

From the Editor's Desk



Dear Reader.

The 2007 conference of the International Society for Frontier Missiology was an inspiring success. As usual, it was the only scholarly conference of the year that was intentionally intergenerational.

But I will let you read about it on page 172.

Accordingly, you will find some of the key presentations from the ISFM conference in this issue (and also in the next issue). What an amazing lineup of key people were presenting. When people like that get together and compare notes, mission speeds up!

However, we have also decided to make space for a potentially earth-shaking event. Maybe it won't turn out that way. You, too, can guess. But it is entirely possible that these 138 Muslim leaders are going to lead the way into massive reductions of tension between global Christian and Islamic worlds. Go ahead. Read their words for yourself (pp. 203–14).

And please reflect on the serious response of the scholars at Yale (pp. 215–17), written by people we consider impressive. Their thoughtful response to it makes plain how serious the Muslim bolt from the blue actually is.

If you combine the heady implications of the ISFM documents here with the staggering significance of the Muslim document, there is much to rejoice in and pray about. Things are changing, profoundly. We have to run to stay abreast.

Another new “New” thing is the first international meeting at Bangkok of the new Asian Society of Missiology. See page 218 for at least a brief note, plus a brief update on page 219 on the meetings co-sponsored by the major evangelical church and mission associations of South Korea and our own journal and ISFM.

First, take a deep breath!

Ralph D. Winter

Editor, *IJFM*

P.S. Please rejoice with us: next year the IJFM will publish its 25th volume. Expect a lot of surprises and new things as we celebrate a quarter century of attention to the frontiers of mission.

The views expressed in *IJFM* are those of the various authors and not necessarily those of the journal's editors, the International Society for Frontier Missiology or the Society's executive committee.

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ISFM 2007 Report



Participants interact concerning the baggage of terminology in contemporary mission.

Unusual. That's perhaps the best way to describe the 2007 annual meeting of the International Society for Frontier Missiology, held September 15-17. Sixty of us gathered in the cafeteria of the International Linguistics Center in Dallas, TX around the theme "India: Debating Global Missiological Flashpoints." Rarely, if ever, has a single country or region served as the basis of discussion for an ISFM annual meeting.

This year's ISFM had a special intergenerational, even family, feel to it. Our youngest participant (and participate he did, asking several good questions) was ten years old. In addition to missionaries, missiologists, mobilizers, researchers and two Brahmin followers of Christ, we also had families, students, teens and young adults.

One highlight of the conference was our Sunday morning worship time. While most Christ-followers in the Dallas area were singing hymns or choruses, many of us sat cross-legged on the floor singing *Bhajans* in Hindi as the smell of incense filled the room.

While we can't recreate the atmosphere of the ISFM in paper and ink, we can bring you at least some of the papers in this and the next issues of *IJFM*. Other papers will not be available due to prior publication commitments, etc.

In this issue, you will find presentations by Raghav Krishna (pp. 173-177), Ryan Stevens (pp. 179-184), H. L. Richard (followed by an exchange of responses between Richard and Gordon-Conwell Seminary Professor Timothy Tennent, pp. 185-197) and Brian Schrag (pp. 199-202). Hebert Hoefler's paper *What's in a Name?: The Baggage of Terminology in Contemporary Mission* will appear in the next issue of *IJFM*.

Todd Johnson, Director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, presented *India as the Statistical Center of Gravity of Frontier Missions*. Among other things, Johnson reminded us that, tragically, most Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus have still never met a follower of Christ. Some of his conclusions can be found in the October 2007 issue of *EMQ*.

Jim Slack, senior missiologist with the IMB (Southern Baptist Convention), shared *A Comparative Study of the Characteristics of Church Planting Movements with Special Attention Given to those in India and South Asia*. Based on his research, Slack warned about the practice of introducing outside financial resources into such movements, a practice that consistently aborts potential CPMs or causes existing ones to plateau.

J.V., another Brahmin follower of Christ, also shared his story, entitled *My Journey to and with my Shepherd*.

On the final morning, we had a panel discussion, moderated by 2007 ISFM president Chong Kim. The participants included Ralph D. Winter, H.L. Richard, Ryan Stevens, Herbert Hoefler, Brian Schrag, and Jim Slack.

The panel discussion dealt with issues such as caste and the church; Yesu Bhaktas and the world Christian community; the fear of syncretism; best ways to mobilize the average North American church to frontier mission action; the effectiveness of short-term missions; spiritual warfare, and much more.

Ralph D. Winter, senior editor of *IJFM*, gave the final wrap up.

Hope to see you next year! Stay tuned for more information. **IJFM**

The *IJFM* is published in the name of the International Student Leaders Coalition for Frontier Missions, a fellowship of younger leaders committed to the purposes of the twin consultations of Edinburgh 1980: *The World Consultation on Frontier Missions* and the *International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions*. As an expression of the ongoing concerns of Edinburgh 1980, the *IJFM* seeks to:

- ☞ promote intergenerational dialogue between senior and junior mission leaders;
- ☞ cultivate an international fraternity of thought in the development of frontier missiology;
- ☞ highlight the need to maintain, renew, and create mission agencies as vehicles for frontier missions;
- ☞ encourage multidimensional and interdisciplinary studies;
- ☞ foster spiritual devotion as well as intellectual growth; and
- ☞ advocate "A Church for Every People."

Mission frontiers, like other frontiers, represent boundaries or barriers beyond which we must go yet beyond which we may not be able to see clearly and boundaries which may even be disputed or denied. Their study involves the discovery and evaluation of the unknown or even the reevaluation of the known. But unlike other frontiers, mission frontiers is a subject specifically concerned to explore and exposit areas and ideas and insights related to the glorification of God in all the nations (peoples) of the world, "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God." (Acts 26:18)

Subscribers and other readers of the *IJFM* (due to ongoing promotion) come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Mission professors, field missionaries, young adult mission mobilizers, college librarians, mission executives, and mission researchers all look to the *IJFM* for the latest thinking in frontier missiology.