely mainline) denominations, one of the first items of business for fundamentalists was to draw up a preliminary Doctrinal Basis of some cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith as a basis of fellowship and cooperation.⁸ Building on the work of leading conservative scholars who had collaborated in producing a series of small volumes entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, leaders identified eight such doctrines beginning with the

verbal inspiration and the inerrant authority of Scripture and including statements on the Trinity, the Fall, the deity of Christ, salvation by faith, the imminent and personal return of Christ, heaven and hell, the church, and Christian mission.⁹

According to Joel Carpenter, the gap in our knowledge of the contribution of the fundamentalist movement to world missions is a “critical missing piece” in American and global religious history. Nevertheless, we know that

The fundamentalists...contributed about one out of every seven North American Protestant missionaries in the mid-1930s, and by the early 1950s, the fundamentalists' portion had doubled. Their dynamic missionary movement was an important factor, along with other evangelical missions efforts, in the survival and growth of the foreign missions enterprise in the twentieth century.¹⁰

Amidst and in the wake of not one

but multiple steps forward, some evangelicals gradually came to be characterized by three weaknesses that, though theological in nature, had very practical manifestations.

Following World War II some evangelical mission leaders took what they conceived to be a giant leap forward. It was due in part to the advent of the so-called “new” evangelicals. Finding themselves at odds especially with liberals on the left but also with fundamentalists on the right, in 1945 these evangelicals established the National Association of Evangelicals and its mission arm, the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association. That signaled the beginning of Winter’s “twenty-five unbelievable years.”¹¹ The “twenty-five unbelievable years” saw GIs come home from faraway lands and peoples only to return to them as missionaries; witnessed the missionary commitment of thousands of young people inspired by the example of the Auca martyrs; saw the growth of evangelical student movements such

as Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ and Navigators; experienced the birth of Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and *Christianity Today* magazine with their sponsorship of conferences on evangelism and missions and the beginnings of the Lausanne Movement; lent new life to mission courses and degree programs at evangelical Bible schools and seminaries; and gave rise to strategy movements such as Crusade Evangelism, Evangelism-in-Depth, Explosion Evangelism, and Church Growth. The story is too great and grand to encapsulate in a few words.

The “twenty-five unbelievable years” and, especially, the twenty-five years that followed them, also gave rise to developments that cast a shadow over the future of evangelicalism. Like fun-

damentalists before them, evangelicals also founded their organization on a statement of faith—albeit a statement capable of being interpreted more broadly than its fundamentalist precursor. Amidst and in the wake of not one but multiple steps forward, some evangelicals gradually came to be characterized by three weaknesses that, though theological in nature, had very practical manifestations. First, some evangelicals allowed for the kind of cooperation with Roman Catholics and Protestant liberals that tended to undercut the importance of Reformed theology on the one hand, and the deleterious significance of liberal theology on the other. Secondly, some evangelicals allowed for translations of Scripture and contextualizations of the gospel designed to produce certain effects

in contemporary readers and respondents more than to communicate the intended meaning of the authors of the biblical text. Thirdly, some evangelicals produced statements and declarations that, though not qualifying as “statements of faith” either in formation or in substance, nevertheless often functioned as such and at times eclipsed the original NAE/EFMA Statement of Faith in importance.¹²

If post-World War II years witnessed great strides forward for evangelicals they also witnessed (sometimes contentious) disagreements and divisions on major theological/missiological issues. So much so that when Richard V. Pierard analyzed the evangelicalism that emerged in the late 1940s and became more or less the evangelical mainstream in the 1960s, he noted that the movement “. . . labored to bring together people of like mind from all the various Christian communions, *whether or not they had been involved in the earlier struggles for doctrinal purity*.”¹³ Pierard goes on to indicate that, as a consequence of this ecumenical effort,

As the movement for evangelical ecumenism proceeded apace, it became increasingly clear that the term now encompassed so complex a sociological reality that it was losing its description power. Included under one label were traditionalists, restorationists, Adventists, Pentecostals, Holiness people, fundamentalists and pietists, as well as hierarchical, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches. They [evangelicals] could no longer be distinguished from people in ‘mainline,’ ‘liberal,’ or ‘ecumenical’ churches. In effect it had become a generic term for all kinds of Christian orthodoxy, and with the indigenization of mission society operations, the multinational character of relief and evangelistic organization, and the sending of missionaries by people in third world countries themselves, this broad evangelicalism was a global phenomenon.¹⁴

Some Reflections on the Importance of Orthodox Creeds and Confessional Statements

Very early and in response to divine revelation and exhortation, Christian believers—like Jewish believers before them—engaged themselves in a process of developing creeds and declara-

tions of faith such as can be found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, 21-25; 26:5-9 and First Kings 18:39 in the Old Testament, and in First Corinthians 15:3-7 and First Timothy 6:12-16 in the New Testament. In fact, though the Apostles' Creed itself was likely developed in Rome toward the end of the second century, all of its theological formulas were already current by the end of the first century.¹⁵

The testimony of the New Testament: doctrine is essential to church and mission. In the Matthean version of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20 our Lord makes it clear that we are to make disciples of the nations by going into the whole the world; baptizing believers in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded. It is common knowledge that, grammatically, "teaching" is the most important of these activities; that the verb *didasko* means to instruct or teach; and that the nouns *didaskalia* and *didache* have to do with the act of teaching or what is taught. Some holists link "teaching them to observe all I have commanded" so closely with the resultant good works as to make those works central to the command. The Great Commission emphasis, however, is upon "teaching the teaching." Paul makes that meaning clear when he exhorts missionary Titus to "Teach what accords with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1); when he exhorts Christians to be faithful in order to "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior" (Titus 2:10); and when he explains that Christ gave himself to redeem a people "zealous for good works" as a part of his teaching (Titus 2:14).

The research of a sociologist: doctrine played a vital role in the rise of Christianity. In a book first published by Princeton University Press in 1996 and then in paperback by Harper Collins in 1997, University of Washington professor of sociology and comparative religion, Rodney Stark, maintains that it was obedience to Christian doctrine that resulted in the expansion and

growth of the early church. After providing the results of a penetrating sociological analysis of the meteoric rise of early Christianity Stark writes,

Therefore, as I conclude this study it is necessary to confront what appears to me to be the ultimate factor in the rise of Christianity. Let me state my thesis: *Central doctrines of Christianity prompted and sustained attractive, liberating, and effective social relations and organizations.*

I believe that it was the religion's particular doctrines that permitted Christianity to be among the most sweeping and successful revitalization movements in history. And it was the way these doctrines took on actual flesh, the way they directed organizational actions and individual behavior that led to the rise of Christianity.¹⁶

The conclusions of a historian of theology: confessional/creedal statements are indispensable. Shortly after joining the Trinity faculty in the 1960s I came across a recently published volume, *Creeeds of the Churches*, written by John H. Leith, Presbyterian Professor of

dox Christian believers; and, (3) are commonsensical in that they emanate from the common life of Christians as much as from the scholar's study.¹⁹ Faith statements of this kind serve churches and missions in some very important ways.

1. Orthodox declarations/statements of faith serve to underscore the fact that Christianity is a "confessional religion." Leith writes, "From the beginning Christianity has been theological, involving men in theological reflection and calling them to declarations of faith. . . . A nontheological Christianity has simply never endured, although such has been attempted . . ."²⁰

2. Orthodox declarations/statements of faith serve as buffers against the encroachments of religious relativism and syncretism. Leith writes, "Christian faith also holds that God is the Truth and that he is the source of all truth. To be sure, God is love as well as truth,

Some holists link "teaching them to observe all I have commanded" so closely with the resultant good works as to make those works central to the command.

Historical Theology at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.¹⁷ In an environment where the biblical text, creedal statements and the evangelical heritage were of great importance, the book proved to be exceedingly helpful.

Leith writes that doing and making creeds represents an important part of Christian service. In fact, he maintains that doing and making creeds is *indispensable to any other service that can be rendered*.¹⁸ According to Leith, though Christian confessionalism takes various forms, it is primarily expressed in declarations of faith whether as church creeds, rules of faith, confessional statements or statements of faith that, (1) put forth interpretations of the Bible teaching that are the result of interaction over time; (2) are representative of the thinking of broad bodies of ortho-

will as well as mind. While God may be truth, truth is not God."²¹

3. Orthodox statements of faith serve as a standard and a witness to the world.

Leith says, "Creeds are also a standard, a battle cry, a testimony and witness to the world"²² We don't ordinarily think of confessional/creedal statements in those terms. However, upon reflection it becomes apparent that they serve not only to bear witness to the truth, they also serve to prevent us from communicating mixed messages concerning it.

4. Orthodox declarations/statements of faith serve as foundation for, and aspects of, true praise and worship. As Leith explains it, "The Christian faith of its own volition comes to some sort of articulate expression, and the affirmation of faith is part of the Christian's praise and thanksgiving to his God."²³

5. Orthodox declarations/statements of faith serve as interpretational records and hermeneutical guides. Concerning this rather novel but most instructive notion, Leith writes,

The creed is simply the Church's understanding of the meaning of Scripture. The creed says, Here is how the Church reads and receives Scripture. The whole history of theology is the history of the interpretation of Scripture, even though the theologians do not always cite Biblical references. In general, the victories in the great theological debates have gone to those who have been the most convincing interpreters of Scripture.

The creeds are the record of the Church's interpretation of the Bible in the past and the authoritative guide to hermeneutics in the future."²⁴

6. Orthodox declarations/statements of faith serve as source and content for future theological decisions. Leith notes that none of the great creeds of the church was produced independently of

cal missions movement and from perspectives provided by faith statements recently generated.

The faith statements of three Edinburgh centennials—a preliminary analysis. Three 2010 centennial celebrations may have set the precedent for the future of what Pierard terms the “evangelical ecumenism” of the twenty-first century: one in Edinburgh, Scotland; one in Tokyo, Japan; and a third one in Cape Town, South Africa.

1. The World Missions Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, June 2-6, 1910. Sponsored by the World Council of Churches the centennial in Edinburgh brought together some 300 conferees from 60 nations. According to WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Twelt, its purpose was “to launch together a new beginning for common mission in the 21st century.”²⁶ Reinforcing the ecumenical concern for unity “Twelt also high-

by the Conference advances the notion that “God’s mission” (*mission Dei*) is especially concerned with liberation and justice. Only later was the word “evangelism” inserted into the Common Call!²⁹ Thirdly, the Conference celebrated not alone a diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and experiences but also a diversity of understandings of Scripture authority, the content of the gospel, and the meaning of mission—in fact, a diversity of understandings of the very nature of God and the uniqueness of Christ. Fourthly, in my view Edinburgh 2010 was not just a commemoration of Edinburgh 1910, it was also a sort of culmination of Edinburgh 1910 in that it prized organization over orthodoxy.

2. The Global Mission Consultation & Celebration in Tokyo, Japan, May 11-14, 2012. The Tokyo celebration was convened by three regional mission networks: the Asia Missions Association, the Third World Missions Association, and the Global Network of Mission Structures. However, it also included representatives of CrossGlobal Link and other lesser known mission associations. It was attended by 968 delegates from 73 countries.³⁰

Tokyo 2010 leaders adopted the Lausanne Covenant as the Consultation’s “Statement of Faith” but they also put forward a “Tokyo 2010 Declaration” which affirmed Scripture as fully authoritative, the lostness of all people; the gospel of Christ as God’s remedy; the priority of disciple-making in mission; and the importance of finishing the Great Commission task.³¹

If Tokyo 2010 affirmations of biblical faith and mission are precursors of future evangelical strength—and they may be—the Tokyo Consultation seems to have sent some confusing signals as well. One question has to do with the representativeness of the primary sponsoring associations. Another question has to do with the apparent felt need of leaders to formulate another faith statement when they had already adopted the Lausanne Covenant as their Statement of Faith. Nevertheless, there is cause to be grateful for the dedication to Scripture and

It is right that we rethink and re-evaluate, evangelicalism in its various forms and from a variety of perspectives.

what the church thought and said in previous generations. That being the case, the theological reflections that are embodied in creeds become part of the theological memory of the church and are the source and context for future theological decisions.²⁵

Revelation, reason and reflection told me when I first read Leith’s book—and they tell me today—that Leith is fundamentally correct in what he says about declarations and statements of faith.

The Role of Creedalism and Confessionalism in Securing an Evangelical Future for Missions/ Missiology

And so, as evangelicals, we come to a new century and, indeed, to a new millennium. It is right that we rethink and re-evaluate evangelicalism in its various forms and from a variety of perspectives—among them the evangeli-

lighted that mission and unity are inseparable: ‘Mission and unity belong together. To be one in Christ is to witness together to Christ.’”²⁷

Representing the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), International Director Geoff Turncliffe emphasized the need for contemporary Christian missions to reconcile evangelization and prophetic witness. “To witness to Christ is both evangelism and the prophetic stand for Christ’s will for justice, peace and care of creation,” he told the conferees.²⁸

After reviewing the documents that emanated from Edinburgh I think that certain observations are justified. First, Edinburgh 2010 study documents make it clear that mission is no longer founded just on the Bible but on three bases: experience or context; diverse understandings of the biblical text; and, new theological frameworks. Secondly, the initial draft of the Common Call issued

scriptural faith evidenced by Tokyo 2010 planners and leaders.

3. *The Third Congress on World Evangelization and Celebration (Lausanne III) in Cape Town, South Africa, October 16-20, 2010.* It is of considerable interest but probably of little importance that none other than William Carey proposed “a general association of all denominations of Christians, from the four quarters of the world to enter into one another’s views” be held in Cape Town in 1810 or 1812.³² Cape Town 2010 was not the “association of all *denominations* of Christians” that Carey envisaged, however. Rather, it was more of a “gathering of evangelical Christian *individuals*.” The difference is important as we shall see, but, nevertheless, the Congress was significant. It was planned and led primarily by leaders of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship but with the involvement of many other evangelical groupings. It was attended by over 4000 participants from 198 countries. A high percentage of participants were from the Majority World. In a word, of the three centennials Cape Town was far and away the most representative of world evangelicalism. But how is it to be assessed in terms of its contribution to the evangelical future?

The organizing framework of the Congress was the familiar Lausanne formula, “The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World.”³³ Perhaps with an eye to avoiding the “fatal flaw” of Edinburgh 1910, Executive Chairman Doug Birdsall and other Cape Town planners appointed a prominent evangelical theologian, Christopher Wright, to help set the Cape Town agenda and plan its program. Accordingly, when reflecting on Lausanne and Cape Town later, Allen Yeh could rightly say, “Lausanne is built on the twin pillars of mission and theology” and conclude that Cape Town was also buoyed up by those “twin pillars.”³⁴ More must be said, however.

The theme verse of the Congress was 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and the empha-

sis was that God has reconciled himself to us and given us the ministry of reconciliation. The significance of that theme is put forward in various documents and, especially, the Cape Town Commitment. The heading of Part I of the Commitment includes the phrase “the Cape Town Confession of Faith,” but that phrase is preceded by the words “For the Lord we love” and succeeded by ten extended statements of *beliefs*, yes, but mainly *behaviors that flow from “loves.”* The listing of “loves” in the Commitment is almost unending—love of God’s Word, love of mission, love of the gospel, love of social justice, love of creation care, love of orality, love of sto-

the Evangelical Missiological Society was formed in order to further evangelical missions and missiology in 1991, it was decided that agreement with either the IFMA Confession of Faith or the EFMA Statement of Faith would be required for membership.

Very recently, in October, 2011, CrossGlobal Link (formerly IFMA) and The Mission Exchange (formerly EFMA) merged into one organization, *Missio Nexus*. The stated objective was “. . . to develop a *Missio Nexus* for the largest and most inclusive expression of Great Commission oriented evangelicals in North America that fosters shared learning, opens doors for

Love is desirable to be sure,

but it is of fundamental importance to realize that Christian mission is not so much a matter of felt love as it is a matter of true truth!

rying, and so on for a total of 29 pages! Overall the Commitment represents something of a shift from confessional objectivity to experiential subjectivity and as a consequence loses clarity and a clear focus. Love is desirable to be sure, but it is of fundamental importance to realize that Christian mission is not so much a matter of felt love as it is a matter of *true truth*!

The Statement of Faith of Missio Nexus and the Evangelical Missiological Society—some preliminary thoughts. We have noted above how leaders of independent faith missions responded to the challenges of theological liberalism and the weaknesses of Edinburgh 1910 by organizing the IFMA and crafting its Confession of Faith in 1917. We have also noted how evangelical church leaders responded to liberalism but also to perceived social disengagement and internecine bickering on the part of fundamentalists by drafting a Statement of Faith and forming the NAE and its missions arm, the EFMA, in 1945. Finally, when

collaborative action and produces *increased effectiveness*.”³⁵ In short, *Missio Nexus*’ primary purpose is to provide a platform for broad-based evangelical unity and cooperation. With that in mind, leaders melded their respective faith statements into a new Statement of Faith. (For the time being at least, the EMS and *Missio Nexus* will maintain the former relationship and, in that sense, the new Statement of Faith can be termed the “*Missio Nexus*/EMS Statement of Faith.”)

1. *The Missio Nexus/EMS Statement of Faith—its problem.* The *Missio Nexus*/EMS Statement consists of a compilation of paragraphs selected from the IFMA Confession of Faith and the EFMA Statement of Faith. It represents an attempt to enhance unity and cooperation by combining part—but not all—of the fundamentalist response to the liberalism of a hundred years ago with part of the evangelical response to the liberalism and fundamentalism of seventy-five years ago. It is something of a hybrid in that its formulation pri-

marily serves to achieve a wider evangelical ecumenism and, only secondarily, does it serve as a response to liberalism. *If, at least in part, hope for an evangelical future is to be found in guarding the evangelical heritage of the past, the difference between the main purpose of the Missio Nexus/EMS Statement of Faith the purpose of the IFMA Confession of Faith and (to a lesser degree) that of the EFMA Statement of Faith constitutes a fundamental problem for both Missio Nexus and the EMS. Certain basic questions literally cry out for answers. Namely, what kind of evangelicalism are we talking about? What kind of evangelicalism have we inherited? What kind of evangelicalism do we seek to preserve?*

I think that we can agree that both theologically and missiologically “Great Commission oriented evangelicalism” is entirely too imprecise as an answer to such questions. I myself—and I tend

evangelical movement first in terms of its belief system and only then in terms of its *behaviors*. He writes as follows:

I prefer to describe evangelicalism with more specificity as a movement that is based on classical Christian orthodoxy, shaped by a Reformational understanding of the gospel, and distinguished from other such movements in the history of the church by a set of beliefs and behaviors forged in the fires of the eighteenth-century revivals—the so-called ‘Great Awakening’...—beliefs and behaviors that had mainly to do with the spread of the gospel abroad.³⁷

Sweeney’s formulation takes us back to the Missio Nexus/EMS Statement of Faith and its importance. All of us recognize that creedal/confessional statements such as these are human creations. As such they are not to be “absolutized,” but neither are they to be minimized. *The Missio Nexus/EMS Statement has weaknesses as well as strengths, but used courageously and wisely it has the*

I think that the challenge for evangelicals is that every one of the Lausanne Congresses was actually an *ad hoc* event. It was organized for the occasion. As a result, continuity between the three is really difficult. Whereas the World Council of Churches or the Roman Catholic Church has an infrastructure behind it, so they have continuity. When evangelicals gather, the people who come are the ones to cause the change when they go home. . . . They’re not answerable to anyone. We came as individuals, not as delegates of our respective churches.³⁸

That is true in the case of consultations and conferences of the 2010 Centennial type, but it is not true of all evangelical movements and gatherings. Certainly it is not true of Missio Nexus and Evangelical Missiological Society. Missio Nexus—and, in a derivative sense, the Evangelical Missiological Society as well—constitute mission arms of a large number of evangelical denominations and missions. Applying Tienou’s terms and criteria, these organizations and their declarations exhibit the infrastructure and continuity—and therefore a certain authority—that *ad hoc* mission enclaves and their declarations simply do not possess. And that leads to a further observation. Namely, that as the confessional declaration of these organizations, their Statement of Faith has potential to serve as

“a buffer against the encroachments of religious relativism and syncretism”;

“a standard and a witness to the world”;

“a foundation for, and aspects of, true praise and worship”;

“an interpretational record and hermeneutical guide”;

“as source and content for future theological decisions.”

Conclusion

Exactly how should we as members of Missio Nexus and the Evangelical Missiological Society “tend to our tether”? How should we analyze, evaluate and employ the Missio Nexus/EMS Statement of Faith so as to preserve the evangelical heritage of the past and ensure hope for evangelical missions in the future?

The Missio Nexus/EMS Statement

has weaknesses as well as strengths, but used courageously and wisely it has the potential to “tether” us to Christ and Scripture.

to believe that many of my evangelical colleagues as well—prefer to think in terms proposed by Associate Professor of Church History and the History of Christian Thought and Director of the Carl F. H. Henry Center at Trinity, Douglas Sweeney. In a Festschrift published in honor of John Woodbridge and entitled *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Mission*, Sweeney first takes note of the definitions/descriptions of two fine evangelical scholars. Both make mention of evangelical beliefs but one defines “evangelical” primarily in terms of the kind of people involved in the evangelical movement; the other in terms of the kind of activities in which these evangelicals are engaged.³⁶ Sweeney himself takes an approach that is more in line with this paper. He describes the

potential to “tether” us to Christ and Scripture; to claim (or reclaim) our heritage from the past; and to preserve that heritage and provide hope for the future.

2. The Missio Nexus/EMS Statement of Faith—its potential. Over the long haul and with a view to preserving a truly evangelical heritage for missions in the future, the Missio Nexus/EMS Statement of Faith has a huge advantage over corresponding declarations engendered by the 2010 Centennial gatherings dealt with above, including the Cape Town and the Cape Town Commitment. Though Tite Tienou entertains a high regard for the Lausanne Covenant, for example, he nevertheless recognizes the limitations of the confessional documents of conferences and gatherings of this type. Tienou says,

Questions such as these are of the essence. But in order to answer them it will be necessary to examine the Statement of Faith in detail and deal with its various provisions much more carefully than is possible here. That must be a future consideration. In any case, the way we answer these questions will depend upon our determination of the kind of evangelicalism we envisage for the future: one that, as Pierard says, is so inclusive as to make it all but indistinguishable from “mainline,” “liberal,” or “ecumenical” churches”; or one that, as Sweeney says,

is based on classical Christian orthodoxy, shaped by a Reformational understanding of the gospel, and distinguished . . . by a set of beliefs and behaviors forged in the fires of the eighteenth-century revivals—the so-called ‘Great Awakening’ . . . —beliefs and behaviors that had mainly to do with the spread of the gospel abroad.

That decided, Leith’s contention appertains. Namely, that the doing and making of creeds represents an important part of Christian service. In fact, it is “*indispensable to any other service that can be rendered.*”³⁹ I would add, “And so is the defending and deploying of them.”

Endnotes

1. David L. Edwards with a response from John Stott, *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 106.
2. Ibid. 1.
3. Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1959), 515–18.
4. B. J. Longfield, “Liberalism/Modernism, Protestant (c. 1870s–1930s)” in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, D. Reid, R. Linder, B. Shelley, H. Stout eds., InterVarsity: 1990:646–48, quotation from pp. 647–48. In line with this fundamental differentiation, Longfield goes on to identify some of the most salient features of Protestant liberalism/modernism. Namely, it emphasized progress and experience manifested in a liberal understanding of the Scriptures as being an account of the advancing religious consciousness of the Hebrew people fulfilled in the life of Jesus. The Bible was not a repository of inerrant history and doctrine but an historically conditioned norm of religious experience to be interpreted and reproduced in light of the progress of culture. This belief allowed liberals to embrace the results of histor-

ical criticism and the natural sciences without worry. For instance, if modern Christians have difficulty with the resurrection, the virgin birth or the miracles of Jesus, they need only realize that these categories were but outmoded expressions of unchanging religious consciousness.

5. David Hesselgrave, “Will We Correct the Edinburgh Error: Future Mission in Historical Perspective,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 49:2 (Spring 2007), 121–149.

6. *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission: Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974–1989* (Paternoster 1996), xii; emphasis mine.

7. A. Moreau, “Putting the Survey in Perspective” in *Mission Handbook: U.S. and Canadian Christian Ministries Overseas*, 18th ed., J. Siewert and D. Tolliver, eds. (Wheaton: EMIS 2000), 4, 34; see also D. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel 2005), 317–26.

8. E. Frizen, Jr., *75 Years of IFMA 1917–1992: The Nondenominational Missions Movement* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1992), 119–20.

9. Ibid. 109–10; see also 435–36.

10. J. Carpenter, “Propagating the Faith Once Delivered,” in J. Carpenter and W. Shenk, eds. *Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880–1980* ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 92–132, 93.

11. Ralph D. Winter, *The Twenty-Five Unbelievable Years, 1945–1969* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1970).

12. The Lausanne Covenant of 1974, for example, was a 3000-word 15-point document drawn up by comparatively few evangelical leaders acting under limited authority and committing signers to certain selected practices as well as doctrines. The Covenant included a statement on social concern that has, in fact, been a source of continued controversy and division on theological grounds.

13. Richard V. Pierard, “Evangelicalism” in *New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 2nd ed. ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 312, emphasis mine.

14. Ibid. 313.

15. John H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), 22.

16. R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 210–11 emphasis his.

17. John H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963).

18. Ibid. 2.

19. Ibid. 1–12.

20. Ibid., 1–2.

21. John H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), 1–2.

22. Ibid. 9..

23. Ibid. 2–3.

24. Ibid. 8–9.

25. Ibid., 3.

26. [www/http oikoumen.org/en/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/world-mission-conference-2.html](http://www.oikoumen.org/en/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/world-mission-conference-2.html).

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. See F. Fox, “A Participant’s Account of Edinburgh 2010,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 47:1 (January 2011), 88–93, 89.

30. <http://www.Tokyo2010.org/resources/Handbook.pdf> and <http://Tokyo2010.org/delegates.htm>.

31. Ibid.

32. Noted and quoted in Paul E. Pierson, “Ecumenical Movement” in A. Moreau, “Putting the Survey in Perspective” in *Mission Handbook: U.S. and Canadian Christian Ministries Overseas*, 18th ed., J. Siewert and D. Tolliver, eds. (Wheaton: EMIS 2000), 301.

33. For an analysis of this motto see “The Whole Church Taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World” in *The Evangelical Review of Theology* Vol. 34 No. 1 (Jan. 1910), 4–13.

34. A. Yeh, “A Participant’s Account of Lausanne III,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 47:1 (January 2011), 94–96, 94.

35. “What’s in a Name?—How and why we are now Missio Nexus,” *MissioNexus.org*, n.d., 3 (emphasis in the original).

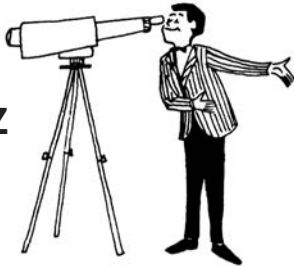
36. Douglas A. Sweeney, “Introduction” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions*, Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch, eds. Nashville: B&H Academic Publishing Group, 2008), 2.

37. Douglas A. Sweeney, “Introduction” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions*, Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch, eds. Nashville: B&H Academic Publishing Group, 2008), 2.

38. “Engaging Global Reconciliation” *Trinity Magazine* Spring 2011:10–14; quotation from 13.

39. John H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), 2.

As seen through the LENZ



This is a very special edition of *OB* because we are honoring a very special person. Dr. David Hesselgrave received the Lifetime Service Award at our recent Missio Nexus/EMS annual meeting. This edition is dedicated entirely to him. Craig Ott, long time associate of Dave, has written the feature tribute, and Dr. Hesselgrave has contributed his thinking as to the future direction and the cautions that we of EMS need to consider.

But I would like to add a word of tribute to a dear friend whom I have come to know and love through our many correspondences in relation to the *Occasional Bulletin*. Dr Hessel-

grave was also my main reader along with Dr. Ed Roman when I was at Trinity. After three rejections of my proposal (not precise enough), I finally got his approval and completed my degree. But that is who Dave is; very precise, whether in doctrinal mentoring, or theological precision. He keeps us steady and reminds us often that without a sound theology, we will have a poor missiology. That is also evident from his article in this edition of *OB*.

Someone has said that Rep. Paul Ryan from Wisconsin is a great man because he does not know it; i.e. he is humble in his brilliance and knowledge of finances. This can also be said of Dr. Hesselgrave. His varied accomplishments in missionary life, teaching, and a plethora of articles and books tell us that he is an accomplished practitioner and scholar. Yet he is humble and treats people as personal friends. I value that characteristic in him as well as his friendship and his advice.

It is somewhat sad, yet refreshing when the older generation moves off the active scene of ministry to give place to the younger generation who will hopefully follow their steps. The song “May all who come behind us find us faithful” runs through my mind as I think of Dr. Hesselgrave. He has been found faithful, has held high the inerrancy of Scripture, the bed rock of his thinking, and has given us a vision of a world that is lost without Christ and needs saving. May the next generation of missiologists follow in your foot steps.

Thanks Brother Dave. You have been a model and example to me as well as a blessing. I treasure all of our correspondence and times of interaction, whether personal or in conjunction with the *Occasional Bulletin*.

God’s richest blessing on you and your dear wife and family.

—Bob Lenz, editor

Continued from page 3

his writing may at times appear polemical, this is only because he believes that theology makes a difference. People of the Book should be able to discuss and debate the issues openly.

It is widely known, for example, that Hesselgrave took to task no one less than John R. W. Stott regarding his views of holistic mission and annihilationism. However, when telling the story Hesselgrave is always quick to add that he and Stott remained warm friends in the midst of their theological differences. The same can be said of his relationship with others with whom Hesselgrave differed. However weighty the debate may be, one must view others in a spirit of Christian charity and kindness.

Lives impacted and movements influenced. It is difficult to say how long Hesselgrave’s writings will continue to be read. But this much is sure: his true lasting legacy will be measured less by

the books on library shelves than by the people and ministries he impacted. Some were his spiritual children in Japan. Many were his students during his decades of classroom teaching—in the U.S and abroad. Not a few of them have in turn become teachers, missiologists, and mission executives with global influence. But many more are the lesser known missionaries and ministers for whom Hesselgrave’s writings became their ministry handbooks and theological guideposts. Evangelists found the keys to bridging cultural gaps, church planters followed the “Pauline Cycle”, missiologists read their Bibles more carefully, and mission agencies and local churches sharpened their vision because of Hesselgrave’s influence.

In a recent interview Hesselgrave said, “It is not unusual these days for married couples to celebrate a wedding anniversary by renewing their vows. After my experience in Japan and a half

a century of subsequent involvement in evangelical missions worldwide I suggest that evangelical apologists and missionaries ‘renew their vows.’” Though some may disagree with particular positions Hesselgrave took on controversial issues, most would agree with this: The future of evangelical missions will depend much on the ability of theologians, church leaders, field missionaries and missiologists to “renew their vows” in the common cause of fulfilling the Great Commission by joining the best of biblical thinking with the wisest of missionary practice. And in that endeavor we will hardly find a better example than that of David J. Hesselgrave.

Craig Ott, a former student of David J. Hesselgrave, is professor of mission and intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and coauthor of *Encountering Theology of Mission and Global Church Planting*.