

BUSINESS AS MISSION: A REPORT FROM ISSUE GROUP # 30

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A NEED

We have a major challenge before us as the worldwide Body of Christ:

- 90% of the unreached peoples live where Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are dominant.
- This is also where 80% of the world's poor is found.
- Unemployment in these countries ranges from 30% - 80%.
- These nations have the fastest population growth.

That means that the unevangelised areas of our world, with the greatest poverty and highest unemployment, also have the most people entering the marketplace looking for jobs. Over the next 20 years up to 3 billion people will enter societies where there are few churches and no jobs. What should the response of the Church be to such a challenge? What are some of the keys to these locked doors where the poorest and least reached live?

A RESPONSE

We believe that the Gospel has the power to transform peoples' lives - spiritually, physically, socially and economically. This is the holistic message of the Lausanne Covenant.

With a Jesus-like holistic approach, we believe that God is calling businesspeople and entrepreneurs to manifest God's Kingdom in the marketplace - using the unique gifts and skills He has equipped them with in His Body. God is using people to demonstrate Kingdom of God values in all spheres of our society and to the ends of the earth. In our time there is a ground swell of people and organisations using the keys of business and business creation to reach communities that have the greatest need for the gospel.

A GLOBAL THINK TANK

Business as Mission is an emerging movement in global missions and the Lausanne Forum provides an ideal opportunity to address some of the challenges before us. Issue Group #30 has called together a global think tank of primarily business people, but also researchers and writers, church and missions leaders and theologians.

To help us identify what defines our issue, we have started by drafting our objectives. The objectives provide the framework for all group activities.

Our tentative objectives are:

1. Learn from examples of Christians (entrepreneurs) who have made a strategic difference in societies through business - especially on the mission field - seeing the Kingdom impact people's lives spiritually, socially and economically.
2. Further develop a theological perspective on work and business as it relates to the holistic mission of the Church in the world.
3. Explore ways to mobilize the Christian Business Community, impart a vision for Business as Mission, affirm them in their calling and provide connection for practical application for their ministry in mission settings.
4. Explore Business as Mission's potential impact and implications on existing mission and development paradigms and practices - theologically and operationally.
5. Identify national, regional and global Business as Mission networks and initiatives.

Through our deliberations and findings we hope to bring strategic recommendations to the Church worldwide on ways to respond to these challenges.

CLARIFICATION AND VALIDATION

Defining our issue has also meant identifying areas that are related and important, but will not be our primary concern and focus. Some of these areas will be dealt with by other IGs and identifying these will help us to intentionally listen and learn from them during the Forum. For us,

some of these areas include: evangelism in the marketplace, fundraising through business, tentmaking, relief and development and others.

HOW WE WILL WORK

We are planning to have a sub-group advancing each objective in preparation for the Forum. For example: Objective 1 - Case Study Research; Objective 2 - Theological Group, etc. In addition, our intention is to hold national and regional consultations on all continents that will serve as smaller contextualised think tanks feeding into the overall process. Each national/regional group will deal with the five objectives in a set framework that will allow for easy collation and comparison.

Our Research Team will develop tools and a research framework for documenting case studies - gathered both centrally and from the national/regional groups. Likewise the Theological sub-group will develop material centrally and incorporate input from the contextualised groups. In turn, each sub-group will feed these findings and discussions into the global process.

Our approach for the one-year process is like a funnel. We will work broadly, engaging many more than the core group of 70, with deliberations taking place in various consultations and other forums gradually feeding into the funnel to be sifted and clarified. Our ambition is to produce a report that will contain a lot of intellectual capital, along with strategic recommendations, which can then be widely distributed and utilised.

CONFRONTING RACIAL, TRIBAL AND ETHNIC CONFLICT AND SEEKING CHRISTIAN RECONCILIATION AND TRANSFORMATION: A REPORT FROM ISSUE GROUP #22 By Chris Rice, Convener THE CHALLENGES Several complex truths embodied in the story of the 1994 Rwandan genocide will never be far from our work group's considerations over the next year.

- When 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis were killed by fellow citizen Hutus over 100 days, the slaughter was largely self-confessed Christians killing other Christians, even their neighbors.
- Until 1994 many missiologists celebrated Rwanda as a faithfully evangelized country, even a gleaming model of church growth.
- There were Rwandan Christians who resisted the violence, aiding neighbors, or choosing to die rather than kill.
- The genocide (and Christian complicity) did not drop out of the sky—it occurred out of a social and political history.

Rwanda's complex dynamics and the challenges they raise for Christian evangelization carry dimensions both old and new, that are repeated across the globe. Ours is a shrinking, increasingly "pluralistic" world with ethnic and tribal identities on the rise. >From the Balkans to Northern Ireland's Protestants and Catholics, from South Africa's post-apartheid challenges to pressing Middle East challenges and the pervasive, de facto segregation between black and white U.S. Christians, what can be done to move reconciliation from the margins to the core of Christian mission?

THE TEAM

To address these challenges our leadership team has worked very hard over the past five months to identify and recruit a diverse group of 60 Christian leaders from 25 locations of historically-divided social groups—conflict areas mentioned previously and places such as Korea, Burundi, Australia, Columbia, India, the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Indonesia.

We consider it crucial to first ask not "What should the Church do?" but "How do these conflicts come to be? What are their histories, their roots?" So we have recruited several Christian scholars to help us (historians, conflict transformation experts, etc.).

Another crucial question: "Where is Christian faithfulness occurring in the world? How might we describe that faithfulness theologically, in terms of case studies and promising practices?" To help us, about half our group are practitioners and activists, working from villages to macro-national levels. Several pastors will keep before us the stories of faithful local congregations.

Another key component is a strong theological framework for a vision of reconciliation. Five theologians from different global regions will be helping us.

We have been eager to recruit women and younger leaders and for the "whole church" to be at the table. Several group members come from outside the Protestant tradition.

THE OUTCOMES

Outcomes envisioned at this time include:

- An occasional paper outlining findings in the areas previously mentioned.
- A priority "alert" list identifying the most persistent problems, hindrances and barriers to reconciliation, both theologically and problematically.
- An annotated list of the best resources available in books, study and training centers, and promising case studies.
- An action agenda for moving reconciliation from the margins to the core of Christian mission. The leadership team is of one mind in strategizing about our work as more than an "event." We are asking, "How can this year of international relationship-building, mutual learning and common mission as 'one church under Christ,' have the widest possible influence beyond the 2004 Forum?"

One answer is that partnerships are being established with key international institutions with reconciliation as a core mission. One of these partners, Duke Divinity School in the U.S., is hosting a work session of our leadership team November 20-22, 2003. A panel discussion will be held with the entire Duke community invited.

A faithful group of committed people is coming to the table. As a friend of mine's mother used to say, "I don't know what God is doing. But I'm sure glad to be part of it."

URBANA 2003

20,000 college-age students and others from around the world will gather December 27-31, 2003 at the University of Illinois for Urbana 03. The theme of this year's InterVarsity Student Missions Conference is "Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done."

Speakers include (among many others):

- John Stott, Author, Theologian, Missionary, Founder of John Stott Ministries, U.K.
- Ray Aldred, Director of First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada, Cree Nation.
- Samuel Escobar, Peruvian missiologist and missionary to the U.S. and Spain.
- David Zac Niringiye, Regional Director, Church Mission Society, Africa. Complete list of speakers:

<http://www.urbana.org/u2003.speakers.cfm>

Urbana 2003 online: <http://www.urbana.org/today.cfm>

PRAISE AND PRAYER FROM GLENDA WELDON, INTERCESSION WORKING GROUP

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."