

5 The teaching challenge: Since ideally media messages for a particular culture should be produced by people within that culture, how can local expertise be developed, supported, and encouraged?

- What partnerships can support these efforts?
- How to discover and inventory local talent in [location]?
- The basics: what do local media producers already know? What more do they need to know?

Ugis Sildegs wrote:

Mission work involves not only preaching and teaching the Gospel, but also preparing everyone to serve in their calling and capacity. Available local talents and skilled people should be recognized and, if possible, put to good use. Particularly, it is important for media outreach. A big difference can be made, for example, discovering in our midst tech savvy people, outstanding artists or excellent writers who are willing to devote their time and gifts to the mission.

I am convinced that the best way to start is, first, by knowing and understanding what kind of people are available and what kind of media they are most suitable for. That can serve as the basis on which to build and add what is necessary, afterwards improving their skills and qualifications. Thus the basis should be our own Church people. Of course, it is possible to employ all sorts of professionals, but, if they are unbelievers, they will fail to understand and participate properly in the mission.

In our work in Latvia the main force behind our paper were pastors who besides their congregational ministry did most of the writing, interviewing and editing for *Latvian Lutheran*. Some pastors were better writers than others. But in these years all of us managed to improve our skills of writing and communicating, significantly. Since our Church and newspaper mission was closely correlated, both of those ministries benefited and could become only better.

We discovered that in our congregations there were some very good writers, artists, poets who could contribute to our media work. They were able to come up with important feedback, questions, suggestions and recommendations, which helped to make our paper finer and improve our mission.

The skills and qualifications which our pastors obtained during publishing *Latvian Lutheran* have been very beneficial to us, since in recent years we had no choice but to look for secular jobs and become bi-vocational. Today two of our pastors earn their living as professional journalists for the biggest daily business newspaper, and another writes regular articles for the same paper. So the experience we gained continues to be a blessing for us.

We also should recognize and commend the assistance and cooperation from our sister Church bodies in USA. The most important help has been the theological education. Two of our men have received degrees from the Bethany Seminary. Several others have participated in Summer Quarters. Particularly in the beginning of our mission we gained a lot of knowledge, inspiration, good advice and valuable books from our visiting professors.

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Jas Lonnquist and Mike Klebig wrote:

Since we aren't boots-on-the-ground missionaries, we won't address the question of how to find and nurture talent in a particular region. Instead, we'll discuss tools that can be used for teaching and training. M & J

An Ethiopian eunuch, riding in a chariot, puzzles over the meaning of scripture. Two men walking the road to Emmaus ponder recent painful events. In each case, someone appears to share and explain scripture, and connect the dots for the person with the searching heart. Today, media and technology can help us do the same!

The Potential: Teachers can create a course of study and, using media technology, share it with millions, massively amplifying every effort.

Students can learn anywhere, anytime as long as they have materials, access, and power.

Technology provides unprecedented opportunities to share media, including:

- **Film:** A projector, brought on back of motorcycle, plays a docudrama of Jesus' life on makeshift screens in remote corners of the world. *(Requires film print, projector, power source, a screen, and transportation)*
- **Online courses:** A foreign national studies for the ministry in his own language, his own country. Materials have been approved so teaching is accurate and consistent. A woman takes a Bible information class and asks questions of a pastor in live chats and email. *(Requires a computer, power source, internet connection.)*
- **Radio:** A crowd of neighbors gather by a hut where a fix tuned radio (\$25, operates on solar power) plays a Christian radio program. The radio station is portable and missionaries trained locals to operate the station. *(Requires license and/or government approval to operate, radio station, transmitter, programming, radios).*
- **iPad:** Video Sunday School materials are shared with an illiterate audience in a remote area. The portable system was brought in a missionary's suitcase and will be left with the class. Inexpensive flash drives provide additional media. *(Requires device, power, data on drive)*
- **iPod:** Hundreds of tiny, inexpensive iPods loaded with gospel messages in the native language are given away in a remote village. Users in areas with internet access subscribe to ongoing series. *(Requires device. For subscription, requires internet access.)*
- **DVD:** A family with no access to a church in China takes a full year of sermon DVDs recorded the previous year. Messages track with the church calendar. They invite neighbors. *(DVD Production requires camera, audio. May require computer for editing. Playback requires computer or DVD player. Duplicator may be required if distribution is wide or to duplicate in alternate format. Printer may be required to put an image on DVD.)*

- **Smartphones:** A Masai man reads a daily scripture on a smartphone. Cell phones send SMS text messages in developing countries. Since 2002, phones have surpassed computers as a means of accessing the internet. 4 billion users worldwide. *(Requires feature phone, internet access, some kind of power – in remote parts of the world, may be DC from a vehicle or solar.)*

SAMPLES OF WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING *(For information only – not an endorsement of services or content)*

- **The Hope** www.thehopeproject.com
An 80-minute film produced by Mars Hill Productions in collaboration with filmmakers around the world detailing the redemption story. Translated into many languages. Study guides. Affiliation: Belief statement on www.mars-hill.org.
- **Simplifying the Web for Ministry** <http://churchsmo.com>
Information on using iPod, iPad, social media, video, and more in ministry and missions. Affiliation: Not Stated
- **Christian Missionary App** <http://christianmissionaryapp.com>
iPad app helps you repeat Bible verses in any language as well as simple phrases like “May I pray with you?” Affiliation: Not stated
- **Missionary Help** <http://missionaryhelp.com/?p=1123>
Information on starting an SMS (text messages) ministry. Affiliation: Author Jonathan Parsons
- **Your Network of Praise (YNOP)** www.ynop.org
Christian outreach using radio. Many outreach efforts. Affiliation: Non-denominational
- **Time of Grace** www.timeofgrace.org
Outreach using TV, streaming video on internet, and other media. Affiliation: Wis. Evangelical Lutheran Synod
- **Redcliffe University (Bible College in the U.K.)** <http://www.oscar.org.uk/index.htm>
“If you're involved or interested in world mission or Christian work around the world, OSCAR is your gateway to useful information, advice and resources.” Timely information, good technical knowledge, newsletter. Affiliation: Nondenominational

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Paul Hartman wrote:

Through its coordinators Multi-Language Publications seeks to help identify local talent and guide, encourage and support them in the publishing process.

The Asia Publications Conference, scheduled for the week of October 29 to November 2 in Hong Kong will bring together nationals and missionaries working in the area of publications. Attendees will come from areas that reach out in Cantonese, Hindi, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Nepali, Telugu, Thai, Tibetan, Urdu (and related languages), and Vietnamese. Dr. ER Wendland (WELS Central Africa) and Dr. Soesilo (UBS-Asia) will help attendees consider the production or adaptation of publications oriented to the needs of their targeted audiences. Martin Spriggs will help attendees see how the Intranet can be used to share files and track the development of publications.

Ongoing training and development of local talent is a critical need. One idea that has surfaced is a degree program in translation studies at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Students would come from cross-cultural publishing programs of our fellowship. Prerequisites might include a degree from a national seminary of our fellowship. The purpose of the degree program would be to help students articulate the needs of their targeted audiences compared to the audiences for which source materials were produced. The curriculum might be delivered through seminars, distance learning, attendance at one or two summer quarters at WLS and study projects related to the publishing programs of the students.

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Terry Schultz wrote:

I believe every world mission field would benefit from having national church members trained in video production with access to basic production

equipment. What would be the most viable way to deliver a video production education to a national? Bring the education to the foreign country, or bring the foreign student to the United States? Could ongoing instruction be offered over the Internet?

How about a media institute designed specifically for foreign students that teaches the basics of video production? How long would it take for a student to complete such a program? The local church leadership could easily identify potential students. Perhaps the video skills learned at the institute would translate into a marketable skill for the student in his home country.

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John Lawrenz wrote:

Permit this Old Testament professor a sidebar on the teaching profession as viewed from the Bible before turning to the questions posed by our conference planners under this rubric.

God's plan at the beginning was for parents to teach their children. Parents mentored their children and passed on what life had taught them. Under Moses education buttressed the Torah, which is by definition what God wanted Israel to know and observe. Moses marshaled the wider community. He equipped the nation with a "textbook" and with five percent of the population teaching what the book said. The school year was the religious "calendar" that called for continuing education and set appointed times for repeated refreshers. The High Priest was "superintendent," and the priests and Levites were the heads of regional schools. In villages the Levites would teach the heads of clans and families. The Levites in turn were to tutor the heads of the local households. Finally, at home fathers taught their children. In this way God's covenant was supposed to pass from generation to generation. In actuality the command "teach your children!" was honored more in the breach than in the observance.

David placed a patch on the system after the sons of Eli brought about the destruction of the

tabernacle in Shiloh which had served for hundreds of years as "education headquarters." Kings were to make their own personal copy of God's instructions and see to it that the old educational system got a second life. Sadly, the system broke down again. Before David the Word of God was scarce according to the writer of 1 Samuel. After David there was a famine of the Word according to Amos.

Ezra the scribe is credited by tradition with the inauguration of the Sabbath school concept, another reform. Ezra himself was a teacher. He gathered the scriptures and urged the remnant of Judah to learn from them in community gathering places later known as synagogues. Jesus learned at these schools. At 12 Jesus became a "son of the commandment." This meant he had mastered the contents and language of the Torah and was ready to publicly read what he had learned. The Apostle Paul learned God's ways from Gamaliel. Timothy learned from his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois. Paul came full circle when he admonished parents to bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:2).

Teaching and preaching are a perfectly matched pair in Ephesians 4:11. If Christ is to be preached in the world, then he must be taught as well. Jesus said "Go!" and he said "teach them to observe everything I have commanded you." Jesus promised his presence where two or three are gathered. Jesus sent his Spirit to bear witness to everything.

Mass media must preach and teach Christ and teach what his advent means. Repentance comes from a knowledge of the law. Forgiveness, life and salvation flow from the Gospel. Can there be such things as mass eye contact, mass laying on of hands, mass prayer that sums up and focuses the peculiar needs of a particular sinner? Media can't baptize nor can it digitally beam the elements of Holy Communion.

Western education, something being imitated in East Asia, cannot do it either. At the risk of oversimplification, Western education is since the Renaissance a highly organized, streamlined,

and structured system not unlike mass media. Students are gathered in cohorts, walked through a schedule of set hours, weeks, semesters and years, and are pushed through curricula that may or may not equip the learner for what he needs to know for time and eternity. American education puts a premium on doing it yourself and exploring options to conquer the unknown. At their worst, schools have taken over what parents were meant to do and leave the learner unequipped for eternity.

The densely populated and largely non-Christian mission field of East Asia has encountered the Western world. Though it imitates American educational methodology, Chinese education marches to a different drummer. The Chinese revere the teacher as an authority figure and as a bulwark of cross-generational stability. What the group knows is more important than what the individual learns. Age trumps youth. Earning the respect of peers is golden. So too is success, good health, long life and accumulated wealth.

China is churning out literate people. The sheer numbers guarantee that there will be educated leaders in most any field of human endeavor. Without respect for the revealed Creator, schools in East Asia have embraced evolutionary science wholeheartedly. Chinese excel in mathematics. Western humanities are little known. Eastern humanities are making a comeback after the Cultural Revolution. Business ethics are pragmatic. Vocations serve the needs of the state. What is missing is the reason for living and an explanation for dying. As a consequence there is a spiritual hunger that appears to match that at the first advent of Christ when the Roman world was spiritually empty.

Back then, the Gospel spread person to person. Mass media and the instruments of mass media have the power to move millions and muster instantaneous responses. Thus—after much thought—I wonder out loud whether mass media could become a huge and volatile mouthpiece of the prince of this World far quicker than a gigantic stimulus for repentance and regeneration.

One huge and necessary thing to be mastered through education in East Asia is language. Chinese is both a spoken and written phenomenon largely unknown in our Christian circles. The hundreds of Chinese dialects use a common set of picto/script “icons” as conduits for meaning. There is no Chinese alphabet. This system was headed for obsolescence, but has since been rescued by the digital age. It is no longer necessary to learn a brush-stroke order or to elegantly shape each character so that the proportions are just right. The computer does it. The Christian who wishes to communicate, however, still needs to speak Mandarin, the major spoken dialect, and acquire skill in reading and writing the written code in simplified characters. The thousands of years of history that have gone into the development of Chinese orthography and expression mean that there is no shortcut. Mass media can use the Chinese language if the script writers know what they are writing. The writers can glorify Christ if they know what the Holy Spirit teaches. The two have to work hand in hand.

In the current context bilingual education within schools, utilizing technology on a small scale provides missionaries with a necessary bridge. The teacher/preacher whose roots are in unilingual America needs to speak, write and think like a Chinese or he will never adequately make those adjustments in his own thinking that communicate God’s message.

A unique insight into Christ’s work in these last days was provided by the faculty of the Lutheran Theological Seminary of the Wisconsin Synod in the years before World War I.

I believe their convictions instruct our mission endeavors in the 21st century. In Wauwatosa, the home of the WELS seminary in those days, men decided that the words of the prophets and apostles needed to be read in the form they were written, that is, in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. These same Wauwatosa men warned against doing God’s teaching primarily on the basis of *Vatertheologie*.

What the world values in education is built each generation on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Inherited knowledge begets all we

know and makes it likely that we will come to learn more. In theology, however, it is different. The sermons, books, and theological works of the past have value because they addressed God’s enduring truth for their times. They are useful, but they are not the place to begin. Only the Word itself as written can be used by the Holy Spirit to validate speech. That same Word is the only thing that can keep human minds from obscuring the content of what the Holy Spirit teaches.

Bad translations of the Bible are inhibitors, yet not without their place. Good translations are better. The Hebrew-speaking prophets and the Greek-speaking apostles are by far the best. Theological works, based squarely on biblical teaching, even in a bad translation are not without their limited value. Good translations are better. Having leaders in the Chinese church who can go to Moses, the prophets, the evangelists and apostles is best.

Mass media won’t do such things, even though lesser media out of an arsenal of technological wonders can help. Today we can search and compare words, phrases and syntax in Greek and Hebrew through such programs as Logos and BibleWorks. We can store notes and hard won insights for later retrieval. We can aim to arrive at a state of theological interdependence in a mission field like modern China. The enduring truths of God, once grasped by the Holy Spirit’s power will be best expressed to the Chinese people in a written or spoken Chinese that breathes the Law and Gospel drawn from Scripture.

Technology is not new. It has always been there to augment person to person sharing of God’s Word. The simple spoken word was God’s vehicle in the Garden of Eden. Moses parlayed his knowledge of the newly developed Semitic alphabet to write the first scripture. Later Ezra pioneered the need for libraries and translations. The early church adopted the easy-to-flip Bible codex as a tech improvement over an armful of scrolls that had to be coiled and recoiled with every use. Luther’s testimony spread throughout Europe because he utilized the printing press. God’s Word moved on telegraph

wires in the mid-19th century. Then came radio, TV, and now digitalization. The Christian teacher in East Asia will accept the 21st century as rich in technological tools. He will use them and rejoice to do so. He will use them well and take the time to master their potential for communication.

But the 21st century teacher in East Asia will not forget that the heart of Christ's mission is speaking God's truth in love through person-to-person communication that honors Christ and believes that only the Holy Spirit can kindle faith and move an individual from light to darkness.

What do I see? We teachers teach the way we were taught. We emerged from a layered process that began for most of us in childhood and ended with a graduation and a calling sometime in our 20s. The vast majority went to serve folks who entered God's kingdom through baptism as children. In East Asia there is no layering. Most gathered Christian congregations are made up predominantly of adult converts. Few have the mentoring skills of parents whom God has always commissioned as the first teachers for a little child. We do what we know. If there is a continuum in ministerial education in WELS/ELS it emphasizes the cognitive skills that congregations seek in a pastor early in the educational process. Along the way we expect pastors to accrue the people skills that belong to the affective domain. This usually happens in the course of eight to a dozen years. In East Asia this continuum is flipped. A love for people and affective skills are prized early in a potential pastor's journey to the pastoral ministry. A cognitive grasp of biblical doctrine is developed late and sometimes imperfectly. Thus continuing education is a must if doctrinal maturity is an eventual goal.

Moreover, East Asia's ministry of Word and sacrament comes with two tiers. The graduate is almost never ordained. He serves as an evangelist and only after he nears age 40 is he deemed ready to become a pastor. The evangelist is in very real sense a "junior" pastor. Many men pay their own way into the ministry. Scholarships and direct subsidy for students are both rare, even though living costs, particularly for a roof over one's head is steep. As a result

recruitment of men is not easy. Many feel they must salt away enough to support themselves and a family before considering seminary training.

In Hong Kong we have started a seminary that is not all that different in externals from Bethany Evangelical Theological Seminary or Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. There is a calling today in East Asia to build Christian families from the bottom up. Our partners are Chinese Christian parents. Our partners are the evangelists and pastors who shepherd existing Chinese Christian congregations. Our partners are also all the people who can open up to us the culture and language and history and ethos of the Chinese and other Asian peoples. We can't be teaching unless we learn. And we can't learn God's way unless we stand firmly alongside God's prophets and apostles with the crucified and risen Jesus Christ in our midst and the Holy Spirit as our constant teacher, all to the glory of the Father.

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