

From the Editor's Desk



Dear Reader,

In the interest of full disclosure, I confess: I am not Ralph Winter. I have never been Ralph Winter. What's more, I have never used Ralph Winter as an alias or pseudonym, nor have I ever been mistaken for him in any setting. As for the photo, it's amazing how lifelike the Ralph Winter masks sold on eBay actually are.

This editorial represents a compromise. Once it became apparent two days ago that his departure for South Korea would inevitably overlap with the writing of this editorial, I agreed to fill in, but only if I got to wear the mask. (By the way, those of you who are wondering, "Who is this masked man?" are asked to wait until the end. No cheating.)

That said, this playfully concocted introduction leads us to a more serious issue, namely *identity*. If I stretch the *identity* analogy in places, I hope you'll indulge me and persevere, if for no other reason than unbridled curiosity. So let's begin almost with the end in mind, with Gavriel Gefen's article (pp. 99-108, right before the *Editorial Reflections*, written by someone who's never *not* been Ralph Winter).

As you'll discover, Gefen is no ordinary person. His sometimes historical, sometimes autobiographical, always interesting piece details the journey of a man and his family seeking to live in faithfulness to all three components of their Messianic Jewish Israeli identity. Whatever your interest, don't miss this.

Sandwiched between Gefen and a few snapshots from our *IJFM* family album (pp. 61-64) are 30 plus pages tackling issues raised by Christopher Little in his paper "What Makes Mission Christian?" "At first thought," he begins, "such a question begs an obvious answer, but in reality, there is a growing divide among evangelicals today regarding the fundamental meaning, role, and purpose of Christian mission" (p. 65).

Is there a growing divide? Are segments of the Evangelical mission movement on a slippery slope toward theological liberalism? Is this, again, a case of mistaken identity? Seven respected mission thinkers/practitioners interact here with Little's analysis from widely differing perspectives (Mark Russell's article, while not a response to Little *per se*, addresses similar concerns and is aware of the Jan 2006 *EMQ* version of Chris' paper, commenting on it briefly). We hope you find the rounds of discussion stimulating and invite you to join in the conversation (write us at letters@ijfm.org).

Back to our 25th anniversary. In the previous issue, we kicked off our celebrations with snapshots from those "thrilling days of yesteryear" and a word from Brad Gill and Darrell Dorr. For convenience, we've divided *IJFM's* history into four periods by editor: 1) Gordon Aeschliman/Brad Gill/Darrell Dorr (1984-1988); 2) Todd Johnson (1989-1992); 3) Hans Weerstra (1993-2000); 4) Ralph Winter (2001-present). This brings us to the "Johnson" era, Todd Johnson, that is.

In case you're wondering about Todd's *real* identity, he's currently the Director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (home of the World Christian Database, www.worldchristiandatabase.org). He co-authored, along with David Barrett,

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the 1,699-page two-volume second edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* and the 900+ page *World Christian Trends: AD 30-AD2200* (see p. 79 for the *World Christian Trends* ad). These books were published in 2001 by Oxford University Press and William Carey Library respectively. Page 63 of this issue of *IJFM*, entitled *Global Diagram 18: Today's Global Human Need*, actually comes from the *WCT* book and is updated here from the original diagram that appeared in *IJFM* 7:1. More on that in a moment.

Those of you who collect vintage *IJFMs* (also popular on eBay) will remember the small 5.5" x 8.5" format of those early years. Suspiciously, that format was replaced after Todd's very first issue. To understand why, you need look no further than page 63.

Considering the ocular prowess required to read that diagram—and the many that would follow—the move to 8.25" x 10.75" was merciful indeed. Now it's just speculation, mind you, but if the 12.5" x 10.3" format of the aforementioned books is any indicator, the *IJFM*, had Todd continued as editor, might now more nearly resemble the even larger *Rand McNally Road Atlas*. But again, that's pure conjecture.

Of course, it wasn't just the diagrams, charts, and graphs that characterized his era. There were the unreached peoples profiles, the global plans for

world evangelization, the manifestos, discussions of statistics (and innu-meracy), the challenging editorials. One issue was devoted to John Paul II's encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio*. (If you want to know what the previous Pope thought about frontier mission, and what his respondents thought about his encyclical, check out *IJFM* 8:3). For that and more surprises from the Johnson era, see p. 64.

While we hoped to have something new from Todd this time, the timing was exceptionally bad. We'll hear from him again, though. Stay tuned.

One final note: I considered changing the subtitle of our intentionally mysterious cover title, "Word and Deed: A Century of Polarization?" to "A Case of Mistaken Identity?" But since Winter's editorial note (p. 91) and editorial reflections (p. 111) both comment on this "century of polarization," it seemed good to leave it as is (for a fuller treatment, see his Sept-Oct 2007 *Mission Frontiers* article entitled "The Future of Evangelicals in Mission," beginning with the chart on p. 14 of that paper). Following his thesis there, would "A Case of Recovered Identity?" have been an even more appropriate subtitle? You decide.

Well, the time has come to remove the mask . . . at least long enough for station identification.

Rory Clark, Managing Editor, *IJFM*
(sitting in for Ralph D. Winter)

Save the Date: ISFM 2008!

This year, the International Society for Frontier Missiology will be meeting at the Omni Interlocken Resort in Broomfield, CO (near Denver), September 27-28, 2008. Participants in the overlapping meetings of CrossGlobal Link (former IFMA), The Mission Exchange (former EFMA), and EMS can attend the ISFM meetings through Saturday morning at no extra charge. Those only wishing to come to the ISFM meetings can register with us for a very nominal fee. The overarching theme for the joint meetings is: *Mission Next: Relating to the Majority World Harvest Force*. For those interested in the joint CrossGlobal Link/The Mission Exchange/EMS/ISFM meetings see www.crossgloballink.org/events. If you're only interested in the ISFM, see www.ijfm.org/isfm for details. As more details come available, check the site.

News Flash: Apostolos 2008!

The ISLCFM is sponsoring a gathering of young people who have already committed their lives to the least reached people groups. It will be held at the US Center for World Mission in Pasadena, CA from August 16-19, 2008. Intergenerational discussions will focus on discovering and implementing new paradigms for seeing the gospel implanted in these unengaged people groups. Registration is only \$20. For more information, contact islcfm@gmail.com.

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." (Acts 26:18)

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.