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## Evangelical Review of Theology

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witness to their risen Lord and Master in word and deed. The opportunities which present themselves in everyday life, in all walks of life, should be placed in his service. In another era the reformers, when faced with the Muslim in Eastern Europe, sought to prepare their people going into battle as soldiers to use the opportunities they might have if they were prisoners (*Luther's Works* vol. 53:571f.). Today, in various parts of the Arab world alone there are thousands of people, particularly from the West, employed by governments and private companies. Among these a not inconsiderable number are committed Christians who, without compromising their position as technical advisers, experts or employees, have many opportunities in the way they carry out their work, in personal relationships and during their spare time to bear witness to Christ (Conn 1977:3). p. 56

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## Assistance Programs Require Partnership

Vinay Samuel and Charles Corwin

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*In this article a national Asian Church leader and a former western missionary together call for better cross-cultural research and greater sensitivity to historical and psychodynamic*

*factors that will alleviate the humiliating role playing and paternalism that mar many compassionate relief and development programmes.*

*The authors explore patterns of partnership in initiating, deciding and implementing programmes that will help minimise the tensions of donor-receptor and para-Church conflicts. Only such partnerships can liberate both donor and receptor.*

Many national churches in the Third World are on the eve of establishing their credibility in society and government. Their leaders are being brought into councils on planning and development. Upon this scene emerges another principal—the national church of the West, willing to share its resources, eager to carry out the cultural and evangelistic mandates laid upon it. Yet often this well-intentioned church behaves in ways reminiscent of actual receptors of aid in the Third World—oblivious of the historical process and the psychodynamics of a donor-receptor relationship.

Such behaviour can undermine long term efforts for establishing credibility by the Third World national church and frustrate long-range goals for self-sufficiency desired by the Western church. The thesis of this article is that the crucial credibility and self-sufficiency of the Third World evangelical church can be enhanced by its counterpart in the West, if both churches work together on the principle of partnership in the initiation, decision-making and implementation of assistance programs.

## **PARTNERSHIP IN INITIATION**

Initiation for famine relief of Jerusalem Christians came from Jerusalem church leaders. They raised the issue while Paul visited them on another errand. Then and there Paul determined to remember the poor ([Gal. 2:10](#)), organized an aid program among P. 58 daughter churches, and finally delivered that aid in person to the Jerusalem church. The vicissitudes of life had precipitated a demeaning role-reversal for the mother church; it had become the receptor culture. As representative of the donor culture, Paul was sensitive to the explosive psycho-dynamics going on during that process. So he asked prayer before aid was actually delivered, that he “might find acceptance with God’s people” ([Rom. 15:31](#)). He didn’t presume his motives were apparent.

The evangelical church of the West must be equally sensitive to the fragile donor-receptor relationship. Mere influence does not qualify for the donor’s role. Western churches must first invite Third World leaders to visit them as equals, coming as communicators not supplicants. If their spiritual gifts and maturity were considered important for the full development of Western churches, Third World church leaders would be invited more to Western pulpits. On such occasions the conditions and needs of both national churches could be freely aired.

It is both humiliating and power-dwarfing for Third World church leaders to always appear to Western churches in the garb of receptor not donor. Humiliating, because when a national comes seeking help for his projects, he must verbally or nonverbally also communicate his spiritual impoverishment and need *vis-a-vis* the donor culture if he is to be heard at all. Powerdwarfing, because he cannot come as spiritual equal while requesting material aid. In a partnership the spiritual maturity and gifts of both national churches are accepted. Does the Third World church approach the West bearing no gift of enabling the Western church to fulfill its mission?

In an atmosphere of free expression and sharing, there will be an open agenda. Together those churches can determine who will be donor, who will be receptor. If, for example, a Third World church by mutual decision is designated the receptor church for future assistance programs, national leaders from that church are best qualified to specify real needs. They will be able to recruit national Christians with skill and integrity to

implement programs. Also, these leaders will have a vested interest in the program's success and completion.

It can be frustrating for enthusiastic potential donor churches to wait for the national church of another culture to send representatives before initiating assistance programs. But by refusing to wait, they retard progress toward credibility desired by the national church of the Third World. p. 59

When a donor culture unilaterally initiates an assistance program, it unwittingly creates a parent-child relationship with the receptor culture, with inherent propensities to paternalism. Actually, a parent-child relationship between the donor-receptor cultures is easier. The parent can freely dominate, the child can happily manipulate. Each knows his role; there are no ambiguities. But a sense of responsibility and integrity will not grow in the child. Rather, he will develop techniques for getting around the parent, using him and stressing dependency. In an adult-adult relationship neither can dominate or manipulate. The relationship requires much more of both; this is partnership.

### **PARTNERSHIP IN DECISION-MAKING**

Once needs are carefully articulated, the donor-receptor relationship can be established. It is not enough, however, that a council of trained experts in the donor culture evaluate needs, prioritize them and decide in isolation on a course of action. For joint decision-making leads to power-sharing. The penchant for donor cultures to share resources but not power begins at this decision-making stage.

Partnership in decision-making also minimizes misunderstandings as the program unfolds on the field. Often donor cultures have genuine needs as well—the need for broad participation by their constituencies, the on-going training of donor-culture youth on the field—and these needs are inbedded in decisions handed down to the receptor culture. But because national church leaders from the receptor culture are not present when these decisions are made, they become mystified and even scandalized to behold so much of the accumulated “assistance for world mission” recycled back to the donor culture.

Aid candidates, like refugees huddled on a raft, await rescue by some benefactor. When the good ship “concern” appears on the horizon, expectations are raised, preparations to board begun. But a shout comes over the megaphone from the rescuers, “Welcome aboard—if you can keep the ship moving.” That is, the criterion for aid program by the donor culture is that the program must have within it sufficient appeal value to (1) motivate potential donors, and (2) generate enough surplus to keep the ship going until another raft is found. To avoid the disenchantment and cynicism such decision-making engenders, the donor culture must be researched as thoroughly as the receptor culture. p. 60

### **PARTNERSHIP IN IMPLEMENTATION**

After initiative is taken by both cultures in response to real needs, joint decisions are made that set goals and priorities. Next implementation begins by mobilizing available people. Who is best qualified to screen them? Often representatives from the donor culture visit the field, interview, and select such leaders themselves. They find the relationship most comfortable with nationals in the receptor culture who affirm their values, psychology and communicational vehicles.

So, bewildered national leaders stand helplessly by as those one-step removed from their culture are chosen to represent them. It is like *Catch 22*: to identify with your people you must leave them and identify with strangers. In getting the ears and attention of the

donor culture, progressive nationals must become encultured into orientations and thought patterns of the donor culture.

Often such nationals have recently studied in the donor culture and have not yet established credibility in the receptor culture. They may be in culture-shock during the “re-entry” period, facing unanticipated resistance from the very ones who sent them abroad. The arrival of an enthusiastic representative from the donor culture comes as deliverance from such malaise. The bond is struck. From it emerges, quasi Western-Third World church organization, identified with neither the receptor culture nor the donor-culture. It becomes a fiefdom wherein nepotism is rife, local answerability non-existent, credibility within the receptor culture zero.

This proliferation of para-church organizations in the Third World, answerable only to church leaders in the donor culture, is evidence of the lack of partnership in implementation. Leaders of these para-church organizations usually found Christ within the national church, were trained by it, then grew restive within its structure. So, the avenue of para-church activity is taken to circumvent church structures. But a crisis of credibility inevitably comes, especially during the transfer of leadership from founder to successor. It is then that the donor culture realizes how few respected national leaders will assume leadership, simply because of the para-church organization’s abysmal credibility within the receptor culture.

Uchimura Kanzo, one of Japan’s most famous Christians, observed this phenomenon as far back as 1904. He wrote: [p. 61](#)

*These are they who by studied imitation of pious language and manners have won the confidence of the missionary captains, and are to all outward appearances perfect samples of Christian docility, and are the best possible help whenever uncomplaining obedience is the first thing to be desired.... Imagine such—licensed, surpliced, and adulated, even as the choicest trophies of Christian missions and given chairs of presidency of Christian colleges, or head secretariats of the YMCA and their portraits engraven on the first pages of missionary reviews, and their piety lauded ... but the whole edifice rested on such goes to crash, be it a church, a mission school or any other work, and the poor captain stands in awe as to the mysterious ways of Providence (Uchimura, 1904:112).*

Also in the implementation phase, there must be partnership in the display of Christ’s compassion. During crisis relief, everyone is thankful for assistance. Few questions are asked by the receptor culture. The donor culture rushing in with foreign trucks, foreign faces and foreign labels presents no problem for dazed disaster victims. However, in the post-crisis period, when relief gives away to development and the church takes up the task of evangelism, the local populace does not recognize the faces of national Christians. Subconsciously, it is saying, “The compassion of the donor culture I know, but who are you?” Partnership maximizes visibility of the local Christians and minimizes resistance to their evangelism.

## CONCLUSIONS

Partnership between donor and receptor in initiating, deciding and implementing assistance programs establishes the church’s credibility and self-sufficiency in receptor cultures. It liberates both donor and receptor.

The donor will be liberated from concealing his own needs and weaknesses. He can learn and receive from the receptor culture while serving it. The receptor will be liberated from feelings of inferiority and given boldness to share his gifts. Partnership frees donor and receptor together for evaluating, then redirecting such assistance whenever it mutes Jesus Christ, ministering law and promise through his body, the church.

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# The Money Barrier Between Sending and Receiving Churches

Harvie M. Conn

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The 1971 Green Lake Conference was convened to identify points of tension in church-mission relations and to develop guidelines to assist the mission boards in charting future paths. Before adjournment, fifteen areas of tension had to be isolated and discussed; seven were explicitly related to financial questions.<sup>1</sup>

Complicating the transition to national leadership was the reluctance of the home church to donate money for distribution by national leaders, deepening in some cases into a resentment on the part of the home church. On the "home" front the local church agonized over the missions' competition for financial resources.<sup>2</sup> On the field, there were the traditional problems of shifting from subsidy to indigenous responsibility, lack of trust toward nationals in distribution of funds, conflicts over funds for institutions versus funds for evangelism, the discrepancy between the living standards of missionaries and national workers.

From Green Lake's Affirmation came a consensus, confessing tendencies towards paternalism, authoritarianism, and lack of trust, a recognition of missions' slowness in building scriptural bridges of unity and fellowship. Mission societies were urged to evaluate their relations with home and overseas churches through fellowship and consultation, to foster reciprocal ministry on the basis of mutual love, acceptance and oneness in Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Has this affirmation been implemented since Green Lake '71? Arni Shareski, responding to that question before the Annual EFMA Missions Executives Retreat in 1975, saw Green Lake's "most significant benefit" as "the extent to which many delegates were

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<sup>1</sup> Vergil Gerber, ed. *Missions in Creative Tension* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1971), pp. 347–350.

<sup>2</sup> Gordan MacDonald, "Closing Gaps Between Missions and Home Churches." *Church Mission Tensions Today*. C. Peter Wagner, ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), pp. 53–72.

<sup>3</sup> Gerber, *op. cit.*, p. 383.