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MISSIONROUNDTABLE
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Who am I?

Identity in Christ and in the World

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Cover photo: In former days, members of the China Inland Mission put on Chinese dress and lived and ate in a Chinese manner in order to identify as closely as possible with the Chinese people, but this did not make them Chinese. Today, many Asians dress in "western" style clothes and eat in western ways, but this does not mean they are no longer Asian. Our identity, now as then, goes far beyond what we wear and the superficial way we do things. Identity cannot be reduced to the clothes we put on but, in Christ, we have "put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:9-10) - CCMcC.

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Archive photo source: "A Group of Former Workers in GAN-HWUY," *China's Millions* (January 1903): 4.

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Editorial

Walter McConnell

A Missionary's Identity–Sent to be Transformed

In April 1855, Hudson Taylor and his friend John Burdon sailed up the Yangtse River on an evangelistic journey that took them to the city of Tongzhau (now Nantong). Along the way, they heard cries of "black devils"—not because of their skin or hair color but because of their foreign clothes.[1] Foreign clothes, foreign speech, and foreign ways were found to be an unnecessary distraction to the gospel. Though Taylor had previously donned Chinese garb while preaching, not long after this trip he determined to adopt the local fashion permanently. Despite the disapproval of many expat missionaries, he regularly wore Chinese clothing from August 1855.[2]

Hudson Taylor became well known for identifying with the people to whom he brought the gospel. The same is true for the members of the China Inland Mission that he would found a decade later. Learning language and culture is an essential part of becoming "all things to all people, that by all means I might save some" (1 Cor 9:22, all quotations from ESV). But as the cover photo of this issue illustrates, clothes don't necessarily make the man. Fashions change. Cultures evolve. Religious practices transform. The status of foreigners in a country fluctuates. For all these reasons, missionaries find themselves continually assessing and reassessing their personal identity.

The question, "Who am I?" impacts us all in significant, though often different, ways. This is because we are psychological, social/cultural, and theological beings who are shaped in diverse ways as we develop in different contexts and relationships.

Theologically, our identity is grounded in our relationship with God since we were created in his image and have been "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29). As God's image-bearers, our role is to rule over creation as stewards who follow the rule of God. Unfortunately, this image was sullied when we fell after the pattern of the first Adam, "the man of dust" (1 Cor 15:49), and sin ruined our God-designed relationships. Though this tarnished identity will ever be part of us, when Jesus renews us spiritually and gives us eternal life, our identity is gradually moulded into the image of the second Adam.

Much of our identity is shaped by our social and cultural relationships as members of families and institutions, language and ethnic groups, classes and nationalities. As these relationships shape me over time, there is a sense in which I am not the person I was before. Even so, my present identity is inextricably tied to who I was in the past and who I will be in the future. Not even my status as a new creation in Christ erases all of my old identity. While I am new in essence, the "old man" simply won't go away. And since my identity is in process, people will view me differently. Those who have known me for a long time will remember my old identity, while new acquaintances will only know me for what I have become. It is therefore vital that I learn to recognize myself as one who, no matter what my background, is being shaped into the image of Jesus. Only as I do this will I be able to fulfil the role God has given to me as a member of his family and ambassador of his kingdom.

It is therefore vital that I learn to recognize myself as one who, no matter what my background, is being shaped into the image of Jesus. Only as I do this will I be able to fulfil the role God has given to me as a member of his family and ambassador of his kingdom.

This is true regarding my work as a missionary. Though people at "home" and "on the field" will view me differently, I need to know who I am in Christ and how that affects my current role and relationships. Toward this end, this issue of *Mission Round Table* begins with some articles that set identity in the context of relationship, particularly our all-important relationship with Christ. Peter Rowan's examination of "Mission as Bearing Witness to an Identity Given by Christ," fleshes out this concept and applies it to the church in Asia. Printed in Chinese and English (an *MRT* first), S.Z.'s article reflects on positive and negative aspects of the relationships that form us and considers Paul's missionary identity as a model for us to follow. Recognizing that we all have multiple identities, Richard S looks to Jesus as a model of one who knew when to use which identity. He further argues that missionary integrity compels us to perform the job we have come to do well *and* to call others to become disciples.

Identity transcends my self-awareness, and includes how others see me. This reality greatly concerns many who are engaged in Christian mission. As a long-term practitioner of missional business,

Continued on p.34.



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Mission as Bearing Witness to an Identity Given by Christ

The mission of God's people is intimately connected to our effectiveness in bearing witness to an identity given by Christ. When that identity is subsumed by other identities, our witness to the gospel is obscured, our relationships with other Christians become fragmented, and our message of hope to a troubled world is compromised. Identity matters for mission.

1. Theology of personhood

In this article I want to explore what we mean by "identity" from a theological standpoint. Following a brief look at personhood, we will outline the dimensions of Christian identity and ask what this might mean for discipleship in East Asian contexts.

In his book, *Identity*, Vernon White defines identity as

> an inclusive term covering all significant and distinctive aspects of human being. As such it includes biologically determined aspects of our nature and being to do with sex, race, kinship and bodily identity. It includes culturally determined aspects of human being, such as gender identity, nationality, social role. It also involves character and disposition.[1]

White discusses the substance of human identity, exploring aspects of human personhood which correspond to divine personhood. Firstly, says White, there is a *unitary* nature to our personhood. In other words, there is something inherently enduring about our identity. "Just as God is and remains who he is as the one and same God in time and eternity, so do we (even into eternity)."[2] In the biblical narrative we encounter individuals called by God and who experience great changes, even name changes, but who still remain the same person. There is continuity and endurance of identity no matter how profound the changes one passes through.

Secondly, White discusses *freedom* as an aspect of human personhood—something which "is integral to our status as creatures in *imago dei*."[3] The question concerning the extent of human freedom is not one that we are able to pursue here, apart from saying that this is a qualified freedom which allows us to "contribute or co-operate in becoming ourselves."[4] Choices and decisions matter because they shape character and disposition and these are aspects of human identity affected by more than simply biology.

Thirdly, there is the aspect of *particularity*. Human identity involves "being a particular person … bound to particular space and time and identified with a particular gender, race, personality."[5] This too corresponds with the divine identity—supremely with the particularity and uniqueness of Jesus of Nazareth who is "the critical means by which the transcendent God can then relate effectively (and savingly) to all particulars *as* particulars."[6] What might seem to be a restrictive aspect of identity is nothing of the sort. It would be impossible for human beings to relate effectively without a sense of our own particularity. White puts it well when he says that particularity "is not a prison to break out of but the prism through which we too relate most effectively to other particulars in the world. We fulfil our personal identity as people of particular background and particular calling."[7]

Finally, personhood has a profoundly *relational* dimension to it. The theological basis for this is found in the relationality of the Trinity: "it belongs eternally to God's trinitarian being and in God's temporal relation to the world."[8] There is nothing abstract, static, or isolated about personal being. Our identity, individually and collectively, is relational. But relationality opens us to change, and it is on this point that White brings together the relational and unitary aspects of human identity to suggest change as something which strengthens identity rather than fragments it (something applicable to organisations as well as to individuals). As White says:

> change [is] something which contributes to the potential fulfilment of human identity, not just threatens it. This is a direct implication of a relational and unitary notion of personhood. An isolated notion of the person could fulfil her individual identity without change: this is as true of the disconnected postmodern person as it is for the classic

> Cartesian ego of modernism. But an essentially related and unitary person cannot be truly himself in isolation from the change entailed by his connectedness with other people and situations through the sequence of time.[9]

2. Dimensions of Christian identity

With White's framework in mind, I want to suggest that from a biblical perspective Christian identity is three-dimensional: historical, relational, and ecclesial.

a. Historical

Where is our starting point for articulating Christian identity? Some may want to start with the individual, or with his or her own personal history. Newbigin, however, has a different view.

> In distinction from a great deal of Christian writing which takes the individual person as its starting point for the understanding of salvation and then extrapolates from that to the wider issues of social, political, and economic life, I am suggesting that, with the Bible as our guide, we should proceed in the opposite direction, that we begin with the Bible as the unique interpretation of human and cosmic history and move from that starting point to an understanding of what the Bible shows us of the meaning of personal life.[10]

Western expressions of Christianity lean heavily towards the individual. We are not over-reacting against this, because as we shall see, the individual's understanding of their Christian identity is crucial for peacemaking. But at this point Newbigin helps us to see that Christian self-identity *begins* not with the individual but with the larger biblical story, the mission of God. The gospel is not about me but about the world and what God has done, is doing, and will do, to accomplish his missional purposes for the whole of creation.

Where does this story, this redemptive history begin? Isaiah directs our gaze: "look to Abraham, your father" (Isaiah 51:2). All who have been embraced by the gospel and who have become part of the contemporary church trace their spiritual identity back to this archetypical man of faith. With the mention of Abraham at the start of his Gospel, Matthew establishes the history and at the same time points forward to the future of the people of God. Matthew locates the present—what God is doing in and through Jesus Christ—in terms of the past and the future. The people of God are past and future people. Without the connection to Abraham, Christians have no sense of history and this affects their outlook to the future. If there is little grasp of where we have come from and where we are going, this signals a profound lack of identity, which in turn affects the ability of Christians to live with integrity in a fast changing world and especially through times of national or personal crisis.

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b. Relational

White's work on identity emphasises its intrinsic relational aspect and how "our personhood exists by its relation to other persons, divine and human."[11] The new identity given to the Christian in the gospel provides historical rootedness so that he or she is drawn in to the biblical narrative and connected with the people of God through all of history. The story of the Bible can be viewed as the outworking of the covenant promise to Abraham that through him and his descendants the whole world would be blessed and so find healing and integration. The blessing of Genesis 12 has relational elements in both vertical and horizontal directions: "*vertically*, those who are blessed know who it is that is blessing them and seek to live in faithful relationship with their God" and "*horizontally*, the relational element of blessing reaches out to those around."[12]

c. Ecclesial

The historical and relational dimensions already point in an ecclesial direction, particularly in connection with Abraham, the "father of all who believe." There are two dynamics at work in the ecclesial dimension to our Christian identity: belonging and departure.[13]

(1). Ecclesial identity defined by ***belonging.*** Although historic Christianity presents a rich diversity of expression, it also demonstrates a substantial degree of coherence and continuity. To be sure, translatability is intrinsic to Christianity, and this has enabled the Christian community to develop and be expressed in a wide variety of cultural contexts. While seeing incredible diversity, we can also distinguish beliefs, principles, and themes which have remained at the core of each expression of authentic Christianity and provided that underlying coherence to all the transformations of Christianity discernible across the centuries.

The promise to Abraham, that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed, is a promise with the expectation of diversity built into it from the start, and yet, a diversity that would bring about a profound integration and unity, where Abraham would be the ancestor of all who believe and that all who believe, without relinquishing all their rich diversity, would, as Ephesians 4 pictures it, grow together into a full grown humanity. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was thrilled to see Gentiles believing the gospel and living under the lordship of Christ. But what takes centre stage in Ephesians is the fact that in the gospel Jew and Gentile believers are now one people—God's new humanity. This creation of a new humanity is essentially about *identity* being recreated in Christ. And this was not a one-off historical event, but a paradigm for the way Christian mission is to understand itself: "that now through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known" (Eph 3:10).

Christian identity is shaped when Christ's lordship is extended over our cultural diversity and we humbly recognise what being reconciled to Christ means for our relationships with others.

What Paul saw in the context of Jew and Gentile, the church is to expect to see in various contexts of division and among hostile ethnicities. Christian identity is shaped when Christ's lordship is extended over our cultural diversity and we humbly recognise what being reconciled to Christ means for our relationships with others. As Andrew Walls puts it, "The faith of Christ is infinitely translatable, it creates 'a place to feel at home.' But it must not make a place where we are so much at home that no one else can live there. Here we have no abiding city."[14]

(2) Ecclesial identity defined by ***departure***. The Christian faith has always incorporated a sense of pilgrimage. Miroslav Volf uses the picture of departure to illustrate this aspect of Christian identity:

> Much like Jews and Muslims, Christians can never be first of all Asians or Americans, Croatians, Russians, or Tutsis, and then Christians. At the very core of Christian identity lies an all-encompassing change of loyalty, from a given culture with its gods to the God of all cultures. A response to a call from that God entails rearrangement of a whole network of allegiances … Departure is part and parcel of Christian identity.[15]

Christian identity, rooted in Abraham, is a counter-cultural identity. In Abraham's day, as in many modern cultural contexts, the identity of an individual was bound up with ties to tribe, clan, and household. These were the relationships that fundamentally defined the individual. For Abraham to consider leaving his country, kindred, and father's house was to depart from those relationships which defined him, and in doing so allowed his identity to be redefined by obedience to the call of God and faith in the promise of God (Heb 11:9). There is, writes Howard Peskett, "an alternative call to loneliness" which must be faced by those who profess to follow Christ, "a going against the tide."[16] It is part of the essence of what it means to be church because "to be a pilgrim in the world belongs intrinsically to the church's ex-centric position."[17] The church "is *ek-klesia*, 'called out' of the world, and sent back into the world."[18] It is in this tension of being called out of the world and sent back into the world that the church realises its true identity—as pilgrim and therefore missionary.

> A church with an identity crisis can do no missionary good. But its true identity is precisely a missionary one. The church's identity does not lie in itself. It can only find itself by losing itself and define itself while being *en route*. It is always in an eccentric position. Nor can the church live merely by reproducing its own traditions. Hence, there must always be something foreign about its mission. It must risk the security of every established identity by being open to new things, practicing creative freedom, experimenting with new possibilities, and entering upon foreign situations. Foreignness is an element of the church's constitution; staying at home is for those in retirement.[19]

There is, therefore, a distinctiveness attached to the Christian church as "stranger", "alien", and "exile" in this world. But this identity is configured in the New Testament in such a way that it empowers and sustains followers of Christ to be committed to this world because they are sent into it with the incarnational life of Christ as their supreme example and the blessing of the nations as their motivation.

3. Christian identity: given and anchored in love

Arguably the most significant passage in the New Testament to speak about identity in an ecclesiological context is Ephesians 2:11–22. A dramatic change of identity is signalled in verse 13, "But now in Christ Jesus". Before this there was a Jewish identity, with all its attending privileges, and there was a Gentile identity which stood outside the promises of God. But now—in Christ—the Jew and the Gentile become one. This is also made clear in Galatians 3:28—"There is neither Jew nor Greek." Both now have a new identity. In contrast to their previously alienated, separated position, the Gentile readers of Paul's letter have been "brought near", through the cross-work of Christ.

The death of Christ has broken down that "dividing wall" and the result is a "new humanity … reconciled to God in one body through the cross" (Eph 2:15–16). The cross of Christ has effected peace—Jew and Gentile are made one—restored in relationship to both God and one another. These two deeply divided groups are created in one new person and it is important that we see this not simply as a new combination but a new creation that transcended the deep divisions between Jew and Gentile. Gentiles have not been made into Jews, nor Jews into Gentiles. Neither is it an amalgamation of the best of Jew and Gentile worlds, but a "new humanity", transcending the old entities and made possible by the grace of God. The gift of a new identity means that "Jew" and "Gentile" now function as adjectives. They are *Jewish* Christians and *Gentile* Christians. We have here not only the transcending of old entities but *the transference of a new identity*—there is now "one new humanity out of the two" (Eph 2:15). The Jewish Christian does not think of himself as a Jew first and foremost. The Gentile Christian likewise has to rethink her identity. The labels of ethnicity no longer define identity.

This has implications for Christian self-identity and peacemaking in the twenty-first century. Identity transferred by grace, in love, nullifies all attempts to self-construct identity on the basis of human achievement or worldly power. The breaking down of the "dividing wall" and the establishing of the "new humanity" is something only God could do. Human effort contributes nothing. The dividing wall in Paul's context

was "the law with its commandments and ordinances" (2:15). Jewish self-identity was largely bound up with the keeping of the law, which functioned as the key boundary marker for Jewish communities. Those who did not keep the law were looked down upon by those who did. Therefore, the gospel of reconciliation, with its accompanying transformation and transference of identity, together with its resulting peace, was a profound challenge to any Jew whose self-identity was rooted in the boundary markers contained in the Mosaic law. Ramachandra draws out the contemporary challenge of this for Christian communities today.

> We could say in general that if our self-identity is rooted in anything we *possess,* whether it be our racial or cultural heritage, educational ability, theological scholarship, wealth, social prestige, religious devotion, 'meritorious works', political power, moral achievements, or whatever, that identity will always divide us from others who lack that particular possession.... Thus it is that 'law' must be abolished as a means of human self-identity if true reconciliation between God and humankind and within humankind can be realised.[20]

We receive our identity as a gift from God, and that is liberating because it sets us free to be who God created us to be. By implication, as we see in Ephesians 2, our identity is given in love, for it is "through the cross" that Christians are made "members of the household of God" (2:19, ESV). Christian identity is not abstract but practical, concrete, and essentially relational. This identity which is given in love restores one's relationship to God and simultaneously with one's neighbour. "This," writes Ramachandra, "is the logic of the cross: the very act that binds me to God in grace binds me, *simultaneously*, to my neighbour in acceptance."[21] Volf explores this core thought of our identity being given and shaped in love and the profound impact it has on our relationships with others, basing his perspective on some words of Martin Luther in his treatise *The Freedom of the Christian*.

A secure Christian identity is rooted in the understanding that our identity is given and anchored in love, and such an identity shapes peace in relation to our neighbour. An identity based on anything else becomes a source of division and strife.

> A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbour. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbour through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbour. Yet he always remains in God and in his love.[22]

A secure Christian identity is rooted in the understanding that our identity is given and anchored in love, and such an identity shapes peace in relation to our neighbour. An identity based on anything else becomes a source of division and strife. If we reject the identity God offers, those defining things such as "Language, Culture, Religion, Education, Science ... while either neutral or good in themselves, become causes of human division whenever they are sources of human identity."[23]

4. Practical suggestions for East Asian contexts

How can this sense of Christian identity be worked out in those who profess to follow Christ in Asian contexts?

a. Recover a forgotten heritage of Asian christianity

This should matter as much to Western as to East Asian Christians. However, this is not as straightforward as it may seem, given the attempts of "mischievous historians" who suggest "that the Church is a legacy of colonialism, and that Christianity gained a foothold in Asia because Christians worked in collusion with the colonial masters."[24] For instance, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist communities in Malaysia commonly speak of Christianity as a Western religion that does not naturally belong in Asian contexts. In some quarters this perspective is used "as a convenient excuse ... to call upon the authorities to restrict Christian activities and ban conversion on grounds that national development should eventually phase out all vestiges of colonial legacy."[25]

It is a matter of urgency that patterns of discipleship be developed that encourage the formation of Christian identity in various East Asian contexts that celebrate the gospel's deep roots in Asia's rich soil. An acquaintance with the sort of perspective Samuel Hugh Moffett provides in his monumental *A History of Christianity in Asia*, would be a start.

> Its earliest history, its first centres were Asian. Asia produced the first known church building, the first New Testament translation, perhaps the first Christian king, the first Christian poets, and even arguably the first Christian state. Asian Christians endured the greatest persecutions. They mounted global ventures in missionary expansion the West could not match until after the thirteenth century.[26]

This linkage with the past helps both Western and non-Western Christians to identify with the wider family of God. As Ramachandra explains:

> All those in whom Christ dwells through faith, all who have been accepted by God in Christ, are now family members.... What this means is that, for me as an Asian Christian, Augustine and Irenaeus, Teresa of Avila and Mary Slessor, Calvin and Bonhoeffer all become my ancestors, part of my personal family tree. And for Western Christians, their family tree now includes John of Damascus, Panditha Ramabai, Sadhu Singh, Kagawa and a host of outstanding Asian Christian men and women.[27]

A Christ-centered community is restorative... When both sides are committed to one another, in spite of personal hurts, they will experience God's grace and healing.

b. Affirm Christian primary identity in baptismal confessions

Secondly, a believer's primary identity should be expressed confessionally within public, corporate worship. This is most effectively done during that moment when a person's allegiance to Christ is being publicly professed—at baptism.

In an article examining Christian perspectives on racial integration in Malaysia, the author, M. Selvendran, suggests that in a society where racial division and conflict is a reality, the Christian's primary identity as a member of the global body of Christ, should be affirmed and included in baptismal confessions.[28] For support, Selvendran turns to Richard N. Longenecker's interpretation of the Apostle Paul, who "was deeply concerned to show that ethnic exclusivity has no place in the Church."[29] Paul's bold statement to the Galatians that, "there is neither Greek nor Jew" (Gal 3:28), is echoed in passages such as 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Colossians 3:11, and may well be evidence of a baptismal confession.

A precedent for an affirmation of identity to be included in a baptismal confession may be found in the Barmen Declaration of 1934. This was a declaration adopted by the Evangelical (Protestant) Church opposed to the German Reich Church during their first synod held in Barmen, Westphalia, in May 1934. The six-point declaration was deliberately constructed as a witness to the gospel and a proclamation of the lordship of Christ to a particular set of challenges facing the churches in 1930s Germany. Barmen has been described as "a truly revolutionary document",[30] and one would expect a parallel confession, directed to a 21st century context such as Malaysia, to be as equally far reaching. Selvendran asserts that it is not only necessary that the Christian's primary identity be found in his or her membership in the global body of Christ, but this must be affirmed without, as Longenecker puts it, "the renunciation of racial characteristics or ethnic distinctions."[31]

Here then is a way of understanding how Christian identity, shaped by its historical, relational, and ecclesial dimensions, can ground a missional Christian identity and lifestyle for today's 21st century global church. In the gospel, a new way of being human has been established. Jews and Gentiles who came together in Christ saw themselves as a "third race"—neither Jew nor Gentile. Their primary identity was found in the new community they had become part of—the body of Christ—whose social and cultural inclusiveness was unprecedented. And although they were a marginal and often despised group within the Roman Empire, the early Christians lived out this identity with a clear vision of Christ's lordship encompassing the entire empire, understanding themselves as the community through whom God would bring about the hope of renewal and the healing of the nations.

NOTES

[1] Vernon White, *Identity* (London: SCM, 2002), 44.
[2] White, *Identity*, 49.
[3] White, *Identity*, 53.
[4] White, *Identity*, 53.
[5] White, *Identity*, 54.
[6] White, *Identity*, 54.
[7] White, *Identity*, 54.
[8] White, *Identity*, 52.
[9] White, *Identity*, 53.
[10] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1998), 128.
[11] White, *Identity*, 45.
[12] Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Leicester: IVP, 2006), 210.
[13] I am indebted here to two influential articles by Andrew Walls which appear in his book *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996). The first is "The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture" (pages 3–15), and the second, "Culture and Coherence in Christian History" (pages 16–25). "God's pilgrim people" is a concept which figures prominently in the Papal Encyclicals of *Lumen Gentium* and *Ad Gentes*. In Protestantism, the theme is found in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's works and at the International Missionary Council at Willingen in 1952. The church as resident alien is one of the characteristics of an "emerging missionary ecclesiology" explored by David Bosch in chapter 12 of his *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991).
[14] Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 25.
[15] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 40.
[16] Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission* (Leicester: IVP, 2004), 104.
[17] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 373.
[18] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 373–4.
[19] Carl E. Braaten, *The Flaming Centre: A Theology of the Christian Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 55–6.
[20] Vinoth Ramachandra, *Recovery of Mission* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 267.
[21] Ramachandra, *Recovery of Mission*, 267.
[22] Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 198.
[23] Ramachandra, *Recovery of Mission*, 266.
[24] Ng Kam Weng, "Two Millennia of Asian Christianity: A Forgotten Heritage," *Kairos* (November 2003): 6–8, 30.
[25] Ng, "Two Millennia of Asian Christianity," 6.
[26] Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia, Vol. 1: Beginnings to 1500*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998), xiii.
[27] Vinoth Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict? Christian Integrity in a Multi-Cultural World* (Leicester: IVP, 1999), 136.
[28] M. Selvendran, "The Christian Model for Racial Integration," in *The Christian and Race Relations in Malaysia*, ed. Michael Moey, Kwan Yoke Lin, and Goh Keat Peng, The Christian in Malaysia Series (Petaling Jaya: Graduates Christian Fellowship, 1986), 43–50. Selvendran draws on the work of New Testament scholar Richard N. Longenecker, *New Testament Social Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 33–46.
[29] Selvendran, "The Christian Model for Racial Integration," 49.
[30] Arthur Cochrane, "The Message of Barmen for the Contemporary Church," in *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust,* ed. Franklin H. Littell and Hubert G. Locke (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), 193, cited in John de Gruchy, *Bonhoeffer and South Africa: Theology in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 129.
[31] Longenecker, *New Testament Social Ethics*, quoted in Selvendran, "The Christian Model," 49.

宣教士身份问题的再认识

A Christian's Identity in Christ: How should we Understand our Identity as Missionaries

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在现代生活中，“身份”往往是一件弃之不成，持之又不甚有理，甚至让人感到困扰的东西。比如我们出国旅行，第一要紧的，就是记得要带上自己的护照。但是，即使你带上了护照，也不表示一切就绪。一群都拥有护照的人一同出行时，往往会因为持有人从属不同国籍而被人区别对待：有些人可以通行无阻，而另外一些人却要面临刁难，甚至歧视。

In our modern world, “identity” more often than not proves to be indispensable even though it frequently seem to be a nuisance. Travellers, for instance, always put their passport at the top of their list of things to carry. Even so, passports do not serve each individual equally well. Holders of certain passports are clearly “more equal” than others.

其实在上帝在世界所造的生物中，并不只人类具“社会性”，却只有人在社会中以不同的身份被标识和认知。事实上，人摆脱不了要藉着自己的身份被他人认知，并依此建立相应的关系。

Though humans are not the only living creatures in the created world that socialize, they alone distinguish between the identities of each member in his or her social context. There is actually no other means for humans to be known and related to by others than through their identity.

这是因为身份可以表明人的属性，比如：他是美国人，或她是中国人。另外，身份也可以用来标明人的性别，比如人类历史上第一个身份的出现，就是当上帝利用“那人”的肋骨造成一个女人之后，那人就说：“这是我骨中的骨，肉中的肉；可以称她为‘女人’”（创2:23）。这样，“女人”这个称谓就成为了人类历史上第一个的人类身份。而这个身份表明当事人是 女性。

Identity can indicate various human attributes. For instance, we can indicate a person's nationality by saying, “He is an American,” or “She is Chinese.” Similarly, it can indicate a person's gender. The first time identity appeared in human history was when God formed a woman from the side of “the man” and the man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman’, for she was taken out of man” (Gen 2:23).[1] The appellation “woman” thus became the first label of identity in human history, and simultaneously indicated the gender of the subject concerned.

但人类的“身份”并不只标识人的属性，比如那个被亚当称为女人的，后来又被称为“夏娃”（创3:20）。因为她不仅是女人，而且是“母亲”。而母亲的身份，则表明了这个女人和她的孩子之间有着血亲的关系。

Human identity is not limited to gender. The one who Adam initially identified as “woman” was later named “Eve” (Gen 3:20). This is because she was not only a “woman”, she was also a “mother”. Her identity as “mother” indicates that this “woman” and her children are related by blood.

除了标识“关系”和“属性”的客观作用，身份的存在又意味着不同身份的人，在行为准则上有着主观上显著的差异。比如说，虽然夫妻关系

Apart from being an objective indication of “attributes” and “relations”, identity also signifies the differences in personal conduct expected by society at large. For

In human society, the different identities that people have primarily define their "relationships" and "belonging". At the same time, they establish a standard of right conduct. For this reason, different identities supply the foundations for social structure and order.

和父子关系同属家庭关系，但各自在家庭中的不同身份， 因伦理准则，使当事人的行为有着不可逾越的规限。

在人类社会中，不同人的不同身份，首先表明不同个体与其他人的"关系"和"从属性"，也因此构建起一定的行为准则。如此，身份给社会带来秩序和结构。而这社会秩序和结构有两个层面：既有纵向的，同时也有横向的。比如在最小的社会单元"家庭"里面，在关系方面，纵向的是亲子关系，横向的就是手足关系。在从属性方面，宗族和种族构成人纵向的从属性，而国籍却赋予人横向的从属性。

另外，正因为不同身份要求不同人按照不同的行为准则行事为人， 身份的不同亦造成了社会差异的客观存在。在这个被罪污染了的世界，存在于人类社会中的身份差异带来许多根植于人类罪性的差异，就如中国著名剧作家曹禺先生所著的话剧《王昭君》第二幕中，有这样的一句话："他知道自己的身份是个奴隶。"

可见，身份的差异构建起社会的秩序和结构。可惜在现实生活中，身份差异的存在却带来 社会地位悬殊，人与人之间隔绝。比如国籍、种族、性别、学历、财富、权位等 身份，都可能成为社会不公的主要原因。如此一来，反而使得社会无法维护那合乎情理，体现人类尊严之秩序。

但是，身份不仅体现于人类社会中的关系和从属性，其实也在神人互动中体现出来，并具独特的意义。比如"以色列人"，就是人类社会中独特的一个群体，因为与神立约而构成特殊的关系和从属性（创17:1–14；创32:28；出12:40–51）。

上帝是永恒的，也是全爱和全能的神。虽然我们依然受制于人类社会中种种带着罪性的身份，但在基督里，他却让我们得享着一系列新的 身份：基于他全然的爱，我们与基督建立起"牧人"和"羊"的关系；他更因着为羊舍命的行动，成为我们永远的好牧人（约10:11–16）。另外，也因着上帝在基督里的拣选，使得我们因"信"成为了"神的儿女"（加1:4-5；约1:12）。

正是这种唯独在基督里才能建立起来的关系和从

instance, although husband-wife relationships and father-son relationships can both be subsumed under family relationships, the fact that each member of the family has a different identity means that there is a world of difference between the actions that are appropriate for each.

In human society, the different identities that people have primarily define their "relationships" and "belonging". At the same time, they establish a standard of right conduct. For this reason, different identities supply the foundations for social structure and order. This kind of structure and order extends in both the horizontal and vertical directions. In the most basic social unit—the family—parents and children are related to one another vertically while siblings are related horizontally. Belonging can likewise be witnessed at the level of clan and ethnicity. While vertical order in society is established by one's place in a clan or ethnic group, horizontal order is found in one's nationality.

Since one's identity impacts one's behavior, differences in identity result in social differences. In a world contaminated by sin, differences in identity engender widespread inequality rooted in our sinful human nature. This idea is expressed by the renowned Chinese playwright Cao Yu who wrote in Act II of the stage play *Wang ZhaoJun*: "he is aware of his identity as a slave."

It is clear that differences in identity can create order and structure in society. They can, in addition, actually produce disparities in social status and segregation between different groups. Nationality, ethnicity, gender, educational qualifications, wealth, and power are some of the major contributing factors to social inequality and injustice.

Now, identity is not only something that pertains to relationships and belonging in human society; it also applies to the dealings between God and humans. For instance, the "Israelites" were a unique community because the covenant God came into a special relationship with them and made them to be a people who specially belonged to him (Gen 17:1–14; 32:28; Exod 12:40–51).

God is eternal, all-loving, and omnipotent. Though our social identities still carry the marks of our sinful nature, in Christ we have obtained a series of new identities. For instance, because of his love, our relationship with him becomes that of "sheep" and "shepherd". Since Christ gave his life for his sheep he became our eternal Good Shepherd (John 10:11–16). Similarly, since God chose us in Jesus we become "God's children" through faith (Gal 1:4–5; John 1:12).

属性，使我们在这被罪污染的世界中，拥有一个为世人所瞩目的独特身份"基督徒"（徒11:26）。

自从有基督的教会以来，正是基督徒这身份，让我们跨越了人类罪性所构成的身份差异。就如保罗时代的阿尼西姆一样，已不再是奴隶，而是亲爱的弟兄了（门16）。因为"基督释放了我们，叫我们得以自由"（加5:1）。也正是 基督徒这一新身份，让"外邦人"与"受割礼的人"和睦，"拆了中间隔断的墙"（弗2:14）。藉着十字架"灭了冤仇"（弗2:16），又藉着他"被一个圣灵所感，得以进到父的面前"（弗2:18）。

"基督徒"的身份意味着我们从属于基督，且是基督的跟随者。这身份又是如此之高贵，它不仅让我们与造物主上帝之间建立起了美好且永恒的从属关系，而且也让我们与其他人，在基督的爱的里面确立起了彼此为弟兄姊妹的平等关系。这一身份确立了我们所享有的尊贵的人格地位（彼前2:9）和属灵特权（彼前1:3–5），也确立了与此相应的责任（彼前1:15）和在世的义务（彼前2:11–12）。就如保罗曾提醒大家注意的："既然蒙召，行事为人就当与蒙召的恩相称"（弗4:1)。

其次，就如同保罗本人一样，虽已属乎基督，却不只有基督徒一个身份（罗1:1）。相反地，在基督里的人，也会有多重的身份。尤其对于我们这些宣教士而言，多重身份更是我们需要正视的问题。

在今天的亚洲工场上，当我们领受了从上而来的使命，成为宣教士，投身于宣教工作，不论在何时或何地，我们的宣教士身份都可能成为一个敏感，又颇令人困扰的问题。因为并不是所有的国家都欢迎我们以宣教士的身份进入，或以这样的身份展开工作，甚至不能以这样的身份自由地旅行。但如此种种的不便并不意味着上帝已经向我们关上了宣教的大门。那么如何应对现实中的挑战，去达成上帝呼召我们的使命，就成为了每一位准宣教士都需要认真面对的属灵功课。

使徒保罗，与巴拿巴一起，成为教会历史上第一个正式被差派的宣教士。在多次的宣教旅程中，他遇到留守在安提阿或耶路撒冷教会事奉的工人所未曾遇到，甚至未能想象的种种艰辛。但是，

It is due to the relationship established in Christ alone and the belongingness he has given us that we are able to obtain the distinctive identity of "Christian" in this sin-stained world (Acts 11:26).

Since the beginning of the church, the identity of "Christian" has allowed us to overcome the disparities in our identity that result from human sin. Our identity changes—like Paul could say about his co-worker Onesimus—from being a slave to becoming "a beloved brother" (Phlm 16). As he elsewhere wrote, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (Gal 5:1). It is also our new identity as Christians that allows Gentiles and the circumcised to have peace, because Jesus "has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2:14). Through the cross, "he put to death" the hostility that had separated different people and made it possible for all of us to "have access to the Father by one Spirit" (Eph 2:16, 18).

Our identity as "Christians" implies that we belong to Christ and follow him. This is such an honorable identity that it should be held in high regard as it not only allows us to establish an eternal vertical relationship with the Creator God, but also allows us to relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ as equals. It is an identity that gives us an honored status on earth (1 Pet 2:9) and further spiritual privileges (1 Pet 1:3–5). It also requires that we fulfil our responsibilities (1 Pet 1:15) and earthly obligations (1 Pet 2:11–12). As Paul reminded us, since we have been called, we should "live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph 4:1).

Nevertheless, just like Paul, those who belong to Christ will recognize that being a Christian is not their only identity (Rom 1:1). In reality, a person who is in Christ has multiple identities. This is especially true with regards to missionaries who must look the problem of multiple identities squarely in the face.

As far as the Asian fields are concerned, when we accept the Commission from above and enter missionary work, our identity as missionaries can become quite sensitive and at times fairly troublesome. This is because not every country permits entry to those identified as "missionaries" or allows them freedom to work or even to travel. Even so, facing inconveniences like these does not mean that God has closed the doors to missions. How then, can we overcome such challenges and fulfill God's Commission for us? This is a serious spiritual lesson that every missionary candidate must face.

Along with Barnabas, Paul was the first missionary formally sent out in church history. The many hardships he faced during his missionary journeys would have been

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藉着他各样不同的艰辛经历，上帝将许多重要的启示存留给教会，其中就有不少与身份有关的宝贵教导。直到如今，这些启示性的真理依然是我们处理 身份问题的智慧泉源。

首先我们要注意到的是，保罗曾对在罗马的教会说："我们从他受了恩惠并使徒的职分"（罗1:5）。他也曾对在哥林多教会自我介绍道："奉神旨意，蒙召作耶稣基督使徒的保罗。"（林前1:1）从中我们看到，在教会的面前，作为宣教士的我们，有着一个荣耀的，且能体现我们使命的身份。

因为我们是蒙恩的人，蒙召去达成上帝所赋予的使命。在今天这个世俗化，又强调多元的世界，人们往往会从不同的角度来看待，甚至是判断我们。有的时候，我们也会从他们的角度来看自己，甚至以此来判断自己是否成功。可是，我们不可忘记，保罗并没有用自己的学问、地位、建立了多少间教会、行过多少次神迹奇事，这些可以量化的数据来表明自己的成功和成就。最后，他只是说："那当跑的路已经跑尽了。"其实，这就是对使徒身份最恰当的判断，也是我们看待自己宣教士身份最恰当的角度。因为最终，上帝是用这样的角度来判断我们使命的落实，而不是根据我们的学位、地位、成就和能力来给我们打分。

其次，我们注意到，很多圣经读者是从〈罗马书〉和〈哥林多前书〉的开篇开始认识保罗这个人的。在那里他写道："耶稣基督的仆人保罗，奉召为使徒，特派传神的福音。"（罗1:1）"人应当以我为基督的执事，为神奥秘的管家。"（林前4:1）这两句话表明，我们有一个反映我们与神关系的身份。这身份有几个不同的称谓："仆人"、"管家"和"执事"。

因着基督的救恩，我们得享在基督里的自由，也有了神儿女的名分。但是作为一个蒙召的时代工人，我们必须清楚地知道自己在事奉中的身份：我们不是任何人的主人，也不是任何事工的总裁。我们只是上帝的仆人，是主的执事和管家。

unimaginable to a gospel worker who remained in Antioch or Jerusalem. Even so, through his many experiences of hardship, God revealed many significant lessons for the Church, some of which are related to the issue of identity. These revealed truths are still a fount of wisdom when we deal with identity issues.

The first truth we want to focus on is Paul's statement to the Roman church that "through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship" (Rom 1:5). He similarly introduced himself to the Corinthian church as one who was "called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (1 Cor 1:1). From these verses we learn that those who are apostles or missionaries stand out before the church as having a glorious identity that reflects our Commission.

Since we are a people who have been saved and called by God's grace, we must fulfill the Commission that God has given to us. The problem is, in this secular and pluralistic world, people frequently look at us from an entirely different perspective and judge us according to a different standard. At times we view ourselves from their standpoint, and judge our success according to their standards. We must be careful not to forget that Paul didn't evaluate his life and work according to his scholarship, social status, the number of churches he planted, or the miracles and signs he performed. Among his final words were these: "I have finished the race" (2 Tim 4:7). This is actually the most appropriate judgement one can make about the identity of an apostle and the most appropriate angle from which to approach one's identity as a "missionary". This is because God evaluates our Great Commission work from this angle, and not according to our degrees, social status, achievements, and capability.

The second point that we should pay attention to is that readers of the Bible must come to know Paul from the introduction of the book of Romans where he wrote: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God" (Rom 1:1). The idea is repeated in 1 Corinthians 4:1. "So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God." From these verses we learn more about our identity that reflects our relation to God. These identities can be articulated in a number of different ways: "servants", "stewards", or "deacons".

Due to Christ's saving grace, we can enjoy freedom in Christ and the status of being God's children. However, anyone who has been called to serve our generation must be very clear about his identity in ministry: we are not anyone's

不论我们的事工做得多么地轰轰烈烈，在人群中拥有多么高的知名度，有多少人因我得蒙主恩，……；归根结蒂，我们依然是，并且始终是主的仆人、管家和执事。在任何情况下，我们都不能忘乎所以，以为天下少了我就不行。

第三，我们又注意到，保罗曾说："我是自由的，无人管辖，然而我甘心作了众人的仆人，为要多得人。向犹太人，我就作犹太人；……"（林前9:19–23）这表明，我们都有一个让我们可以与人接触，建立关系，使人有机会接触福音的平台(platform)，也有因这平台而来的身份。

任何一个在宣教工场上的同工都知道，我们迫切需要有一个能让我们有效展开服事的身份，而这身份又构建成为我们事奉的平台。因为这个平台可以让我们被人认知，与人接触，建立关系，使人有机会接触福音。就如保罗所申明的："凡我所作的，都是为了福音的缘故，为要与人同得这福音的好处。"（林前9:23）

在我们当中有许多的专业人士，他们的专业已经成为了他们与人接触，甚至见证主爱和大能的主要媒介。我们珍惜这样的专业身份，因为这是我们接触并造就他人的主要渠道。我们不能看轻自己的身份，因为保罗也曾两次提醒哥林多教会："各人在蒙召的时候是什么身份，仍要守住这身份"（林前7:20，24）

最后，不论我们在团队当中，还是在事奉工场上，都要记得那位最有"身份"的保罗的提醒："我们所夸的是自己的良心，见证我们凭着神的圣洁和诚实，在世为人不靠人的聪明，乃靠神的恩惠。"（林后1:12）。

愿主祝福我们所有人手中所作的工，能成就他在我们这个时代中的美意。

lord and we are not the chairman of any ministry. We are only servants of God, deacons and stewards of the Lord. No matter how spectacular our work may appear, how high our reputation rises, or how many people receive God's grace because of us, we are still and always will be God's servants, stewards, and deacons. No matter what the situation, we don't want to get carried away and think that we are indispensable or the whole world depends on us.

The third thing that we want to take note of is that Paul said, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews" (1 Cor 9:19–23). This lets us know that we all need an identity that allows us to draw near to people and establish relationships in order to build a platform to contact them with the gospel. This is our platform identity.

Any worker on a mission field knows that we urgently need an identity that opens doors for service and that this identity is built to provide us with a platform for ministry. Since this platform can help us to become known to others, to draw near to them, and establish relationships, it can provide opportunities to bring them into contact with the gospel. This follows Paul's declaration that "I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor 9:23).

There are many professionals among us whose professions bring them close to people and witness to the Lord's love and power. We cherish this type of professional identity because it is an important channel for contacting people and training them in the truth. We should not underestimate this identity, for Paul twice cautioned the Corinthian church, "Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him" (1 Cor 7:20, 24).

Lastly, whether we are part of a team or serving on the mission field, let us not forget what Paul—the man with the highest identity—said, "Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace" (2 Cor 1:12).

May the Lord bless us all in the work he has given us to do, so that his will may be done in our age.

NOTE

[1] All Scripture quotations are from the NIV.

No matter how spectacular our work may appear, how high our reputation rises, or how many people receive God's grace because of us, we are still and always will be God's servants, stewards, and deacons. No matter what the situation, we don't want to get carried away and think that we are indispensable or the whole world depends on us.

Identity with Integrity: An Issue Jesus Faced

Richard S.
served in the Philippines for thirty years. During this time he served first among the open-access people and then among a restricted-access people. He has spent many years in leadership roles. He has also given much time in non-formal and informal training. Richard holds a doctorate in Intercultural Studies. He is married with three daughters and five grandchildren.

Who are you? This sounds like a simple question but the appropriate answer depends completely on who is asking the question and why. We all carry multiple identities. My earliest identity was as a son and a baby brother. Thankfully, the baby brother identity has fallen away, but I continue as a son and brother. I have added the identity of husband, father, and, seven years ago, grandfather. These are family relationships. They are meaningful and generally do not create any complications.

When my wife and I came to Asia, we served in a country where the only visa option was a missionary visa. That worked well as long as we were working among the very open-access majority. When God called us to work with the highly restricted-access people who were very antagonistic to our faith, I needed to change my public identity. The family identities were still good and actually very helpful. But while I had previously been called "pastor", I now wanted to be known by my professional role as a guidance counselor in a local college.

I never felt the need to hide my faith. In fact, it was very important to reveal that I was a person with a strong faith. However, there were aspects of my faith that I did not want to reveal right away. I was happy to be known as a Follower of Jesus and even as one who was qualified to teach the Holy Books. But the missionary identity was problematic and brought with it some very unhelpful baggage. If I was a missionary, that meant I was trying to change people's religion. To be recognized as one with that identity would likely cause the community elders to block my access to the people. Yet every year I had to renew my immigration registration with my missionary visa.

To complicate things, I pursued further studies and acquired a doctorate in missiology, or as we can call it, "intercultural studies". I actually have two certificates: one that awards me a doctorate in missiology and the other that awards me a doctorate in intercultural studies. I can use either document at the appropriate time. Is switching between the certificates living with integrity?

Then, because of my wider ministry, I pursued ordination and in the process was given the title of Reverend. While I do not actually like this title, it is positively recognized in some circles and opens many doors for ministry.

Depending on where I am and to whom I am talking, I find myself revealing certain identities and hiding others. Certain portions of my professional identity are hidden when I work among my restricted access friends and when I engage with antagonistic communities in my home country. Is that living with integrity?

In September 2013, our International Council (IC) commissioned a group to address the concerns of our M2M workers. It became the M2M CAM Working Group. As we wrestled with this group's concerns it became clear that this group of workers were looking for an *identity with integrity*. They wanted to have one identity that is consistent no matter where they are. If they are in their ministry context as a professional lecturer, then they need to be hired by a company in their home country that employs professional lecturers to serve in East Asia. None of our workers want to hide that they are committed Christians, although they may use different terms to express their faith. What they found problematic is the missionary identity.

It needs to be said that not all the Creative Access Ministry (CAM) settings in which we work as a Fellowship are the same. Many governments are happy to turn a blind eye to the missionary identity as long as that profile is not openly public and as long as the workers really benefit the country through their professional roles. The most highly scrutinized workers are those who serve as professionals or business people within a religious block that is highly antagonistic to Christianity and, in particular, to Christian conversion. These are the workers who need the strongest, most consistent professional identity—a single, consistent identity no matter where they are in the world.

I hear people say that this approach of hiding aspects of ones identity depending on who the worker is relating to, lacks integrity. If

you are always hiding something, you lack integrity. If you have to go to great lengths to have a consistent identity, even setting up companies on the homeside to support a field identity, does that not lack integrity?

I would like to propose that Jesus faced a similar challenge and almost never revealed his full identity to the general public. By understanding to whom Jesus revealed different aspects of his identity, and the timing of the revelations, we will gain insight into the "identity with integrity" issues with which we struggle.

Jesus was prophesied to be "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father" (Isa 9:6). We know that and are comfortable with that, but when Jesus came to earth as a baby, very few were told about his identity as the Son of God and fewer understood what it meant.

Jesus never openly accepted his "Son of God" identity until he was ready to die. He grew up as a boy, mostly obedient to his parents. Only once as a boy did Jesus say, "I had to be in my Father's house." But even on that occasion we read that "they did not understand what he was saying to them" (Luke 2:49–50). Jesus began his public ministry by teaching in the synagogues where "everyone praised him" (Luke 4:15). He was a great and inspiring teacher with something particularly special about him.

The first one to break the silence on his identity were demons and Jesus forbade them to speak (Luke 4:34–35, 41). It would seem the timing was wrong, and the means was wrong. Jesus was on a teaching mission but that was too much information at that point in time. I believe Jesus wanted his followers to recognize that he was the Son of God, but he did not want it to come from the demons. Even Jesus disciples' first recognition of Jesus as Son of God came well into his ministry, after the stilling of a storm (Matt 14:33). Later in Matt 16:16 Peter makes his great declaration that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Finally they had come to understand this but Jesus forbade them to let that information out (Matt 16:20).

By understanding to whom Jesus revealed different aspects of his identity, and the timing of the revelations, we will gain insight into the "identity with integrity" issues with which we struggle.

I used to find the incident in John 10:24–39 very frustrating. In my early attempts to make disciples, I was looking for an incident where Jesus clearly declared his identity. As I spoke to people we would identify as following sub-Christian cults and later to people of other faiths, I longed to find a statement in which Jesus clearly declared himself to be God. It seemed to me this would settle all the controversy. The cults would have to acknowledge Jesus for who he was. I also felt that people of other faiths would hear his clear declaration and embrace him. In John 10, Jesus seemed to have the perfect opportunity and yet he totally messed up, or so I thought. I realized that to even think Jesus had missed an opportunity and failed was sacrilegious, but it seemed he could have helped my witness so much if he had handled that situation differently.

Things were heating up. People were asking him outright if he was the Christ (John 10:24). He did not give them a straight answer but told them to watch what he was doing, observe his miracles. He refers to God as "My Father", which further raised the tension and caused them to want to stone him. He asks them for which miracle they wanted to stone him. Their problem was not the miracles, but his apparent blasphemy: "Because you, a mere man, claimed to be God" (John 10:33). Here was Jesus' golden opportunity. He could have affirmed them for finally figuring it out. But he didn't.

> Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken—what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? (John 10:34–36)

What kind of answer was that? It seems so unclear. What was Jesus trying to do? It seems Jesus knew that the people could not handle a full revelation of his identity. The people accused him of claiming to be God. He responded by asking if we are not all gods in some way. He even refers to their trusted Scriptures to prove it. But he does not declare himself to be singularly the Son of God, distinct from all other "sons of gods."

What must his disciples have thought of this conversation? John later explains that he selected these particular incidents in Jesus life "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). It seems that at the time of this incident, Jesus did not want to reveal everything that was ultimately intended to be revealed.

It took the disciples a long time to grasp who Jesus was. Only in Matthew 16—probably more than two years into their time with Jesus—did they come to understand this. "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" Jesus asked (Matt 16:13). It is interesting that Jesus chose to refer to himself with this less provocative identity: "Son of Man". By this time, in the minds of the people, Jesus was identified as one of the great prophets.

Jesus then puts the same question to his disciples. Who do *they* say he is? Peter makes the great declaration. "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16). It was a great moment. Jesus strongly affirmed this as a revelation coming directly from the Father. But his next words contained a strong warning. His identity was not to be revealed to anyone else. What was happening here? The greatest truth had just been recognized, but the disciples were to keep this identity hidden.

For the majority of the people, to now recognize Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah would cause them to expect Jesus to act as the kind of Messiah they were looking for. It is evident from Peter's rebuke after Jesus foretold of this death that the disciples did not understand what it meant for Jesus to be the suffering servant Messiah. To reveal widely his identity as Son of God would have brought the accusation of blasphemy and probably a premature death.

The issue of the timing of the revealing of such sensitive information was very important to Jesus. His disciples were now ready for it. They could handle it although it became clear they did not fully understand it. Jesus went on from this point to reveal more astounding new truth. He began to speak about his death. A subject they could not fully grasp until they understood who he was, and still could not comprehend all that it meant. But this information needed to be kept hidden from others. They were not ready.

If Jesus was selective about what he revealed about himself, to whom, and when, we should not be surprised that we might face similar challenges. I believe this is part of being "as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matt 10:16).

An issue that we must face squarely is that the identity we present must be an identity with full integrity. If I present myself as a teacher, do I have the necessary qualifications? If I present myself as a development worker, do I have either academic qualifications or sufficient training that indicates I know what kind of development work will bring the best long-range results? If I present myself as a development worker but all I am able to do is access money that allows me to stay to do something else, I believe I am facing an integrity issue.

One of my regrets is related to an experience of being called to meet the community leaders of a particular restricted access people. They asked me what my plans were for their community. What good did I plan to bring? I was not prepared for the question. I was busy learning language and culture so that I could share the good news of Jesus. I knew that was not the answer they were looking for. But I did not have another good answer ready. I do not recall how I stumbled through the situation, but I learned a valuable lesson. Besides being a committed disciple of Christ, I needed another identity that the community would welcome. I should have talked this through and been coached by leaders before I got into the situation.

Eventually I took the role of a guidance counselor in a local college that was predominantly made up of the people group we sought to reach. Did I have qualifications as a guidance counselor? Well, no. Did I actually function as a guidance counselor? Only in the most basic way. Was the community happy with this identity? Yes, they were. I did bring the good they sought to the college so that they were pleased. The final question I had to answer was, did I feel I had full integrity by being a guidance counselor. The answer was, no. It was a convenient identity that gave me access to the people and status to work at the school, but I really was not qualified to be a guidance counselor.

We must apply the same questions to running a missional business. Do I know anything about running a business? One of my favorite lines when doing workshops about missional business is, "missionaries do business badly." Though there is some truth to the statement, it is not always the case. Some missionaries have learned to run businesses very well. I recall one of our workers telling me how the government officials viewed his highly entrepreneurial coworker. This worker had a history of trying one business, failing, moving on to another business, and repeating the failure process. We might have commended him for his tenacity and persistence. The government officials saw him as corrupt. They felt he was deceiving his financial backers. Surely no financial backer would be pleased with a series of failed businesses and wasted money.

This gave me a very clear lesson. If we are going to be identified as a business person, we had better be a very good business person. Our business should make money. People from the community should be able to earn a living. The business itself should be a reflection of our relationship with Christ. Employees should be paid fairly. Taxes should be paid as per government regulations. The business should demonstrate aspects of our faith. The environment should not be harmed. These are high standards that reflect integrity.

I am grateful that in our Fellowship's integrity we have put together a Missional Business Support Unit and accessed highly qualified professional business consultants who can help the previously inexperienced missionary to do business well. If it is business we do, we must do it well and with full Christian integrity.

There are two integrities we need to maintain and keep in a healthy balance. I am a Christian, though I may choose to call myself a disciple of Christ, or a follower of Jesus. The term can be contextualized. What must be consistent is that I am an obedient follower of Christ. As an obedient follower of Christ, I will look for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus. My integrity requires it. How I do it will depend very much on the context. That is a discussion for another paper. The point is, my integrity as a disciple of Christ requires that I seek to call others to be disciples of Christ.

The other issue of integrity is related to my professional role. If I am a professor, development worker, or business person, I should be outstanding in my field. I should operate with excellence. Operating with excellence brings honour to Christ and strengthens my witness as a disciple and disciple maker.

An integrity check is a good thing. Do I function as a disciple and as a professional with integrity? If I maintain my integrity in these two spheres, there should be no problem for me to have multiple identities. Emphasizing one identify over another—depending on the context—is consistent with the pattern given to us by our Lord. Jesus was at every moment, fully God and fully man. He had a mission to do the Father's will, make the Father know, and become the ultimate sacrifice for sin. In the process he chose when to reveal different aspects of his identity. He did it with integrity and so must we.

Identity within a Missional Business

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Hanging on a bulletin board in my sending church is a map captioned "Our Missionaries" that highlights my name and photo next to the country where I live most of the time. That is my identity to my home church. However, when I'm in East Asia, I appear differently to my friends there. In fact, if a friend were to visit me, they might be surprised that I am called a missionary.

In today's wired world, someone could find me identified as a missionary on the internet or on Facebook where I'm friends with a lot of people from a particular missionary organization. My multiple identities create personal discomfort and may potentially cause security issues to arise.

The tension between my differing identities makes me question the level of my personal integrity. How do I merge my identities when friends at home openly call me a missionary when I work in a country that rejects someone called a missionary but accepts someone who does business? Am I a missionary, a business woman, or what? This article on missional business and identity is written to examine some of the tensions faced by many today.

Missional business defined

Missional business can be defined as a business that is inexorably intertwined with Christian mission. It is not a business that does mission on the side or a business that exists simply as the means for securing a visa. It is a holistic organization that strategically seeks to do both. Missional business has four characteristics:

1. The mission is woven into the core of the business: if mission is not part and parcel of the business, it is not missional.
2. It is sustainable because it makes a profit: if no one will pay for the product or service, it is not a business.
3. It is run on biblical principles that include care for creation, fair business practices, and mission.
4. It cares for the planet.

When we look at business plans or do strategic consulting, we help companies focus on these areas. We want the missional business to be both sustainable and scalable.[1] While this is harder than just opening a business, it is what we believe we are called to do.

Identity

Many of us remember the scene in the movie "Chariots of Fire" in which Eric Liddell's sister encourages him to become a missionary to China instead of continuing as an Olympic gold medal-winning runner. The character in the movie responds to his sister by saying, "God made me fast and when I run I feel His pleasure." While Eric Liddell did not actually say that, it reflects a mindset about a skill that God had given to him. He used his God-given gift and gave God the glory for it.

Business is like that for many. It can be a natural skill or one that is honed through education or working in a company. It gives pleasure as we see God at work in every part of it. We see him as we serve people, as we make a product or provide a service that is new and beautiful, and as we train workers to have marketable skills. That's how it is for those who are called to business, those who identify themselves as business people.

We each have a core identity—the basis of who we are—that is built on such things as the family we come from, the country of our birth, even our birth order. As we grow in our faith, we understand more of our identity in Christ. We understand how God has made us and the gifts he has given us to use in

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his service. Using those gifts gives us pleasure and pleases the Father.

But each of us also has more than one identity. I'm a mother, a daughter, a friend, a businesswoman, a disciple of Jesus. In each of those roles I'm seen differently and have learned to navigate the expectations of those different identities. But even though we can handle a number of different roles without having an identity crisis, somehow we expect complete congruence when we talk about ourselves as missionaries or businesspeople.

The identity question for a missional business owner is: how does the local business community relate to you? Can they identify with you? Are you a business person, just like they are? Are you a different kind of business person because you are a Christian? How do they relate to you as a Christian? Do the local business owners see that you have a different identity because you are a Christian?

One missional business owner has held the line on not paying bribes to get permits and registrations. Local business people have told her that if she paid the bribes, things would be easier. Her response? I have a higher standard as a Christian, so I cannot pay a bribe. She clearly lives out her Christian principles before the neighboring businesses. This gives her an opening to talk to them about Jesus. Running a missional business can open up doors of relationship that no other identity can.

What about those who do business only because they have to? Without a business, they won't get a visa to live in the country they feel God has called them to. These people experience the "running" spoken of by Eric Liddell as a chore that keeps them from their calling. Rather than seeing business as their identity before God, they consider it to be the Genesis 3:19 sentence passed on Adam so that he had to work by the sweat of his brow. From their perspective, work is hard and not pleasurable. Business is a necessary process, not a calling.

This explains why many missional businesses fail. The business is not experienced as God's calling to make a difference in people's lives. It is not considered a means of providing jobs or a place for people to learn about being disciples.

I recently met a pastor from a minority group in an East Asian country who told me his story. A foreign missionary led him to the Lord, but it was a bit of a still-birth. He accepted Jesus as his Savior, but didn't know anything more. Then another foreigner gave him a job on a farm. That farm was a missional business. His first day on the farm began with prayer. My friend was shocked. He could pray! *He* could *talk* to *God* and God would listen. He was so overjoyed that this was possible he burst into tears. Over the next months and years he was discipled through that business and decided to become a pastor. When I met him, he was running a business so that he could disciple people in everyday work and life. He saw business as a better way to disciple people than the Sunday-go-to-meeting processes typical in church.

Business as usual, or, business unusual?

When we go into an area to share the gospel we have strong understandings about contextualizing our message so that it can be understood. Business is a very strong contextualizer.

Most people have some form of income generation in their daily lives. While some work for the government or are engaged in professions such as education or medicine, most are either business owners or work in a business, making a living through buying and selling a product or service. When we enter a country to share the gospel, we should consider how the local people respond to our presence. Do we fit their understanding of what foreigners living in their country should do? Do they understand who we are?

When we do business in a missional way, the answer is "Yes". One missional business owner had lived in a village for more than twenty years. A few years ago they began a coffee business, providing coffee plants to the local farmers and buying the beans at fair market value. It changed their identity in the village. The farmers understood them as people much better. They gained an opening to share more about Jesus because they did the same things as the local people. They watched the weather to see if the crop would be damaged by rain. They watched the price of coffee beans to see if they could sell the crop profitably. Starting a business gave them more credibility and a better identity in the village.

Tensions

Tensions often come when we are faced with polarities. Polarities are opposites that both have value. Something is switched on or off and we must choose one or the other. We adopt an either/or, right/wrong way to deal with the possibilities. We see them as problems to be solved, but polarities need to be managed. When "mission" and "business" are pitted against each other, there automatically exists polarity and tension. Because of the structures and worldview of mission societies, doing business as a member creates more tensions than if you were doing business in your home environment.

In 2013, as part of the Lausanne Business as Mission (BAM) work, I facilitated a group of missional business people from more than twenty agencies in a dialogue regarding BAM or missional business. We met online and in person to understand the difficulties of doing business within an agency structure.

We explored three main areas:
1. Worldview
2. Legal and financial structures
3. Mobilization

Our investigation didn't find a magic solution that everyone could follow. It did, however, show that by being aware of the tensions, each agency could find their own way to work with the inherent polarities.

1. Worldview

A worldview is one's mental model of how things work. But it also goes to the core of one's identity. For centuries, there has been a bifurcation of thinking between what is considered sacred and what is considered secular. Being a full-time Christian worker, whether a pastor or missionary, is sacred work. Being a full-time business person, whether owner or worker, is secular work. If I believe that my work in business is not spiritual, then my identity is skewed even if I am doing a missional business. I feel less than I want to be or less than what I feel I should be. If I believe that only when I am doing full-time church planting I am doing "real" missionary work, then the business I run will tend to be a necessary evil. It's what I have to do to get a visa, to look "normal", etc. But if I believe that God has left us here on the earth to "steward and subdue" the earth, then my worldview about business is different.

Agency

As a business person who is part of an agency I see how hard this is. Being a missionary is not easy. To leave home, hearth, and all that is familiar to go to a place where you don't know the language or the culture is a daunting task, even when you have a crucial message to share. Since we want to take every opportunity to share that message, we jealously guard our time, attention, and thinking. While many missionaries have adopted this worldview, as a businessperson I see that there is something missing. We often ignore the worldview of the common man, the very people we want to reach. Since they have to work each day to feed their family, they don't understand our work. What do we do to earn a living? Is it that we are rich or perhaps we are just lazy gadabouts? We often don't provide them with a role model that they can follow. So, the new convert who is serious about his or her faith will decide to become a pastor and so live out the faith. Many times a foreign mission society will support that dream for a few years by providing pastoral training and money to start a church. But if the community around the new pastor does not have income, is the church sustainable? Can it thrive and grow if there are no local funds? Would it be better to help the would-be pastor to be bi-vocational and build a strong community of business people who understand how their businesses can be missional?

In many places where we share the gospel, new converts are turned out of their family and their means of earning a living. We must help provide alternatives for people to sustain the local church.

That is what we are pursuing in one Central Asian country. We've been teaching business so that local people understand how to start and run a business, and that the connection of business and mission is understood from the beginning. In September 2014, we held our first Lion's Den to evaluate these local businesses.[2] We asked our students, former students, and finance people from Hong Kong to give a score as to whether the *person* was capable of doing the business they proposed, whether the business would be *profitable*, and whether the business had a godly purpose. Based on these scores we could seek funding to help them get started. We continue to teach in this way because we believe it will lead to a more sustainable church for these new believers. In many places where we share the gospel, new converts are turned out of their family and their means of earning a living. We must help provide alternatives for people to sustain the local church.

Home and field

There is often a worldview tension between home and field when someone is doing missional business. Many sending churches believe missionaries should all be involved in church planting as this fits their worldview. They are then confused when a missionary wants to enter business, particularly when he asks for money to start the business. How will this business lead to a church plant? Will they still need to provide support for the missionary or will the business now support him or her?

One way around this problem is to have missionaries who want to begin a business complete a "Pre-business Workbook" which works through the theologies of work, business, and mission. Based on the analysis gained, the missionary can formulate a business plan that includes the mission. The end goal is to integrate both mission and business. This also allows the missionary to articulate to their home churches the reasoning behind the proposed business.

Like the home church, field leadership also needs to be involved in the strategy of the business. When the field isn't involved strategically, the business becomes one person's "baby" and it doesn't serve the wider fellowship. Typically, businesses that are not backed by leadership are not sustainable for more than a few years. When one person or a couple is running the business, they get worn out and the business has to close. If a family is required to go home for some reason, and no one has the skills to run their business, it is orphaned and may well die. This explains why it is imperative that missional business is an integral part of the field strategy.

2. Legal and financial structures

While worldviews change over time and missional business is much more understood and acceptable than it was ten years ago, the structures under which we operate create a number of difficult problems and tensions. Here is why:
(1) A mission society is a non-profit with some level of tax-deductible income that depends on the country(ies) of registration.

(2) The missionary is most often held an employee of the society by

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the home-side legal system. When the home side is a western country that has tax-deductible giving, it puts requirements upon the agency including unfair private inurement.[3]

(3) While a business requires cash investment, using money from a tax-deductible source usually does not fit the charter of a sending agency and can be seen by taxing authorities as private inurement since the business is registered in the name of the missionary employee.

(4) Moving money in today's world is increasingly complex. Some non-profits have unwittingly been used by terrorist organizations to launder funds or to fund their activities. Governments look closely at the movement of money, and banks are held accountable to know why the money is moving.

(5) Ownership and control of the business is also part of the conundrum. While the company is registered in the host country in the name of the missionary, the sending agency has some kind of Memorandum of Understanding that the business is run in a way that benefits the field and the assets devolve to the agency when the business is wound up.

(6) Many agencies explore offshore companies, or set up separate sending agencies for people who are doing business to handle these structural constraints. This takes money and creates a lot of bureaucracy and management costs.

(7) On the ground, the missionary, not the agency, has to register the company. Though various holding company processes have been tried, none seems to work well.

The legal issues involved produce polarities that some agencies are not willing to deal with. One agency with which I am familiar started into missional business and then backed out, unfortunately telling their missionaries to close the businesses or leave the agency.

3. Mobilization

Mobilizers usually present opportunities for ministry on a website or during meetings held at a Bible school or church. They may introduce church planting or medical or educational work by saying, "This is what is happening in such-and-such a country. Here are the opportunities for ministry." Rarely does mobilization take place in groups of business people or in Christian universities that offer an MBA. Even if a candidate for mission has a business background, he or she may have wrestled through the sacred/secular worldview and determined that they must leave their business life.

I have had the privilege of helping business people who feel God's pleasure when they do business find their way to integrate both business and mission. I believe that God leads us on a journey that ultimately makes sense. If we have studied business and love doing business, he wants to use that knowledge. If we have studied theology, he wants to use that understanding. If we understand missions, he wants to make us fruitful in missions. While we might not know where the path before us leads, we know that God won't waste our efforts or us. We can trust his sovereignty to put us in the place where we can be the most fruitful.

A few more tensions

There are three other tensions we have not yet explored:

- Location of the business vs. ministry
- Who the missional business serves vs. people group
- Profit vs. ministry

Location

Some types of businesses are better located in a city, others in the country. For instance, a business may provide access to a village or group of people we want to reach. But some businesses require a supply chain for raw materials that may not exist in the place where we want to do missions. One business we worked with made a ceramic pot that could be used to purify drinking water. However, the place where the missionary was located did not have people with expertise to make the pots and the place did not have the right kind of clay. Everyone was faced with a very steep learning curve. Some businesses may be dependent on local schools and universities to train workers with prerequisite skills. A new business I'm working with needs local people to have enough computer skills to provide expertise, but they may not be there. In some cases, the cultural work ethic of the local people makes the business unsustainable. It's often hard to match the business opportunity with the local knowledge culture and one's missional strategy.

People group

Most businesses serve whoever comes in the door. They don't discriminate between a majority and a minority group. Tensions may arise, however, if field leadership feels ministry to a particular target group is being sidetracked because a business doesn't have a narrow enough clientele. In many instances, I've found that a proper strategy of mission includes interaction with other local groups. For instance, skilled Christian workers from a majority group could be hired to work in a medical clinic so that minority people could be reached with the gospel.

Profit vs. ministry

Every business requires cash flow to remain in business. Excess cash flow is profit. Should profit gained be used as a cushion against a bad month, to expand the business, or to support a ministry the field leadership considers needy? This tension requires clear purpose and understanding of the opportunities of the larger business, as well as the blessing of the community. It's easy to get off track when the

business isn't seen as part of the field's strategy for ministry, but only as a vehicle for a visa.

The tensions of doing business in a foreign country

We have explored the tensions within an agency setting and the tensions between our identity at home and on the field. We have yet to consider the tensions in simply doing business.

When someone starts a business in a country other than their passport country, there is a lot to learn even if they know how to do the business. The legal systems are different, as are the business process, people management, etc. Multi-national companies often plunk down a division in a place they think will provide opportunities for business, then discover that it is the things they don't know about the culture and legal system that kill them. The same is true for a missional business. It is even worse for those who have not engaged in business in their home countries, but think it's easy to do it in a foreign environment. Frankly, such ideas simply reflect ignorant hubris. When we don't know how to do something, it often seems easy. When we get into it and realize all the nuances, we understand the need for skill and tenacity.

As OMF's Missional Business Director I helped people wade through these issues and find solutions. Oftentimes, it requires a lot of listening, a Skype call, a quick e-mail, or being available to pray and think through a decision with a business person. Because the field leadership and other team members often have a different experience of life and ministry, the problems may seem incomprehensible to the rest of the team. That is why it first requires a unified team/field strategy and constant dialogue to get an understanding of the issues. This may seem like another polarity that creates tension, but differing viewpoints are not necessarily right or wrong. Dialogue requires that we listen with a heart to understand.

We've considered the tensions faced when one encounters differing legal systems and understanding how the "rules" of business work. Another problem is that each country has rules regarding WOFEs (Wholly Owned Foreign Entities) that provide their owners with the right to live in the country. Some countries require a minimum amount of investment. For instance, the USA requires a $500,000 investment for a foreigner to get a green card. Many countries (e.g., Malaysia and Indonesia) require a local partner. In some countries, certain industries are not open to foreigners (e.g., internet services in China). Recently a couple who had run a missional business in one country for many years were put in jail for "stealing state secrets." There were no real charges, but the country's law allowed the government to simply put them in jail. Due to the real difficulties that are part and parcel of missional business, no one should consider doing business in a foreign country without really feeling called to business and having a sound knowledge base for doing the kind of business they want to run.

... business is effective. It's an everyday pursuit that people understand. Done in a right way, it clears up the question of identity. It enables me to introduce myself as simply a businessperson, but one who follows Jesus and who engages in business in a way that will please him.

Conclusion

Missional business is *a* key strategy to sharing the gospel. That doesn't mean it's the *only* strategy or that it is easy to do. It takes sober thought and strategy to do both mission and business.

Incorporating mission into a business typically sorts out the identity question for the missionary on the field. When missionaries operate a legitimate business, produce a product or a service and sell it, it is easy for people to understand their presence. When the business is performed in a godly way, it opens doors for sharing the gospel. In addition to making sense to the local population, the business must also fit into the field's strategy. Leadership must not just tolerate it, but support it. It must be seen as a part of mission that allows us to have relationships with people that we would not be able to have in any other way.

Furthermore, missional businesses need to make sense to people at home. The question of our identity will continue to be troublesome unless we have ways to explain the purpose of a missional business, the processes and procedures that ensure it adheres to the organization's mission and values.

Doing missional business is not easy. There are legal and worldview hurdles that must be overcome. We must learn to mobilize in different ways. We must understand the legal ramifications of working in another country and how to live godly lives where corruption may be rife. But business is effective. It's an everyday pursuit that people understand. Done in a right way, it clears up the question of identity. It enables me to introduce myself as simply a businessperson, but one who follows Jesus and who engages in business in a way that will please him. It opens the door for me to live in front of people so that they can see how precious Jesus is to me and how much he loves them.

NOTES

[1] By scalable we mean a business that can grow. It may grow by adding products, opening branches, or just selling more of the service or product. Scalability often goes together with sustainability because a business that is very small is particularly vulnerable to changes in the law or increased competition.

[2] A Lion's Den is a business plan competition. The term comes from Jesus' title as the Lion of Judah.

[3] Private inurement is a legal doctrine, which holds that the person receiving tax deductible income cannot benefit unfairly while at the same time being an employee of the agency. So building a profitable business while being an employee is private inurement. Private inurement assumes misappropriation of tax-deductible money for personal use.

Batman and the Quest for Holistic Identity

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Who am I?

Questions about identity may sound simple, but they actually are one of the most headache-inducing issues facing Creative Access Mission (CAM) workers today. Depending on my conversation partner, any one day could find me describing myself as a lecturer of my professional subject, a father and a husband, an NGO worker, and many other things besides. Now, Open Access Mission (OAM) workers in traditional missionary contexts also carry several such labels together. What makes the issue of identity so confused and stressful for missionaries in a CAM context?

The problem is that the words we choose to describe ourselves can have powerful negative consequences for our ministry. Calling myself a "Christian" raises a lot of unhelpful misconceptions for the people group I work amongst, so I prefer to talk about myself as a "follower of Jesus the Messiah." Describing myself as an "OMF missionary" would lead to my expulsion from the country I am working in.

Is there a way in which CAM workers can consistently identify themselves without compromising their ministries or integrity? Is it acceptable to use different identities in different situations?

The dark knights of OMF

When my wife and I joined OMF, we were told at orientation course that CAM workers were not to think of themselves as some kind of "James Bond" secret agent. Over the years, I have come to reflect that they may have said this because they actually wanted us to be more like the superhero Batman!

Like many other mission agencies, OMF has intentionally or otherwise encouraged a bipolar approach to CAM identity issues. On the "fieldside" we present ourselves as normal members of society (like Batman's professional alter-ego Bruce Wayne), not referencing our organisational identity or revealing our missional intentions. On the "homeside" we can freely present our superhero side as traditional missionaries sharing the Christian gospel. Like Batman, our work can continue undisturbed so long as no one connects our dual identities.

Unfortunately this strategy has been coming under increasing pressure in some areas. Global migration is making it more and more difficult to keep our two identities separate. It is no longer sufficient merely to be a bit careful about what is written about our ministry on the internet. On our last home assignment we went to give our main talk to our sending church, only to discover that there were several visiting scholars attending who came from our remote ministry location and the people group we were sharing amongst. Needless to say, the way in which we presented ourselves that night had to be quickly adapted to give more emphasis to the activities of Bruce Wayne than those of Batman! This overlapping of homeside and fieldside identities is becoming more common.

Growing secularism in many homeside countries has also resulted in increasing antagonism toward the traditional missionary identity. Like Batman, we might find our methodology questioned and misunderstood. To adopt the beautiful language of accountants, being legally or constructively related to a traditional mission agency is starting to feel more like a liability than an asset.

Trying to maintain a bipolar identity in such a global environment can lead to a deep struggle with integrity. An inability to talk freely about who we are and what we are doing can leave the CAM worker feeling at best schizophrenic, at worst downright deceptive and dishonest.

Time to hang up the cape?

The external challenges and internal turmoil of the two-pronged approach have led many CAM workers to yearn for a more "holistic" or "global" identity which they can use in any country and situation. They would prefer to be a more clean-cut kind of hero; a philanthropic Bruce Wayne who doesn't need to sneak around at night.

For some workers this need is being worked out passively, perhaps without them even realising it. This can be seen in a recent organisational change survey, which surprisingly found that most of our CAM

workers continue to be satisfied with the dual identity approach. I suspect this reflects that many of them have actually developed a very low sense of OMF missionary identity, and are dodging the inherent tensions rather than engaging with them. Their primary sense of identification is not in close alignment with our organisational vision but rather is to be found in their visa role or with the professional services NGO that they are attached to. Not a few CAM workers have been shocked to discover someone has listed them as "church planter" in the OMF international personnel system!

Others are more actively pursuing a solution to their CAM identity issues. This is reflected in the trend towards setting up parallel, "clean" sending structures that have no legal relationship with a mission agency. These give the worker an organisation to which they can belong wherever they are in the world and the ability to answer visa application questions about not being a missionary with a clear conscience.

While seeking a truly holistic identity is appealing, I question whether it is actually obtainable. Does such an elusive holy grail really exist? Are we really able to fulfil our purpose by being Bruce Wayne the whole time? There is a fundamental tension in CAM work between a missional calling and obtaining a professional visa. Whether pursued passively or actively, developing a simpler identity will always require distancing oneself from the mission agency. The missionary emphasis ends up being diluted in favour of the more generic, politically correct professional one.

There is a risk that we are not actually developing integral identities but rather choosing to live out only one side of our dual identity, moving away from our original vision and mission.

In thinking through this paradox, I find it helpful to reflect on the identity of Jesus as both human and divine. He did not put his humanity and divinity on and off like two hats. It would have been simpler for him to just live out one of them all of the time, but he didn't choose that option either. Instead he held the two polarities in perfect tension: "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Col 2:9).

I believe that any sustainable and lasting solution to CAM issues will require not an adjustment of the individual's identity but rather a re-orientation of the whole mission agency's identity.

The very nature of our work means that CAM missionaries have to juggle dual aspects to our identity, whether we like it or not. Is it possible for us to find some kind of identity equilibrium, like Christ had?

Building a better Batcave

I believe that any sustainable and lasting solution to CAM issues will require not an adjustment of the individual's identity but rather a re-orientation of the whole mission agency's identity. As long as OMF is positioned as an open-access mission with a bit of CAM work tagged on to the side, it will only increase rather than reduce the identity tensions felt by our workers in their changing, global context. We need to build a more CAM-friendly culture into our organisation, just like the Batcave is built into the foundations of Wayne Manor.

How can we change our organisational environment into something that will better hold the polarities of both missional and professional identity? Some of this will require adjustments to our private, internal ways of functioning. For example we need to schedule more meetings and training sessions at holiday times when it is actually possible for CAM workers to attend. We also need to re-examine our expectations of leadership workload, as it is almost impossible for CAM leadership at the Director level to continue living "in-country" through a professional, visa-providing job.

However, reducing the gap between our open-access and creative-access identities will also require more major, public changes. A good example that this is already happening can be seen in the recent re-wording of the OMF mission statement from "urgent evangelization" to "share the good news of Jesus in all its fullness." CAM workers could not describe themselves in the terms of the old statement, except when they were using their open, home-side identity. The new statement can now also embrace many aspects of their professional, field-side identity without any dilution of our missional purpose.

Ultimately, I believe, this kind of re-packaging of organisational identity will require us to change our organisational name. As long as we are using a name widely understood to mean "Overseas Missionary Fellowship", our CAM workers will have to keep distancing themselves from the agency. A different name with less overt connection to traditional models of mission would be preferable. For example, a name similar to "Serve Asia" could do a much better job of incorporating both OAM and CAM identities, significantly reducing the tension felt by workers. While a new name would easily be linked to the past, and so could still not be used formally in a CAM context, this does not make it without benefit. Those we meet day-by-day are usually far more concerned by who we are now, rather than who we used to be.

Conclusion

Global migration and secularisation will continue to put increasing pressure on the identity and integrity of the CAM worker. Addressing this will require either their separation from the traditional mission agency or a re-packaging of the mission agency itself. I believe that the latter would more effective in holding our inescapable missional and professional polarities in tension.

Of course, the only one in whom we can find the peace of a truly integral identity is the Lord Jesus and we look for him to lead us forward through these difficult issues. It is Jesus, not Batman, who will turn out to be "not the hero we deserved but the hero we needed."



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My Identity as an Asian Christian Serving within the Mission of God

Introduction

As an Indonesian who grew up in a remote region of West Borneo, I never really considered how important my identity was until the end of 1999 when I went overseas for the first time to visit Singapore. Perhaps I didn't think about my identity because Indonesia is a multicultural country where hundreds of ethnic groups are united under the philosophical principles of *Pancasila*,[1] and because of my roots in a simple ethnic group.

My understanding of identity began to change when—suffering from acute tonsillitis—I checked into a hospital in Singapore. As my wife and I were registering for a room, the hospital staff asked about my ethnic identity. I naturally gave my national identity as Indonesian, but was further quizzed about the ethnic group to which I belonged. We couldn't understand the purpose of the question, because asking about one's ethnic group in Indonesia is considered a sensitive issue. As the hospital staff kept insisting that we identify our ethnicity, we informed them that I was a Dayak. This caused the staff to become more confused since they had never heard of Dayaks even though Singapore is very close to Malaysia where many Dayaks—often known by the names of their sub-groups, Iban or Kandayan—live. The hospital only recognized the three main ethnic groups in Singapore: Chinese, Malay, and Indian. The cultural confusion was compounded by our linguistic limitations in English.

Though it took a while, we finally discovered that the hospital identified people's ethnic background so they could be put with others of the same group. The issue was whether I should be put in a ward with Chinese, Malays, or Indians. When the staff said that since my face was similar to an Indian I must have Indian blood, we argued that I was not an Indian. When they considered putting me in a room with Malays, we said that we eat pork and Chinese food. Finally, they decided that since my wife is Chinese, they would put me in a room with Chinese patients. It was only then that we learned that the main reason for identifying one's ethic background was to help the patient feel more comfortable by being roomed with others of the same group.

Since that time, I have come to realize how important identity is and how important it is to communicate our identity properly in accordance with our current context. In this article I will examine the concept of identity. My particular focus will highlight being an Asian Christian who is involved in missions within a country with a minority Christian population. Do I base my identity as a Christian on the Bible? Does that understanding impact my freedom to minister in missions? Is having multiple identities deceptive, just an inevitable part of life, or something that I can choose for the benefit of ministry?

The biblical concept of identity

According to the Bible, man was created in the image of God and is therefore related to God (Gen 1:26–27). This is our first identity as believers in God, an identity that is, as the Apostle Paul pointed out to the Athenians, recognized by non-Christian poets (Acts 17:28). The Genesis account of creation teaches that the whole human race is descended from Adam and Eve. From the first pair to the time of the flood, there is an unbroken genetic relationship between people so that everyone shares the same human nature, a specific ethnic identity, and a genetic or genealogical unity.[2] This unity was recognized by the Apostle Paul who wrote that "God made of one every nation of man to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26).[3]

In the Old Testament, those who were called by God are identified as "God's people" (Exod 3:7, 10; 5:1). In the New Testament, people who believe in Christ are called, "the sons of God", "witnesses", "heirs of God", "the temple of God", "a new creation", and "saints" (John 1:12; Acts 1:8; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 1:1). One's identity is explained in a wide variety of ways. The most incredible aspect of identity found in the New Testament links the church with ancient Israel. "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Pet 2:9–10). Christians owe a great debt to Israel's God-centered religion as the Hebrew Scriptures form much of the Christian Bible. Being part of a religion that is rooted in Israel's Scripture allows Christians to recognize similarities and dissimilarities between their view of God and the view of God found in Islam. Islam is also a monotheistic faith with roots in both Christianity and Judaism and a faith that trusts a personal God for gracious deliverance from sin and suffering.[4] Indeed, the word Islam can be translated both as "submission" to God and as "dependence" upon God. The similarities in our beliefs make it possible for us as Asians to live our lives, practice our faith, and serve among our Muslim neighbors in countries where theirs is the majority religion.

While Jews, Christians, and Muslims generally agree that they should submit to God and depend upon him, their views of deity are not identical. As Christians, we believe that no one is saved by the correct practice of religion. This is even true of those who practice Christianity. Salvation is not based on practice, but comes by faith properly placed upon the God who extends his mercy to us through Jesus Christ.

Since the Bible identifies us in such terms as God's creation, human beings, people of God, believers in God, a chosen people, children of God, a people belonging to God, Christians, and so on, we should understand that seeing ourselves as having multiple identities is a normal and inevitable part of life in this world. Our identities multiply as we consider our position in the secular world as a child or parent, husband or wife, father or mother, employee or boss, etc.

Many of these Asian communities have such a strong feeling of group solidarity that individuals will say that if they can maintain their community identity they don't mind going to hell.

The benefit of identity in an Asian context

One aspect of the Asian identity is a very strong sense of community. This sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together.[5] Psychologically, a sense of community is often considered to be an asset.

According to McMillan and Chavis, four factors contribute to a sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and a shared emotional connection.[6] Considered from the perspective of neighborhood attachment, one finds that a sense of community is made up of two empirically distinct but correlated factors: social bonding and behavioral rootedness.[7]

For Asians, one's sense of community is built on a feeling of membership. Being a member means that one has invested part of oneself in the community and therefore has a right to belong. It is a feeling of belonging, of being a part. Membership has boundaries. This means that there are some who belong and some who do not. The boundaries provide members with the emotional safety necessary for needs and feelings to be exposed and for intimacy to develop.[8] Once again, boundaries are constructed by feelings. Applying this missionally, traditional Asian communities will be happiest if outsiders can identify with them as closely as possible.

I have found that a lot of Thai, Malaysian, and Indonesian communities are built around people from the same clans and backgrounds. These choose to live together because they feel secure and rooted by their common language, dress, beliefs, etc. For instance, in Bangkok one can find communities of Malays from South Thailand. In Singapore, one can visit Chinatown, Little India, and the Bugis Kampong. In Malaysia, the Kampong Java is a community built around the descendants of Javanese immigrants. A Javanese proverb says that "*mangan ora mangan asal kumpul*"—"whether there is food for eating or not, the most important thing is gathering in a community."

Today in Jakarta, I am a board member of Dayaks community forum. Before I joined the forum I didn't know the members. We came together because we share the same language, history, and background as people from Borneo who live in Jakarta. There are many communities in many places from many people groups and regions as well. Asians like to set up themselves in communities.

Many of these Asian communities have such a strong feeling of group solidarity that individuals will say that if they can maintain their community identity they don't mind going to hell. Clearly, the value put on one's sense of community can be higher than the truth of God that we bring for their benefit. This connection between community and reception of biblical truth makes it imperative that ministers of the gospel identify with the community where we are serving as much as possible.

I believe the Asian sense of community comes with strengths and weaknesses. In Indonesia, we have a popular concept of communal work known as *Gotong-Royong* that is considered an Indonesian philosophy of life. It started as a positive concept, but as time went by its meaning has been transformed. The fall of President Soeharto in 1998 caused this transformation. What is

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the connection between the Soeharto regime—its practice and ruin—with the change in the meaning of community? Many believed his downfall was due to the practice of "KKN"—*Korupsi*, *Kroni*, and *Nepotisme* (Corruption, Cronyism, and Nepotism).

The practices of KKN have become the communal culture. The government of Soeharto may have been effective administratively and politically, but it did not provide many benefits for the poor. Only those who were part of the community close to the rulers profited. As corruption was rampant in every sector of government, many people became angry and turned against their ruler.

However, even one-and-a-half decades after the end of Soeharto's rule, Indonesia still experiences rampant corruption in most sectors of the government. This shows that the communal concept is not the Satan. The concept of corruption has affected almost every aspect of the country. Even the phrase *korupsi secara gotong royong*—communal corruption—is familiar to most Indonesians and other Asians. Both government and society have adapted the concept of corruption. One's identity can thus be negatively affected by his community.

In order for people to act rightly within their community, their mentalities need to be renewed and reformed by believing in and genuinely fearing God. This is a challenge and, at the same time, an opportunity for Christians to serve and model the true faith. It is clear that rampant corruption is not caused by the identity of Indonesians as a communal people groups. Rather it is their inability to fear God and genuinely to serve others.

The Bible shows us that there are many benefits for those who serve God when they have clear and strong identities. In the Old Testament, Daniel and his three friends used their multiple identities to witness and share the power of God in a pagan setting. According to the book of Daniel, the four young men were of noble descent and characterized as being without physical defect, handsome, showing an aptitude for learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace (Dan 1:3–4). They had been carried off to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar who besieged Jerusalem during the reign of King Jehoiakim (Dan 1:1) and selected some of the captives to be trained for the king's service (Dan 1:5).

Following the then cultural norms, the four were given Babylonian names to indicate that they had a new identity as servants of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was renamed Belteshazzar, Hananiah became Shadrach, Mishael became Meshach, and Azariah became Abednego (Dan 1:7). Though their new names were connected to Chaldean deities, the Bible does not reject their new cultural identity as indicated by the number of times it uses their Babylonian names.[9]

Daniel and his three friends are in part open to their Babylonian identities as they mastered the language and literature of the Babylonians. Even so, they resolved not to defile themselves with the royal food and wine (Dan 1:8).[10] Whether they understood the New Testament concept that their bodies were the temple of the living God where the Holy Spirit dwells (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16) is not clear, but they obviously refused to compromise on some important issues of their faith while feeling free to adapt to life in a foreign culture in a number of other ways.

Their commitment to the true faith, willingness to adapt to many foreign cultural ideas and practices, and God-given ability ensured that they excelled at Chaldean wisdom beyond their peers (Dan 1:17–20), so that they eventually took up high positions in the Babylonian government (Dan 2:48–49; 3:30). Although Daniel does not act like one who occupies the office of prophet, he clearly possessed this gift which he used, like Joseph, as a statesman in a pagan court. One key to his success was the combination of a strong faith in the true God and his willingness to adopt a local identity (Dan 1:17; 3:13–23; 6:11–17). This enabled him to successfully occupy leading governmental posts during the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius. Faith can work itself out through a person of multiple identities for ministry that glorifies God.

This Old Testament picture is supplemented by what we read in the New Testament. I have observed that, like Asians who are proud of their identity and even multiple identities, the same is true of another ancient Asian—the Apostle Paul. Paul could strongly hold on to his Jewish identity. "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today" (Acts 22:3). Throughout his life, his identity as a Jew from Tarsus, a scholar of the law, and a Pharisee impacted his thought and actions.

At the same time, Paul could clearly and firmly proclaim his identity as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37; 22:25). After returning to Jerusalem and bringing an offering to the temple, Paul was arrested on the grounds that he had brought a Gentile into the holy site. His request to defend himself before the crowd was granted and he was able to tell his story until he said that God had sent him to the Gentiles. At this point, the Jews raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!" (Acts 22:22). The following interrogation by the Roman commander was to begin with flogging. Before the whip could be applied, Paul asked the centurion, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?" When questioned by the commander if he really was a Roman citizen, Paul revealed that he was born a citizen (Acts 22:22–29).

Scholarship divides on whether Paul's letters bear witness to his Jewishness or demonstrate the influence of Greco-Roman philosophy, rhetoric, and social practice upon his thinking.

Was he "Paul the Hebrew" or "Paul the Hellenist"? Our answer to these questions will impact our perception of the way Paul interacted with the social world of his day. While there is no simple solution to the problem, it seems clear that in spite of attempts to paint the apostle as a Hellenistic Jew whose thought was thoroughly accommodated to Greco-Roman religion, his worldview remained essentially Jewish.[11]

Even though Paul's Roman connection may have had little influence on his religious identity, the fact that he inherited Roman citizenship gave him a privileged position in society. Not only did it gave him unusual access to the entire Mediterranean world as an itinerant missionary, it also ensured that he received respectful treatment during his imprisonment.

Paul's cultural identity combined Palestinian and Diaspora Jewish elements with Greek, Roman, and more broadly "Mediterranean" elements. As a product of the first century Mediterranean world, Paul was well equipped intellectually and linguistically to contextualize the gospel "as a Jew to the Jews and as a Greek to the Greeks" (1 Cor 9:19–23). His background allowed him to evangelize both Jews and Gentiles "from within their own life situation."[12] Paul's multiple identities opened the door for him to succeed in his mission.

Modern Asians are adept at using multiple identities. In general, we identify ourselves according to the area and people group from which we come. While Paul identified himself as a Jew, I would similarly say that I am from Borneo and can further disclose that I am a Dayak from West Borneo. When I was in Thailand, I frequently heard Thai people refer to themselves as a "*khon Isaan*"—an *Isaan* man—or a "*Khon Yala*"—a man from Yala. A similar thing happens when one is overseas. Though we will be even more general in our answers, identifying ourselves as being Thai or Indonesian or whatever nationality we are.
In Asian contexts, we can talk for a few hours without touching on one's profession or religion. Conversations may cover our life experiences, hobbies, families, nature, politics, and perhaps economic status as we build upon our identity as one who comes from a particular place. A deeper level of conversation and relationship is needed before one will identify himself as a medical doctor or pastor or lawyer. And though Christians who are involved in missions will seek opportunities to steer a conversation toward spiritual issues, the Asian desire for interpersonal harmony slows us down since entering into any kind of debate at an early stage in relationships is taboo.

And though Christians who are involved in missions will seek opportunities to steer a conversation toward spiritual issues, the Asian desire for interpersonal harmony slows us down since entering into any kind of debate at an early stage in relationships is taboo.

Once a conversation gets beyond geographic or national identity, Asians may expand their explanation of their personal identity so that it embraces one's profession, religion, academic achievements, social status in the community (e.g., village chief or descendant of a royal family), or position in local government or state administration. A government worker might introduce herself as a chief of a provincial agricultural department. An Army officer may give his rank and station. When a conversation reaches this point, I normally feel free to introduce myself as a Christian pastor, a doctor of clinical counseling, an associate professor in a seminary, or a researcher. One's social status is extremely important in Asia. Those who have a job that is considered of higher status—such as a government official or military officer—will receive greater respect. Something similar happened when Paul proclaimed his Roman citizenship. This identity was respected in society and by government officials in the first century. For Paul to claim this status was not deceitful. It was his true identity. He was a Jew, but he was also a Roman. He was also very careful to use this identity at the right time and in the right situation. When Paul was on trial he did not introduce himself as a Pharisee as it would be of no use. That was an identity that would be useful in another situation. When he was being questioned by a Roman army officer he realized that this was the best time to play the Roman-citizen card.

As a Christian who serves in Indonesia, I find that multiple identities are very helpful. Calling on one or another of them is neither deceitful nor hypocritical. Paul teaches us from his life story and experience in the Scriptures. Since I am an Indonesian, my identity card labels me according to religion and profession. Mine says that I am a Christian and that my profession is an ordained pastor of a Christian church. At times, government officials ask me where I pastor because they want to know which church I work at and what the denomination of the church is. They only know that an ordained pastor works in a church and are unaware that many ordained pastors are missionaries as well. Should I identify myself as a missionary in such a situation? I don't think so, as it's not the right time.

While I will often introduce myself as a Christian missionary when I am in a church context, when speaking to government officials I prefer to introduce myself as an associate professor in a seminary since they respect this position. If I was in Muslim community, I would introduce myself as a counselor with a PhD in clinical counseling. Rarely will I introduce myself as a Christian missionary in public since

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Integrity reflects personal character. A person with integrity is real with people and does not wear a false face. Integrity makes a person honest in his dealing with others, so that he will keep his word, regardless of the costs.

this identity is often associated with those who beg money from churches in order to Christianize others. Context determines which of my identities I use. Relating to such groups as my family (which is made up of believers and unbelievers), churches or other Christian organizations, government officials, and non-believers (whether religious or secular) requires the appropriate identity. Choosing the one that fits the time and place is not deceptive since identity is all about belonging.[13] While some may feel uncomfortable picking and choosing from multiple identities, we should realize that this is not a theological matter, but simply a matter of feelings that needs to be overcome.

Identity and a life of christian integrity

What does it mean to live a life of integrity? The English word "integrity" is derived from the Latin "*integritas*" meaning "wholeness, entireness, completeness". To have integrity is to adhere to a code of conduct or standard of value. It is a way of life, a style or standard of living that cannot be turned on or off at will but touches and affects all that a person is and does. A person who lives a life of integrity is committed to faithfulness in every area of his or her life. Our integrity therefore affects our relationships with others. It is possible to say that God is more interested in our integrity than in our ministry. A ministry without integrity will not stand as our reputations influence other people's perception of us.

Integrity reflects personal character. A person with integrity is real with people and does not wear a false face. Integrity makes a person honest in his dealing with others, so that he will keep his word, regardless of the costs (Num 30:2; Ps 15:1–5; Eccl 5:5). A person of integrity will radiate humility, even in the midst of great success. Integrity is both an internal and external affair that results in holy thoughts and holy living. And even though holiness will not be perfected before we get to heaven, it is begun in this world. Integrity of soul assures a deep intimacy with God and integrity elevates the lives of believers. The result is that people of integrity walk securely (Prov 10:9).

Integrity is a way of life lived under the standard of the Word of God as absolute truth. It will ensure that we are guided by God's truth every day we live. It will help us to establish and perform our ministries in a way that glorifies God before believers and unbelievers. It also helps believers to remain upright in the face of temptations. For our context, it is important to realize that being a person of integrity does not necessarily conflict with having multiple identities.

Conclusion

Identity is very important in an Asian context because Asians happily use their multiple identities as they pursue the good life, selecting the appropriate one according to the context. Asian Christians who are involved in mission to countries where the Christian population is in the minority use multiple identities in everyday life and in ministry. That this is permissible can be supported by biblical examples. Living out these identities with integrity is our goal as we seek to emulate the biblical characters who faithfully served God in this world. It requires that we adhere to an ethical code of standards that can be seen through our character and action. Exhibiting one or two or more of our multiple identities does not counter Christian integrity when we explain or share it with love and the right motivation before God and men. Rather, it demonstrates our freedom to minister in God's mission.

Living out these identities with integrity is our goal as we seek to emulate the biblical characters who faithfully served God in this world. It requires that we adhere to an ethical code of standards that can be seen through our character and action.

NOTES

[1] *Pancasila* refers to the five moral principles that define Indonesian state and life. It includes (1) belief in only one God, (2) a just and civilized society, (3) the unity of Indonesia, (4) democracy, (5) social justice. Source: http://www.indonesianembassy.org.uk/human_right-2.htm, accessed 24 February 2015.
[2] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: Banner of Truth, 1949), 188.
[3] All Scripture quotations in this paper are from the NIV.
[4] Alister E. McGrath and J. I. Packer, eds., *Zondervan Handbook of Christian Beliefs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 46.
[5] David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis, "Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory," *Journal of Community Psychology* 14 (January 1986): 9, http://iranarze.ir/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Sense-of-Community.pdf (accessed 10 April 2015).
[6] McMillan and Chavis, "Sense of Community," 15.
[7] McMillan and Chavis, "Sense of Community," 7.
[8] McMillan and Chavis, "Sense of Community," 9.
[9] John Bailey, "What is Contextualization and is it Biblical?" *Asian Mission* (September 2007): 5.
[10] For considerations about how the palace food might be defiling see John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1989), 18–19.
[11] Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Leicester: Apollos, 2005), 120.
[12] Flemming, *Contextualization*, 124.
[13] Michael Vlahos, "Russia's Quest for Identity and Belonging," *Jakarta Post* (20 February 2015), 6.



Mary Jeanne Buttrey

Mary Jeanne and her future husband Paul Buttrey met as undergraduates in InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Stanford University. After graduate study, they served with OMF in Taiwan for thirty-four years. A physician specializing in Internal Medicine, Mary Jeanne trained medical students and young doctors at Mackay Memorial Hospital in Taipei as well as providing member care to missionary colleagues as Field Medical Advisor.

Who am I?

Early in our ministry in Taiwan, a colleague brought a battered young woman to our door. Trying to find a safe place for her, we sadly discovered at the time (1986) there was very little that could be done to help her. Her family owned a small factory, and her brother had taken her identity card. This effectively kept her a slave in the family business. Without an identity card, a Taiwanese citizen has virtually no access to government and other services. While Taiwan has improved in addressing domestic abuse, it's still true that losing an identity card puts one in a bind.

Citizens of the United States don't have national identity cards. But what worries us is identity theft, increasingly common in our cyber age. One reads of people whose personal information is stolen and who have to fight for years to prove who they are and redress financial losses. Such a person is incredibly frustrated in trying to prove "I am me!"

But really, who am I? Yes, I can produce civil documents demonstrating my identity in our society. But as we encounter new acquaintances, especially in a social setting, we rarely ask "Who are you?" Nor do we introduce ourselves by pulling out a passport. Rather, we list roles, activities, or who we are in relation to other people. "I'm Paul's wife." "I used to train medical students and young physicians in Taiwan." "I'm a member of Peninsula Community Church." Indeed, it's difficult to know how else to make ourselves known to a stranger. But is that who we *are*? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *identity* as "the distinguishing character or personality of an individual."[1] Imagine trying to explain that to the next person you meet!

Using our roles or relationships to identify ourselves is fraught with challenges, however. These roles and relationships change. For thirty-four years, I was a missionary in Taiwan with OMF International. Now I'm a retired missionary. The questions are still pretty much the same: "What did you do in Taiwan? What are you doing now that you're retired?" Now there's nothing wrong with discussing our present or former activities. We face a danger, though, when we mentally define who we are by our work or our relationships. If my identity is caught up in my work, what happens when I retire or lose my job? If I focus on my role as a daughter, what happens when my parents die? It becomes very uncomfortable, too, if several roles conflict with one another. I was in a very intense counseling conversation when my husband brought our fifth grade daughter home from school with a broken arm. I immediately left the person I'd been counseling to tend to Gail. But later I wondered if I had perhaps too quickly abandoned the counselee. Which should take precedence, being a counselor or being a mother?

This sort of conflict came to a head for me in my role as Field Medical Advisor (FMA) for OMF in Taiwan. Our medical advisory system seeks to help colleagues maintain good health so that they can remain in their field of service, functioning effectively. Sometimes this requires giving advice that is hard to hear, the most challenging being a recommendation that missionaries return to their home country because of physical or emotional illness. Role conflict can arise because our colleagues are also often very dear friends. Professional medical ethics generally hold that physicians should not care for family members or friends. The American College of Physicians Ethics Manual states it this way:

> Regarding people with whom the physician has a prior, nonprofessional relationship, including family members, friends or acquaintances, colleagues, and employees, the physician's prior emotional or social relationship complicates what would become the

There will be many brothers (and sisters) in the new heavens and the new earth, each like Jesus, yet each an individual child of God. We will live in a community of individuals, each with his or her own identity, yet all resembling the Son, whom we will worship for all eternity.

> professional patient–physician relationship.... The physician's emotional proximity may result in difficulties for the patient and/or the physician.[2]

One of my colleagues, a close personal friend, became quite ill. The illness raised issues related to previous conditions, and I needed to make several unwelcome recommendations. My advice was accepted, but it created tension between us. I struggled with wanting to drop the FMA role entirely because I was afraid it was jeopardizing our friendship. I needed to *identify* myself as friend above all else.

At this juncture, I realized my various roles were creating significant problems. Perhaps, though, the greatest problem was how I viewed myself. I don't exactly remember the genesis of another thought, though undoubtedly the Holy Spirit was leading me into an important truth. It suddenly occurred to me that one thing would never change: I am a child of God. True, this is based on a relationship, but it is an eternal relationship with the eternal Father, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Becoming his child wasn't my accomplishment; it was at his initiative. "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12–13).[3]

Does this fit the definition of identity, or is it merely another role? I think it fits the definition. The infinite, loving, heavenly Father knows each of his children by name. He knows my character, my personality—in fact they come from him, my Creator. Better yet, rather than statically accepting who I am right now, he wants me to grow. He is at work within me to conform me to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ. This does not mean my identity is subsumed into Christ's. "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29). John Stott explicates this verse, noting two purposes of God.

> The first is that we should *be conformed to the likeness of his Son*. In the simplest possible terms, God's eternal purpose for his people is that we should become like Jesus. The transformation process begins here and now in our character and conduct, through the work of the Holy Spirit, but will be brought to completion only when Christ comes and we see him, and our bodies become like the body of his glory. The second purpose of God's predestination is that, as a result of our conformity to the image of Christ, *he might be the firstborn among many brothers,* enjoying both the community of the family and the pre-eminence of the firstborn.[4]

There will be many brothers (and sisters) in the new heavens and the new earth, each like Jesus, yet each an individual child of God. We will live in a community of individuals, each with his or her own identity, yet all resembling the Son, whom we will worship for all eternity.

How did this realization of my identity in Christ subsequently affect my life and ministry? It did not automatically solve the problem of competing roles. But I can pinpoint several areas in which it has been crucial.

In my inadequacy

Missionary service, like all of life, entails many challenges. I often failed. I missed opportunities to speak of Jesus. I continued to make cultural mistakes. I spoke in ways that closed conversations down rather than leaving the door open. My prayer life was intermittent and undisciplined. I could go on and on. But when the conviction of sin came from the Holy Spirit, it was couched in mercy. It may have been painful, but it came with the realization that God disciplines those he loves. This was not punishment, it was correction from a loving heavenly Father. Of course when the challenges are met, it leads not to pride but to praise and thanksgiving for what God has done in and through me. But my identity as his child does not rely on my accomplishments or lack thereof. It is who he has declared me to be.

Discipling others

Having in mind this core identity enabled me to encourage other Christians. This was particularly important in Taiwanese culture where relationships are based on obligation. There may be real love in those associations, but the most fundamental cultural value is to do your duty in the various relationships you have. It's amazing how quickly Taiwanese Christians transition from knowing they are saved by grace to thinking they are sanctified by works. They're suddenly told all the things they have to do as a Christian. It is not that such things are wrong—we should read God's word and pray and involve ourselves in the body of Christ and seek opportunities to proclaim the gospel. But there's a serious problem when sanctification is taught as works-based rather than as a continuing process of grace. Growing in Christ does require effort on our part, as seen in 2 Peter 1:3–8. But viewing ourselves as a beloved child of God recalls the human experience of an infant's development. Learning to walk, for example, is hard work! But a parent loves to be there holding the child's hand, protecting against injury, encouraging, and rejoicing in the child's efforts.

While spurring one another on to growth and good works, can we not also stimulate one another to dependence on our loving heavenly Parent? I've often said to brothers and sisters that there's nothing we can do to make God love us more, nor is there anything we can do to make him love

us less. That is because he has set his boundless love on us, the ones he has called to be his children.

In evangelism

I had bad experiences early in my Christian life with evangelistic efforts. In part this came from poor teaching and perhaps my misunderstanding of that teaching. I was turned off by lapel-grabbing approaches but hadn't seen better models. I mistakenly equated evangelism with pushing people to make a decision for Christ, but it never seemed to happen when I tried it. Eventually, I recognized that God often led me to encounter people who were far away from the point of conversion. They might not even know there is a Creator God, let alone recognize their need of a Savior to be reconciled to that God. As I understood how God repeatedly led me to people very early in their journey toward the cross, I began to relax and simply try to point them a bit farther along the way. God knows my frame, and he knows how he wants to use me. In addition, I was freed to speak more frankly about my joy at being loved as God's child. I could tell unbelievers about this joy without heckling them to believe when they weren't ready. I just wanted to invite them to consider something wonderful.

Journeying through cancer treatment

My husband and I completed our Taiwan field service in July 2014, returning to the US for a final Home Assignment before official retirement on January 1, 2015. We were still musing about what shape retirement would take when the future suddenly veered in a different direction. In early December, I was diagnosed with cancer. This was a total surprise to me, and yet my immediate thought was that God was not surprised. He filled me with his peace that passes understanding. It did not even occur to me to ask "Why?" In fact, I thought "Why not?" It's not necessarily wrong to ask the why question, but I'm grateful I didn't worry about it myself. Instead, I have felt carried along as God's child, knowing he will not abandon me wherever the illness takes me. I also felt in a rather strange way that his flooding me with his peace was a confirmation of how I had tried to encourage people in Taiwan. I certainly didn't doubt what I told them at the time, but when one goes through a physical and emotional challenge oneself, one experiences personally the love and care of God in a new way.

Whatever the challenge, whatever the joy, whatever the stress and frustration, whatever the success and accomplishment, are we responding as children of God, filled with his love and grace, desiring to see him glorified above all else? That's the kind of people we were created and redeemed to be. That is who we are.

When I saw friends or colleagues diagnosed with cancer, I used to wonder how I would "be", should that happen to me. It sounds like a silly question, and it's certainly an unanswerable one—until one actually hears that diagnosis. I suspect with any challenge or difficulty we face, we will "be" who God has made us to be at that moment, even as he uses the new experience to continue forming Christ in us.

Several months before his death from pancreatic cancer, Steve Hayner (former president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Columbia Theological Seminary) was interviewed for *Christianity Today*. Here's his response to the question, "What does it mean to frame life in such a way that when this moment comes, you're ready?"

> That's what discipleship is about. What is happening to us as believers is that God is reshaping us into the image of Christ—that God is doing a work in our earthly life to help us participate in eternity, which is with us now. The great test of faith is not how you live life when everything is good. It's how you live life when things are not good. In this case, they were suddenly very bad, at least in an earthly way of thinking about it.
>
> At the same time, from the beginning, there was a sense that, if there was anything that following Jesus was about, it was preparing me for these kinds of events. In this case it was a catastrophic event. So the issue became one of deciding we were going to live as faithfully as we could day to day. That calling was a call primarily to follow Christ, about following Jesus in and through the rough places of faith. That the valley of the shadow of death was just as much a place of working out salvation as the victorious moments.[5]

My illness is not at the terminal stage Steve Hayner's was when he was diagnosed. However, his words reflect an outlook on life that I think we all need to have. Whatever the challenge, whatever the joy, whatever the stress and frustration, whatever the success and accomplishment, are we responding as children of God, filled with his love and grace, desiring to see him glorified above all else? That's the kind of people we were created and redeemed to *be*. That is who we are.

NOTES

[1] Merriam Webster, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity (accessed 7 March 2015).
[2] American College of Physicians, "ACP Ethics Manual Sixth Edition," http://www.acponline.org/running_practice/ethics/manual/manual6th.htm#self-vips (accessed 6 March 2015).
[3] All biblical quotations are from the English Standard Version.
[4] John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 252.
[5] Mark Labberton, "Following Jesus through Cancer: A Final Conversation with Steve Hayner," http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/february-web-only/following-jesus-through-cancer-final-conversation-with-s.html (accessed 16 March 2015).

So That's What They Call it Now!

Learning from the Past

In recent years, mission theorists and strategists have had a field-day creating and rejecting terms to describe evangelization in places where traditional missionary work is not welcome. While they once wrote of the possibilities of placing people in *restricted-access countries*, they now look for ways to place workers in *creative-access nations* (CAN). In countries that remain open to missionaries but where their presence is not welcomed by certain groups, we look for *creative-access ministries* (CAM) that parallel the work done by Christians in *closed countries*.

Where traditional missionaries aren't welcome, Christians may well gain entry as an educator or businessperson[1] or development worker. Based upon his experience in Afghanistan, J. Christy Wilson wrote *Today's Tentmakers*, the highly influential book that introduced the terms *tentmaker* and *tentmaking* to the Christian world to describe people like Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla who engaged in business to support their gospel ministry (Acts 18:1-4).[2] While the tentmaking terminology is still in use, some prefer to refer to the *platform* a person might need to serve in a CAN or CAM.[3]



The 1991 PSA logo

In the not too distant past, OMF made use of another set of terms to refer to workers who were "called by God and sent out by a local church and/or missionary agency to witness and encourage churches in geographical areas or within communities not easily accessible to those who do not take up local employment."[4] The workers were known as Professional Service Associates (PSAs) and their field of work Professional Service Ministry (PSM). Rather than focusing on a destination (like CANs and CAMs), this designation spotlights the individual and his or her ministry. The recognition that they are "professionals" opens the door for individuals trained in business, relief, education, and other areas to become involved.

In the following article, David Pickard (OMF General Director from 1991–2001) reveals the Fellowship's heart for professional service. Writing in the context of the 125th anniversary of CIM/OMF, he confirms that professional ministry is, along with traditional missionary work, an integral part of our call. He further illustrates how it has opened doors for the gospel in both recent and more distant history. Whatever we call it—a Professional Service Ministry, a platform for service, or a tentmaking opportunity—engaging people through business, research, education, relief, and medical work is an essential component for fulfilling our missionary task.

Editor

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[1] Business as mission or missional business was featured in the June 2011 issue of *Mission Round Table*.
[2] J. Christy Wilson Jr., *Today's Tentmakers: Self-Support: An Alternative Model for Worldwide Witness* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1979).
[3] For an article that considers a number of terms used in recent mission history but focuses on the concept of "platform" see Michael Pocock, Gailyn van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, "Innovation in Mission Operations: Creative-Access Platforms," in *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 209–44.
[4] OMF Central Council 1989 minutes, p 12.

Getting Water to the Thirsty[1]

David Pickard

OMF is involved with Professional Service because it helps us fulfil our commitment under God to the urgent evangelization of East Asia's millions. God is placing an increasing burden on us to fulfil that calling through Christian professionals. It is not something to be tacked on. It is part of our overall commitment. There are still so many people and places that cannot be reached without someone physically going to them. Many of the large numbers of unreached people in Asia live where a person with a ministry label would be excluded, but where a Christian professional with a marketable skill is welcomed.
OMF has always been committed to reaching the "unreached". In Hudson Taylor's day these were called the "inland" people. Whatever the label, unreached people exist in their billions, and they are lost. If OMF is to be true to our commission, we must take them the Water of Life—by whatever means.

A Christian professional told me that the Mongolian government had negotiated a contract to rewrite the curriculum for the whole educational programme. The ministry of education then asked for experts in curriculum

development and also for teachers to come help train their teachers. Christian professionals are welcome for such roles.

At the Asia Mission Congress '90 in Seoul, Korea, I met another brother who had earlier been *persona non grata* in Mongolia and had been thrown out after house arrest. Amazingly, just a month before the Missions Congress, he had signed a contract with the Mongolian government to supply medical services—doctors, nurses, and dentists—to come help in Mongolia. A country that had been totally closed to outside help is opening its doors to professionals. What an opportunity for Christian professionals to share the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!

For 125 years OMF has been committed to the front-line missionary work of evangelism and church planting. But how did we penetrate the hostile environment in South Thailand? It was actually our church planters working with our professionals—doctors and nurses treating leprosy patients—that gave credibility to the truth of the saving power of Christ.

Our love for Jesus Christ requires many different expressions, but the driving, motivating force is our commitment to the Great Commission. Perhaps we could view professional service as a recaptured expression of the old truth and the old commission. That's how I would like to see it.

One of the differences between professional and missionary service is in how you go about sharing your faith. Professionals may need far greater sensitivities because of the ideological or political climate in which they work. They need to be very careful as to both the time and the degree to which they share their faith. Often they can only share their faith at a very personal, intimate level after an in-depth relationship has been established.

Tracting, open-air meetings, public testimonies, posters, or billboards will not be appropriate. But, under the inspiration and motivation of the Holy Spirit, God always has a way of ensuring that the thirsty will find water. The Great Commission professional is there to bring water to people who thirst, whether the water's in a jug, a mug, a gourd, or a bucket. The important thing is to bring Christ.

A second difference is related to the use of time. A missionary is often able to determine how many hours he will spend in study, preparation, or visiting. The professional has a commitment to a high standard of professional excellence. Therefore his discretionary time is going to be limited. This can be frustrating. But his use of time as a professional is still in the service of God.

The professional has a commitment to profess his profession—his calling and expertise. The time tension between job and ministry is, I think, dividing theologically what should be considered as one. One of the greatest needs in Asia today is for Asian professionals to see a model of what a Christian professional should be like in daily life.

The fact that professionals have often used the term "tentmaker" has confused the issue. Tentmaking was a means by which Paul occasionally supported himself as a missionary. When OMF talks about Christian professional service, we are talking about professionals who are committed to their profession and who, through their profession, are demonstrating what it is to be a Christian.

I know of a Christian professional who was working in a Middle East country. At his farewell, speeches were being given and all the polite things were being said. When the Dean of the University spoke he said, "I want to express my real appreciation for this man's Christian integrity in the professional execution of his duties." Now that's powerful!

Christian professionals are men and women who have had a special call from God to work cross-culturally and in the pursuit of their professions to reach out to other men and women with the Good News.

The Christian professional is not in a country reaching people for Christ covertly. He has to be able to answer the question, "Who are you?" honestly. He may say that he is a teacher of English or an engineer or whatever. He may even need to say that he is a Christian engineer. But he needs to be able to say with a clear conscience that he is an engineer first and foremost.

It is absolutely essential for Christian professionals to have a strong support team. This team may be a home church or a group of professionals, but they must understand the deep needs of their friend, and they must realize that they cannot pin their friend's picture up on a missionary board or even refer to him as a missionary. He is not a missionary. He is a Christian professional.

There are many tracks for professional service. You don't have to be a highly qualified technician. You can be a welder or labourer. There are South Korean Christians working on the oil rigs in the Middle East in order to witness for Christ.

One effective tract is to go as a student. Why not go to Phnom Penh, for instance, to learn Cambodian? Or why not take your post-graduate studies in Asia? Whatever the track, you need prayer and special care. OMF can help provide the support structure and the accountability in both ministry and life. OMF also provides the pastoral support we have found to be so vital when the professional is coping with cross-cultural living and cross-cultural ethics in lonely or difficult circumstances.

Who knows how God may rearrange the opportunities for open Christian ministry over the next decade? Who knows which Christian professional may be the key facilitator for following up the next Eastern Europe or Nepal? Our experience is that God can use Christian professionals to bring fresh innovations and flexibility into established, traditional ways of thinking.

We do have to be on our guard against "elitism". Whenever something new is taking place, those who have been doing the old can feel that their work is somehow old-hat. The glamour of the new pioneering can make the long-term slogging in a hard place seem

second-rate. Of course this isn't true, but it will take sensitivity and great effort to ensure that all tracks to fulfil the Great Commission are seen as equally valid, not only in God's sight but in ours as well.

As I look at the future of Asia and OMF, I sense a growing burden from God for professional service ministries. There are so many hundreds of millions of East Asians who are thirsting for the Water of Life, whether they know it or not. I dare not deny them the opportunity to hear of Jesus Christ because of some inflexible view of how the Great Commission should be fulfilled.

On the day I was discussing this with OMF's Area Directors, we came to the point where we sensed God leading us on in this direction, and we were praying for guidance. Interestingly, when I went back to my flat, my wife was talking on the phone to a friend of our daughter, who had just arrived in Singapore wondering about a place to stay. Well, she came and spent the night with us. During our visit she said that she had completed her engineering degree and had been working in Brunei with Shell Oil Company as part of her post-graduate programme. Out of the blue she said, "I'm a Christian and I'm a professional. Do you think there is a place in East Asia for someone like me?"

Perhaps you ought to ask God the same question!

NOTES

[1] This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in *East Asia Millions* (April-May 1991): 40–1. For more information on missional business, see Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen, *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), Patrick Lai, *Tent Making: Business as Missions* (Waynesboro, GA and Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2005), Michael R. Baer, *Business as Mission: The Power of Business in the Kingdom of God* (Seattle: YWAM, 2006), Tom Steffen and Mike Barnett, eds. *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered* (Pasadena: William Carey, 2006), C. Neal Johnson, *Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), Mark Russell, *The Missional Entrepreneur: Principles and Practices for Business as Mission* (Birmingham, Alabama: New Hope, 2009).

Continued from Editorial, p.3.

Nora Hughes considers some tensions faced by those whose identity combines missions and business. Writing as an Asian missionary, Andersius Namsi considers some biblical concepts that should influence our thoughts about identity and explains both positive and negative elements of identity as developed in Asian cultures.

Two personal reflections on identity come from a worker in a creative access nation (CAN) and a recent retiree. Recognizing the conflict faced by many CAN workers, James asks whether they should be thought of Batman or as Bruce Wayne and whether mission organizations need to be repackaged to become more effective Batcaves. Mary Jeanne Buttrey, who with Paul has recently made the transition from Taiwan to southern California, slowly came to understand that identity is not based upon one's identity card or passport or role or occupation but on being a child of God. This realization helped her face personal inadequacies, ministry doing discipleship and evangelism, and her recent fight with cancer.

Our final paper looks back nearly twenty-five years to recall David Pickard's take on "Professional Service Ministry", the term then used to cover what is now often known as Creative Access Ministry. The former OMF General Director sees sending professional workers into places where traditional missionaries cannot follow as a means to reach today's "inland" people and urges them to share their faith wisely in spite of their time constraints. His exhortation that professionals should perform their duties to a high level of excellence should challenge us all.

Our next issue will turn to the matter of being salt and light as we work among people from various cultures. Many of the articles will be produced by our International Daniel Team who specialize in language and culture acquisition. The following instalment will focus on the narrative or story aspects of communicating the gospel. If you believe that you have something to share or know of an important book that we should consider for review, please let me know.

Walter McConnell
Editor
Mission Round Table

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[1] J. H. Taylor, *A Retrospect*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: CIM, n.d.), 52.
[2] A. J. Broomhall records Taylor's plan to travel with Joseph Edkins in "native costume" in March 1854. *Over the Treaty Wall* (Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton and OMF, 1982), 148.



傳—海外基督使團150週年紀念文集

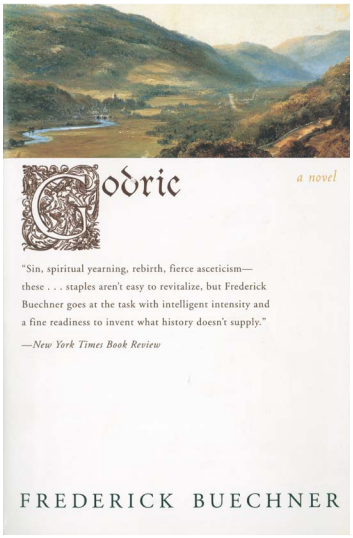
責任編輯:馮鄭珍妮 。香港:海外基督使團, 2015. 235 pp.

Growing Mission: God Multiplies Mission Movements in Asia

Edited by Jennie Fung. Hong Kong: OMF, 2015. 235 pp.

2015年, 中國內地會/海外基督使團成立一百五十年。為述說神的大工, 我們特別選了十個東亞地區, 其中各自不同的事工, 邀請三代的同工, 分享他們在這些事工上的參與。這些同工可能互不認識, 也可能曾拍檔事奉, 不論如何, 他們的故事卻是絲絲緊扣, 互相呼應, 拼湊出一幅美麗的拼圖, 反映出神在意想不到的地方, 巧妙無比的安排。

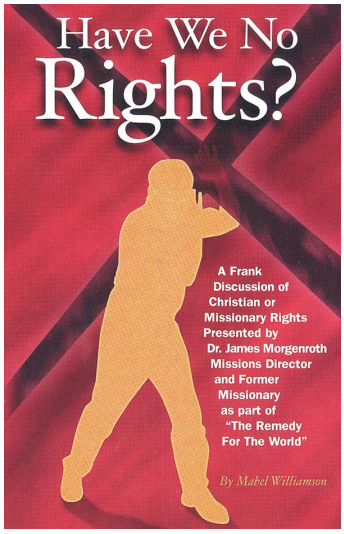
This book was written to commemorate the 150th anniversary of CIM/OMF by narrating God's mighty work in ten different East Asian countries, through various ministries, and three generations of workers. While the individuals who tell these tales may not have partnered in ministry or even met, their stories come together to form a beautiful jigsaw that reflects God's incredible handiwork and matchless provision. It is currently available in traditional Chinese characters, and will soon be published in English and Korean.



Godric

By Frederick Buechner. New York: HarperCollins, 1980. viii + 178 pp.
Reviewed by Walter McConnell.

Godric is the story of a hermit, a holy man. Or is he? Born the year before William the Conqueror led his Norman army into England, Godric begins his life the son of a free-man in Walpole, Norfolk and continues until his 105th year, the last sixty of which he spent in isolation in Finchale, County Durham. Buechner's retelling of Godric's life sparkles like the icy water of the River Ware that ran before the saint's cairn, the source of his physical life and instrument by which he mortified his flesh. This modern account departs from Reginald's ancient hagiography in that it presents a much more earthly ascetic who continually battled the lusts of the flesh and eyes, and frequently gave in. This Godric was a pedlar of sacred objects, a pirate, and a lecher who encountered Christ though a dead porpoise and after ferrying pilgrims to the Holy Land. In lyrical tones, Buechner's saint recalls his Jordan experience. "Nothing I ever knew before and nothing I have ever come to know from then till now can match the holy mirth and madness of that time. Many's the sin I've clipped to since. Many's the dark and savage night of doubt. Many's the prayer I haven't prayed, the friend I've hurt, the kindness left undone. But this I know. The Godric that waded out of the Jordan soaked and dripping wet that day was not the Godric that went wading in" (pp 104-5). And yet, and yet, this son of Adam's identity was not changed forever. The sins he had heretofore pursued followed him through life, hounding and haunting him time and again. Though the monk sent to record his life may have been fooled into thinking he was wholly holy, the hermit knew better and testifies to our need to examine our lives to understand the hold sin has on us and seek the Christ who came to free us from from its presence and power.

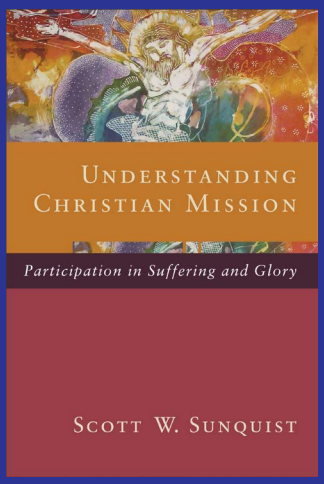


Have We No Rights?: A Frank Discussion of the "Rights" of Missionaries

By Mabel Williamson. Chicago: Moody, 1957. 146 pp.
Reviewed by Walter McConnell.

This short book, by a CIM/OMF missionary of an earlier generation, addresses issues that everyone with a role in the *missio dei* should reflect upon, as they remind us that our identity should not be built upon our backgrounds or relationships or achievements or national pride. Williamson uses copious examples to show how real missionaries react to life overseas, and though some of her illustrations are a bit dated, they give us insight into life of an earlier age when missionaries faced concerns that aren't that different from the major problems before us now. Through it all she reminds us that our identity should reflect the attitude of Jesus who gave up his rights to serve the Father in a needy world. A free ebook can be downloaded from IPS or Gutenberg.org.

Recommended Books

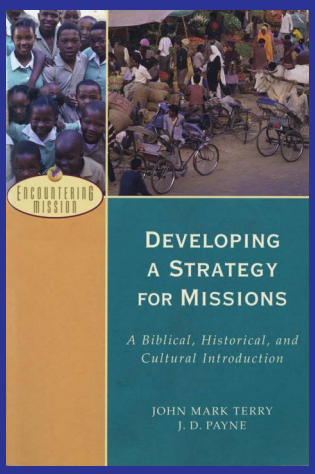


Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory.

By Scott W. Sunquist. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. xiv + 448 pp.

Understanding Christian Mission is an introduction to mission that is essentially three books in one. Part 1 sets the historical background, overviewing the spread of the church in the ancient and medieval world, showing how mission, colonization, civilization, and commerce have been intertwined since the age of Columbus, and outlining the reconception of mission after World War II and the collapse of the colonial era. Part 2 builds a trinitarian theology of mission that is rooted in the life, teaching, and ministry of Jesus and his experience of suffering and glory. Christ's experience should define Christian existence and should permeate the church because it is a mark of true spiritually. Part 3 sets out a missional ecclesiology that aims to involve the whole church in mission as it follows the God whose very nature is missional. Three themes highlight the church's mission in the modern world: urban mission, partnership, and spirituality.

Due to its breadth and depth, clarity and charity, academic insight and spiritual warmth this book delivers. The historical section benefits readers by grounding the missionary task in history and putting evangelical missions into perspective by placing it alongside Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and ecumenical missions—a feat rarely attempted in evangelical missions literature. The theological and practical sections—following the words of the subtitle—remind us that just as the Lord experienced suffering and glory, so too will his church. In spite of our difficulties, the book wonderfully proclaims that "The final word in mission is glory—not suffering" (410). While the book is best suited for a course on Christian mission, it is accessible to laypeople and should be read by everyone who has a part in the *missio Dei*. *Understanding Christian Mission* received the *Christianity Today* book award for missions in 2014.



Developing a Strategy for Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Introduction

J. D. Payne and John Mark Terry. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. x + 304 pp.

Ever since William Carey published *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, a long line of books has been written to promote missions. Comparably few, however, highlight the *means* of taking the gospel to the world. *Developing a Strategy for Missions* was written to demonstrate how mission theory can be applied in a step by step fashion that helps us craft, implement, and evaluate the methods used to plant churches and enable them to grow. The book shows that strategy is future-focused and requires planning as we engage people with the gospel. By comparing and contrasting mission strategy to military and business strategy, Payne and Terry demonstrate that the focus of mission is not on taking territory or selling a product, but on making disciples.

The book is at once broad, practical, and accessible. Though the book's biblical analysis and historical survey is often extremely light and the conclusions drawn are not always compelling, the broad-brush picture it paints covers a lot of ground. While it will be used in mission classes, the book's true value will be appreciated by church-planting practitioners, particularly those working with few local Christian partners. Readers will gain an introduction to mission strategy, learn to recognize the objections to strategizing, and discover the biblical and missiological principles involved in pioneer situations. After laying the foundations, the book displays the tools and processes of cultural research and demonstrates how to use them. It then provides guidelines for processing vision statements, forming teams, assessing resources, setting and reaching goals, and evaluating the whole process. Frequent sidebars introduce various topics and provide questions for reflection.
This book is a must for mission strategists and church planters, and would benefit many other missionaries.