

From the Editor's Desk



Almost like new episodes in a weekly TV drama, the series on external vs. internal boards moves from the experience of Paul and Patrick to Ricci and Carey which in each case portray vividly how disastrous external control can be. The end of this series (in 18:4) will present, finally, how the cliff-hanging situation with Hudson Taylor turned out well (well, almost entirely well). But in this issue you will encounter two more early examples, Catholic and Protestant, each of them potent and classic.

Meanwhile, Alan Johnson's story of the significant transition to Unreached Peoples is now complete in this issue. Interestingly, here is a subtle relation to the external/internal board issue. Both of these series are grappling, one way or another, with the nearly inevitable discrepancy between the understanding of mission on the part of donors and missionaries. Donors back home, for example, can readily "relate" to the subject of "missions" once there are emerging churches in what were once untouched mission fields. The care and feeding of those churches is a natural for donors hungry to see fruit appear and develop (even if donors are not exactly in an ideal position to know how to help that happen in a healthy way). Even missionaries can easily become content to shift away from the special problems and perplexities of pioneer work and relax a bit among bright-eyed converts. In this way the challenge of remaining frontiers is often obscured by the "high grass" of the emerging church. This is especially confusing if indeed an entire country is considered "the field," not the additional peoples beyond that "grass" are subsumed as part of what is already being done.

Johnson deftly, if gingerly, picks his way through the minefield of controversy between those emphasizing the frontiers and those deeply involved with extending the enormous growth of churches only where that is happening in the mission lands. He points out that it is almost predictable that you cannot emphasize a neglected aspect of the mission challenge without being accused of saying that is the only thing we must do. It is equally to be expected that you cannot define intermediate goals (a missiological breakthrough in every people) without being accused of redefining final goals (the completion of the Great Commission).

Personally I have never decried the location or the work of a single missionary no matter how "behind the scenes" their work might be. I simply believe that, okay, modern missions has now successfully turned almost all

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formerly pioneer fields into growing church movements. Can we then ignore the still unreached pioneer challenges? Indeed, missionaries in general are superbly located where they can very strategically endeavor to make sure that the churches with which they are working are involved in reaching out further to unreached peoples. To do that they usually must stay with the new churches not leave them before that vision is born. A frontier missionary is just as much the one who is behind the scenes promoting and educating existing churches about the frontiers as the one who is right in the middle of a pioneer situation. There should be no “second class” missionaries just because they are not located in a pioneer field.

Goodness, if that were not true I could not be writing this editorial about frontiers (safely and soundly in gang-ridden, smog laden Southern California). Alan Johnson should not have taken the time to portray for us all this exciting account

of a strategic movement. Well, for that matter, we couldn't keep any of our sorely needed staff in Pasadena!

Equally logical but mainly arm-chair reasoning has fueled a unique objection to goals and planning in mission endeavors, coming mainly from Latin America. The battery of social science and anthropological and linguistic and even management skills which Americans have been learning to employ for some time has provoked an earnest, kindly, and yet somehow twisted objection to most all North American mission endeavors. The malady has been cutely named “Managerial Missiology,” and the author of that concept has now for at least a decade insisted that this is something undesirable.

Only a Latin American could stand up credibly to this twisted logic, and Dr. Levi DeCarvalho has decided to do

so—without any prompting from North Americans! His paper is a jewel, truly a marvel of level-headed evaluation of the issue. It throws a great deal of light on this major area, which otherwise could tear down a great deal of confidence in the outstanding strides which missions in general have made, with perhaps Wycliffe in the lead, in harnessing many different secular fields of expertise for the progress of the Gospel.

Actually, the acquisition of technical skills, whether in perfectly enormous international radio ministries, or in the gathering statistics of the different aspects of the unfinished task, or the computer skills which enable publication on a whole new level—the harmonious digestion of all this in the pursuit of the Heavenly Vision has been a formidable frontier which is now mainly in the past, a fact for which we can devoutly rejoice.

Ralph D. Winter
Editor

The IJFM is published in the name of the International Student Leaders Coalition for Frontier Missions, a fellowship of younger leaders committed to the purposes of the twin consultations of Edinburgh 1980: *The World Consultation on Frontier Missions* and the *International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions*. As an expression of the ongoing concerns of Edinburgh 1980, the IJFM seeks to:

- ☞ promote intergenerational dialogue between senior and junior mission leaders;
- ☞ cultivate an international fraternity of thought in the development of frontier missiology;
- ☞ highlight the need to maintain, renew, and create mission agencies as vehicles for frontier missions;
- ☞ encourage multidimensional and interdisciplinary studies;
- ☞ foster spiritual devotion as well as intellectual growth; and
- ☞ advocate “A Church for Every People.”

Mission frontiers, like other frontiers, represent boundaries or barriers beyond which we must go yet beyond which we may not be able to see clearly and boundaries which may even be disputed or denied. Their study involves the discovery and evaluation of the unknown or even the reevaluation of the known. But unlike other frontiers, mission frontiers is a subject specifically concerned to explore and exposit areas and ideas and insights related to the glorification of God in all the nations (peoples) of the world, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.

Subscribers and other readers of the IJFM (due to ongoing promotion) come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Mission professors, field missionaries, young adult mission mobilizers, college librarians, mission executives, and mission researchers all look to the IJFM for the latest thinking in frontier missiology.