

From the Editor's Desk



It would be hard to think of any phrase in the Bible that is more significant or mysterious than “Thy Kingdom come.” On the one hand, so many are talking about the Kingdom these days that it would seem futile to add any further words. On the other hand, precisely because there is so much confusion, it seems important to look more closely at what the Kingdom is from the point of view of the Bible.

In Denver, the theme of the International Society for Frontier Missiology meeting was “Thy Kingdom Come.” Some of those presentations appear in this issue.

Many think that the Kingdom is something that is coming later and that we are to pray for its soon coming, in effect, that history will end and we will be with the Lord. In that case, when we pray “Thy Kingdom come,” we are simply hastening the day that the Kingdom will come. On the other hand, many feel that more correctly the prayer asks simply that God’s will be done on this earth, and that the earlier phrase, “Thy kingdom come,” is spelled out by the following phrase, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” This latter view is actually widespread these days, and evangelicals over the last century have very gradually accepted the fact that we are not simply waiting for Jesus to return, but we are to “occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13). Richard Wurmbrand, who is known as the Voice of the Martyrs, puts it succinctly, “We must strive to convert not only a prostitute or a drunkard, but prostitution, alcoholism, the prisons, man’s exploitation of other people, war—all these things must be abolished, and this can only be done if the Christian fights his battle in the social as well as personal sphere.”

In any case, in this issue, this formidable theme is explored in interesting ways. In fact, some of what you will read is the most exciting thing you can imagine.

Less exciting, no doubt, but nevertheless important is the fact that the last eight years of *IJFM*—thirty-two issues—are listed in the beginning because of the fact that they were under a single editor and that this is the fourth and final installment of these glimpses of the past. Don’t forget that you can look up the same list on the website, www.ijfm.org, and can download the PDFs of any of these issues. (We take pride in the fact that we do not withhold the most current issue from the web for the simple reason that one of the great values of communication these days is the ability to send electronic copies to other people.)

While not every ISFM presentation is here, at least you’ll get a good taste of the excitement of those days. One man who’d been at the previous joint-meeting of the IFMA and EFMA (about 300 executives) said that even the first morning of the ISFM meeting was the most exciting thing that week. This was his statement, not ours, but at least you can see there was very high interest stirred up at that meeting.

Last but not least, you don’t want to miss Part II of Jack Colgate’s article or the exciting books mentioned in this Books Reviews section.

Very Cordially,

Ralph D. Winter

Editor, *IJFM*

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ISFM 2008 Report



Thy Kingdom Come: Are we ready for what this means?

As a neophyte to the Christian missionary conference circuit, I had a phenomenal experience attending the 2008 International Society for Frontier Missiology conference in Denver.

The first morning Rick Love, Carl Medearis and Jamie Winship kept us on the edge of our seats as they described what is happening among Muslim friends. Increasing numbers who follow Jesus with great passion live in some of the strongest areas of Islam and could have significant influence on the entire Muslim world. This movement is not about Muslims becoming “Christians” as if they should join “our” side, but rather reclaiming the truth that Jesus was ethnically a Middle Easterner, highly honored in the Qur’an and Injil. Many of our friends in the Middle East correctly perceive the Western depiction of Jesus is often not accurate. Nor, however, is the one found

in popular Islam. With encouragement they earnestly decide to find out exactly what Jesus taught, leading them to study seriously the Injil. “Take him back! Take him back!” has been a rally cry in some gatherings who want to seek the “true” Jesus.

All three speakers are very relational and gifted storytellers, blending faith, humor and contextualized truth to touch the hearts of their audience—Muslim or Christian. In humility, some of them confessed this was not always so. One narrowly missed a lengthy prison sentence because of his abrupt and insensitive approach. Thankfully, another brother later showed him how to be much more sensitive and fruitful, starting with what Islamic culture and the Qur’an already positively say about Jesus.

Rick Love reminded us that we live in an increasingly transparent world. It can be very difficult for Jesus-following workers to try to maintain a dual identity—one to our friends back home and another to our Muslim friends abroad. For the sake of the good news and integrity, we are well advised to consider bringing that dual nature into closer harmony.

Later, Debra Buenting, Greg Parsons (see his book review in this *IJFM*) and Timothy Paul also gave thought-provoking presentations. Timothy Paul shared a successful insider ministry among the Hindu upper caste Gujarati Indians who have moved to the United

States. Timothy’s efforts are a good reminder of the many opportunities within the borders of America with a great variety of homogeneous ethnic communities who have migrated here. For those who are willing to learn the language and spend a large portion of their lives reaching out to a transplanted ethnic group, the effect could become truly global.

Finally, we were privileged to have Ralph Winter present a new paper on the three great periods of modern missionary movements and the recovery of what he calls “Kingdom Mission.” Keep an eye out for this challenging article in an upcoming *IJFM*.

See You in September?

Don’t miss the chance to listen to and interact with practitioners, authors and thinkers who are riding the growing wave of what God is doing around the world in our day. See you next September in Orlando!

Robert Stone

*Executive Assistant to the General Director,
US Center for World Mission*

Editor’s Note: In this issue, you will find presentations by Timothy Paul (pp. 179–181), Rick Love (pp. 183–185), Jamie Winship (pp. 193–198), and excerpts from Carl Medearis’ new book (pp. 187–192). Ralph Winter’s presentation and Debra Buenting’s paper will appear in the next issue of *IJFM*.

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.