

hour presentation of the gospel 155 times a year. That is almost once every other day all year long!

A surprising finding

Despite the relative lack of Christian engagement with non-Christians in the 20th century, there was an increasing tendency to label non-Christians as “resistant”. This offered a quick and easy explanation for why more conversions had not occurred among Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and others. But is it accurate to label neglected or unengaged peoples as “resistant”? A remarkable counter-intuitive finding emerged in the World Christian Encyclopedia survey: the least-evangelized peoples were shown to be the most responsive. This fact was developed by contrasting the annual baptism rate among each of the world’s peoples with the number of hours of evangelism invested in that people. Consistently, those with the least efforts showed significantly higher response rates (per capita). This finding is in harmony both with the biblical idea of God’s initiative among all peoples (even prior to missionary efforts) and the eschatological expectation of God’s community gathered from all peoples. If Christian workers are directed more towards the least-evangelized in the future, the great harvest field may be the former “resistant belt”.

Closure in a new light

If we are to complete the task, twenty-first century mission must be radically different from 20th century mission. The mission force will soon be largely non-Western, strategic planning is likely to be more decentralized, and attention on peoples may become more nuanced—counting up instead of counting down. This may paradoxically lead us to a more satisfying closure than what was envisioned for AD 2000. Nothing is lost if the approach taken is biblical and leads to a more thorough penetration of all the world’s peoples with the gospel of Jesus Christ. **IJFM**

Centers for World Mission: Echos from Singapore 1988

by Darrell Dorr

Editor’s note: This set of documents was included to serve as a historical reference for those participating in the *Global Centers for World Mission* track of the Singapore ‘02 consultation.

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Bridging the Gaps:

A Global Network of Centers for World Mission Accelerates the Completion of the Great Commission

A center for world mission is a strange beast that defies simple description. It’s not a think tank, but it conducts strategic research. It’s not a foundation, but it mobilizes resources necessary for the completion of world evangelization. It’s not a school, but it provides innovative training. And it’s not a bookstore, but it distributes literature and other materials that Christians really need if they are to know and do all that God expects.

By one count, 40 such centers have sprung up in various countries in the past few years, some in isolation, others with the active encouragement of older centers. Increasingly, these organizations have begun to work together to bridge many of the gaps in what David Barrett, the editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia, has identified as an exploding “global evangelization movement.”

This fledgling network of centers for world mission received a big boost November 1-5, when 33 representatives of 12 centers and five other organizations gathered at Singapore’s Metropolitan YMCA to compare notes on their respective ministries and to plan for the network’s future. The huddle was hosted by the Singapore Centre for Evangelism and Missions (SCEM) and jointly convened by SCEM’s acting executive director, Michael Jaffarian, and the U.S. Center’s communications director, Darrell Dorr.

Deliberations at “CentreCon”

The Singapore consultation—dubbed “CentreCon” for short—built on a foundational agreement prepared by a smaller group in the same city two years ago. The 1986 “Singapore Statement on the Global Network of Centres for World Mission” defines a center for world mission as an “interdenominational, inter-mission organisation working in a support role for the cause of World Evangelisation and especially for the reaching of the unreached peoples.”

The November 1988 consultation featured working sessions on such topics as planning mobilization conferences, overseeing mission study programs (such as the Perspectives course developed at the U.S. Center), acquiring and distributing media resources, and developing mission media networks. Since many centers for world mission are heavily involved in mission research, additional sessions were given to coordinating field research, developing guidelines for sharing research data, and establishing permanent national research functions in conjunction with Global Mapping International. Global Mapping conducted a more in-depth workshop November 7-10 in the same location, acquainting center representatives and other mission leaders with GMI’s database, mapping, and data communications tools.

Links to Other Ministries

But how do centers for world mission relate to other ministries in the “global evangelization movement”? Dorr noted that centers for world mission have served and can continue to serve as “implementing agents ready for any good work that might otherwise fall in the cracks between more conventional and less adaptable structures.”

The Singapore Statement includes the aspiration that centers work in harmony with the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. Dorr added that other global mission move-

ments, such as Third World Missions Advance and the Global Consultation on World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond, have developed since the Singapore Statement was framed and are likewise prime candidates for service by centers for world mission.

Where to Go From Here?

Center leaders took further specific steps at CentreCon to strengthen and widen the global network of centers. An executive committee of six was chosen to foster ongoing interaction, recruit additional centers to the network, and prepare for the next such consultation—"Centre-Con II"—planned for sometime in 1990.

The members of the 1988-1990 committee are David Cho (East-West Center for Mission Research and Development); Darrell Dorr (U.S. Center for World Mission); Michael Jaffarian (Singapore Centre for Evangelism and Missions); David Price (BCV Centre for World Mission); and two leaders of centers in south Asia who requested that their names not be published. The executive committee appointed Darrell Dorr as network coordinator and David Price as secretary/treasurer.

Four criteria were specified for membership in the network: affirmation of the Singapore Statement; recognition

by the executive committee; subscription to the network newsletter, CenterNet; and submission of at least four ministry reports each year.

Participants' Responses

Consultation participants expressed gratitude for the fruits of CentreCon. David Price commented, "It was a great inspiration to feel part of a world movement and sense that in being together." John D'Alton, director of the Brisbane Centre for World Mission, praised the "great people contact, new ideas, and a structure developed to help us finish the job of world evangelization!" And Don Cowey, director of the recently-established New Zealand Centre for Mission Direction, said he "gained confidence that we are on the right track."

The Singapore Centre's Michael Jaffarian, a Conservative Baptist missionary completing his first term of service and long-time advocate of a conference like CentreCon, said, "I think all of us were amazed when we found out what was happening in the various centres around the world. This was tremendously encouraging to each of us, and really an inspiration. I thought I was pretty well informed, but in reality I had no idea of the tremendous things God is doing through these centres. It gave tangible proof to the belief that the Lord our God is

raising up a tremendous new frontier mission movement in our day, stemming from all corners of the globe."

As for regrets, participants indicated they were disappointed that only 10 countries were represented, and none from Latin America or black Africa. They asked the executive committee—through site selection, promotion, and possible travel subsidies—to seek a wider representation of centers at CentreCon II.

Anticipating Tomorrow's Headlines

An Interview with Darrell Dorr, Coordinator for the Global Network of Centers

Mission Frontiers: Most of our readers are familiar with the U.S. Center for World Mission, since Mission Frontiers is the Center's official bulletin. But now, suddenly, we are being told there are possibly 40 centers for world mission around the world. What does that mean? Are there 40 mini-USCWMs around the world?

Darrell Dorr: Absolutely not. Each of the 40 centers has its own form and set of functions, although there is significant overlap in functions from center to center. Magnus Sorhus of the Kansai Mission Research Center in Kobe, Japan, was correct when he pointed out

What Is a Center for World Mission?

Excerpts from the 1986 Singapore Statement

The "Singapore Statement on the Global Network of Centres for World Mission" was prepared, not at the November 1988 CenterCon huddle, but by representatives of five centers who met in the same city in June 1986. This statement attempts, among other things, to define the organization called a "center for world mission." It says:

A Centre for World Mission is an interdenominational, inter-mission organisation working in a support role for the cause of World Evangelization and especially for the reaching of the unreached peoples. A Centre for World Mission is intended to fill a gap not being filled by other mission organizations.

We expect the various Centres to have different histories, to have different organizational structures and links, to have different missiological perspectives, and to emphasize different tasks. We welcome this diversity.

A Centre serves churches, mission agencies, mission associations, and others in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) By serving as a Missions Research Centre: conducting, distributing and/or guiding missions research, especially that related to the unreached peoples and how to reach them.
- (b) By serving as a Missions Training Centre: building missions awareness and involvement among Christians, preparing missionaries for cross-cultural service, and/or offering specialized training in specific areas.
- (c) By serving as a Missions Mobilization Centre: seeking to awaken those who are asleep to missions, seeking to mobilize those who are awake to missions, and seeking to facilitate those who are moving in missions.
- (d) By serving as a Missions Resource Centre: distributing from a centralized place a wide range of missions books and media resources to churches, students, leaders, lay people, and mission organizations.
- (e) By serving as a Missions Development Centre: acting as a catalyst for the formation of structures necessary for the advancement of world evangelization.

that none of the centers—including the U.S. Center for World Mission—can possibly expect to do what everyone else is doing.

The Kansai Center focuses on research. The Brisbane Centre is strong in mission mobilization—especially mobilizing young adults. Each center has its own focus, its own audience, its own strengths. At the Singapore meeting, we came to appreciate our diversity all the more.

MF: There was another recent meeting, a meeting of regional centers for world mission in the U.S. Bruce Graham, associate director for Regional Centers at the USCWM, commented that the U.S. Center wants at least “some part of every regional center to be under the supervision of the USCWM.”

Are these international centers for world mission in some way also under the leadership or direction of the U.S. Center?

DD: I’m glad you asked that. I’m grateful for the work Bruce Graham and Wes Tullis have done to serve those regional centers who look to us for leadership and who want to be legally and financially affiliated with us. But the centers I’ve been responsible to serve are those which are autonomous from us and which are our peers.

Most of these centers are in other countries, but some, like us, are based in the U.S. It’s important to recognize that the U.S. Center for World Mission is not out to create some empire of branch offices around the world!

MF: Apart from their relationship to the USCWM, are there any other distinctions between the two types of centers?

DD: There’s overlap in function, but the international and national centers tend to do more mission research—especially primary research—while the (US) regional centers are top-heavy in mobilization. Both do training, including offering the introductory Perspectives course, but the international and national centers are more likely to also conduct training for missionary candidates headed for the field.

MF: You suggested at the Singapore meeting that centers for world mission take up Ralph Winter’s challenge that they, among others, “take orders”

from international consensus groups in determining their agendas. Will this really happen?

DD: It already has. My exhortation in Singapore was simply for the brethren to “excel still more” (to use Pauline language!). For example, the Singapore Centre is spearheading the WEF Missions Commission’s survey of research centers. The East-West Center has buttressed the Asia Missions Association and Third World Missions Advance. For years MARC has provided much of the operational backbone for the Lausanne Committee, and we at the U.S. Center have tried to do what we can to rally behind the January 1989 Global AD 2000 consultation.

MF: Okay. So there are these 40 centers and some of them got together in Singapore. Why should Joseph and Josephine Average Christian care?

DD: For two major reasons, I think.

First, the development of a network of centers is one more piece of evidence that all the recent talk about a “global evangelization movement” is for real. Centers for world mission are themselves signs of such a movement, and they are key implementing agents to translate the rhetoric of a movement into reality.

Second, participation in both global and regional networks of centers helps us at the USCWM to serve the publics the Lord has entrusted to us, including Mission Frontiers readers. Our research will be sharper, our tools will be better, our training will have more depth. These networks extend our reach and put more resources at our disposal.

MF: Those are pretty big claims!

DD: But they’re also realistic. We now have relationships with other centers who can market-test some of our materials and ideas. Even while we were in Singapore we received a strong dose of reality therapy. For example, we were confronted with inconsistencies in our literature distribution policies, and so we got the extra “push” we needed to come out with some written proposals for improvements.

But there are other benefits we can expect from these strengthened relationships. Those of us who were present in Singapore now have a greater degree

The Most Strategic Response to World Need A Network of Centers Anticipated in 1977

In a document written in April 1977 to clarify the rationale for the U.S. Center for World Mission and the William Carey International University, Dr. Ralph Winter anticipated both the need for and the existence of multiple centers for world mission around the world.

In this document, entitled “World Need, World Problems—Can Missions Make Any Difference?”, Winter stated,

The most strategic overall response Christians can make to world need is a string of nerve centers around the world, centers of a new kind . . . In every country these centers will have two functions:

1) . . . They must be information centers concerning unreached peoples within the country where the center is located—so that foreign mission agencies and expatriate missionaries coming into the country can avail themselves of precise, reliable local guidance as to where the highest priority needs are. Thus they consider their own country a mission field.

2) . . . They must be information centers managing at least the basic outlines of the mission needs in the rest of the world, so as to help people from their country become strategic missionaries to other parts of the world—they consider their own country a mission base.

The task of these centers will be to awaken interest in cross-cultural mission, to stimulate and encourage support, and to do essential studies and strategic thinking about the unmet needs . . . It is expected that if this [Pasadena] center succeeds, similar centers will no doubt spring into being in other countries (both Western and non-Western) wherever substantial resources and interest in missions exists, and it will be part of the mission of the United States Center for World Mission to encourage such centers and to relate to them . . .

of trust in one another than we did before the meeting, a trust, for example, that will foster the sharing of sensitive research data within prescribed limits.

Another strategic benefit: CentreCon revealed the potential for centers for world mission to establish the permanent national research functions that are indispensable to Global Mapping's many aspirations. Centers can either become these permanent national research functions or can serve as advocates for the establishment of such functions.

MF: And now you've established an association of centers. What's the significance of that?

DD: For a center to say that it's part of a network gives greater credibility, especially to some of the newer and smaller centers, but we're not getting into the formal endorsement or accreditation business. I think "association" conveys too much of the feel of an organization, while "network" better describes the informal nature of our interaction at this point.

We discussed the possibility of recruiting staff for one another: the average church or Christian is frequently more eager to support "overseas" missionaries than missionaries working in their own country. Even though the "homeside" center staffer is making a strategic contribution to world evangelization, that contribution is so broad and subtle that it's often virtually invisible to people in the pews. . . so let's send some workers to a center in Seoul or Brisbane or Oslo, and maybe they'll send some staff our way!

We may be able to negotiate some reciprocal training agreements. We could help set up the long-discussed worldwide "Adopt-a-People" clearinghouse that links congregations and mission agencies and ensures that no known unreached people group is overlooked. We may be able to exchange late-breaking mission news via electronic mail, cassettes, or video: exciting news that currently goes unreported.

And here's one more strongly felt need: one center may soon assume the responsibility for low-cost NTSC-to-PAL video conversion (conversion between the North American standard and the standard used in much of the rest of the world) on behalf of other centers. That way everyone can share

quality videos with everyone else.

MF: So CentreCon was worth it?

DD: Sure. Meetings and networks aren't exciting in themselves, but they often house tomorrow's headlines. Centers for world mission are vital parts of the infrastructure for world evangelization. My hope and prayer is simply that the rest of the Church will develop a growing appreciation for these instruments of innovation and implementation.

A directory of centers for world mission, produced immediately before the 1988 CentreCon huddle, includes the following list of existing or prospective centers. A few centers are not listed here because of political sensitivities in their countries. Further investigation may reveal (a) the existence of additional centers unknown to the conveners of CentreCon and (b) that some listed organizations are not actually centers for world mission according to their own or others' assessment.

Africa

Africa Centre for World Mission (Walkerville, South Africa)

African Center for World Mission (envisioned for West Africa)

Andrew Murray Centre for Prayers, Revival, and Missions (Wellington, S. Africa)

Daystar Research Unit (Nairobi, Kenya)

Searchlight Project (Jos, Nigeria)

Asia/Pacific

Asian Center for Missionary Education (Manila, Philippines)

BCV Centre for World Mission (Melbourne, Australia)

Brisbane Centre for World Mission (Brisbane, Australia)

Chinese Church Research Centre (Sha Tin, Hong Kong)

Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (Kowloon, HK)

East-West Center for Frontier Mission Research and Development (Seoul, Korea)

Hong Kong Center for Frontier Missions (Kowloon, Hong Kong)

Kansai Mission Research Center (Kobe, Japan)

New Zealand Centre for Mission Direction (Christchurch, New Zealand)

Singapore Centre for Evangelism and Missions (Singapore)

Sydney Missions Resource Centre (being developed, Sydney, Australia)

Europe

FORSCHUNGSZENTRUM (Stuttgart, West Germany)

German Center for World Mission (Bonn, West Germany)

Norwegian Center for World Mission (Oslo, Norway)

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (Oxford, England)

Scottish Centre for World Mission (Glasgow, Scotland)

WEC International Research Office (London, England)

Latin America

Brazilian Center of Missionary Information (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

IMDELA (San Jose, Costa Rica)

Misiones Mundiales (Santa Fe, Argentina)

Nat'l. Ev. Commission on W. Missions (Guatemala City, Guatemala)

PUENTE (Quito, Ecuador)

North America

Alberta Centre for World Mission (Edmonton, Alberta)

Billy Graham Center (Wheaton, Illinois)

Canadian Centre for World Mission (Toronto, Ontario)

Emerging Missions Research Center (Milpitas, California)

Issachar (Seattle, Washington)

Midwest Center for World Missions (Oak Park, Illinois)

Missions Advanced Research & Communications Ctr. (Monrovia, CA)

Northwest Centre for World Mission (Vancouver, BC)

Overseas Ministries Study Center (New Haven, Connecticut)

U.S. Center for World Mission (Pasadena, California)

World Evangelization Research Center (Richmond, Virginia)