

Editorial

Transitioning Mission Approaches

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The current worldwide, multi-generational transition of Christian mission manifests itself in kaleidoscopic fashion. Perhaps the most obvious, and certainly the most cited, aspect of the transition is the multidirectional, “everywhere to everywhere” movement of missionaries, a result of Christianity’s large-scale demographic southward shift. The manifestation taken up in this issue of *Global Missiology* involves the various transitions taking place in approaches to Christian mission. These changes are largely due to the cross-cultural interactions that have been taking place between Western and non-Western settings ever since Europeans, including gospel emissaries, began migrating worldwide a half-millennium ago.

Analyses of the complex, cross-cultural interactions that underlie transitioning mission approaches necessarily are nuanced and multidimensional. Western-African interactions have often been clouded by fundamentally contrasting cosmologies, particularly as Western secular-scientific worldviews have ostensibly explained away spiritual realities that inhabit more populated African universes. Examining how the use of metaphors plays a central role in such interactions is the insightful contribution that Jim Harries’ article makes here. For his part in examining how African missiologies can most constructively progress, *Global Missiology* overall editor Enoch Wan applies the much-discussed contrast between organizationally-oriented and numerically-evaluated Western approaches with more relationally-focused missiologies; “relational missiology” will be taken up in Part II of Wan’s analysis, scheduled for the upcoming July issue.

Cross-cultural interactions inevitably are multifaceted, and Roger Lowther’s exploration of art and missions highlights a dimension too often neglected. Readers should find Lowther’s theological and strategic considerations stimulating, particularly insofar as they are applied to the missiologically enigmatic context of Japan. Also, the two book reviews included deal with Middle Eastern realities that cannot skirt around political, economic, social, and justice issues. Palestinian Pastor Hanna Massad offers both a review and a book reviewed, adding important explanations of situations in ongoing, desperate need of vibrant gospel witness.

Readers will no doubt welcome the overdue return of a Cross-Cultural Humor contribution as well. May these words contribute even a little bit to our concurring with the Psalmist: “Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them’” (Psalm 126:2).