

Editorial

What Is New and What is Old

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Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2021

After instructing his followers through several parables Jesus asked his disciples, “Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, ‘Yes.’ And he said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old’” (Matthew 13:51-52).

Gospel ministry—particularly cross-cultural gospel ministry—involves a new-old dynamic. There are new settings, new people, new technologies, new languages. There is also the same triune God, the same need to receive, the same posture of humble service. New challenges and questions emerge in gospel ministry; and, earlier examples, methods, and principles inform how to meet such new opportunities in gospel service. Most importantly, while he gives new insights into his spectacular goodness and holiness through redemptively working new settings, the same God doggedly keeps his eternal covenant to re-make his sin-wracked creation into a glorious new heaven and earth.

This issue’s articles all pointedly analyze, instruct, and exhort how servants in mission are to “bring out of [the gospel’s] treasure what is new and what is old.” Oral peoples like the Maasai need a new biblical hermeneutic that matches their generations-old, inherited mental framework. A new work of God’s Spirit among the Zulus has come about through tried-and-true preaching on repentance and faith and humble concrete service. Technologically-shaped African youth have new questions to be met by biblical, time-proven postures of serious listening and focused study. Today’s secular Spaniards need to see contemporary examples of Christians who live genuinely and sacrificially.

Noteworthy as well is the call for articles for next October’s issue on the new and old theme of “Pentecostal / Spirit-Empowered Mission.” Mission movements that explicitly acknowledge the fresh work of God’s Spirit have swept across recent generations of worldwide Christianity. These movements are new, yet the same Spirit who has been at work across the generations is acknowledged as empowering more contemporary revivals and large-scale conversions to faith in Jesus Christ.

May God continue use the articles before you here to guide you, and those you serve, in “bringing out of [the gospel’s] treasure what is new and what is old.”