A Mission Strategy for Equipping National Leaders: The Mobile Theological Training Team

Training national Christian leaders in their own country and culture

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* Theological education and training in the mission context has been a subject that has interested me for many years. I can trace this interest back to the 1980s when I was in seminary and faced with a decision about whether to accept a teaching position in East Africa or to undertake further studies. Thus, it has been a burden on my heart for a long time. My first experience teaching overseas was in Eastern Europe in 2002, and since then I have taught block courses about twenty-five times in Africa, Asia and South America. Over the years I have endeavoured to develop a missiological philosophy and strategy that you will find expressed in this article. Many readers have asked for an in-depth article on this subject, and I offer the following as a work-in-progress on this exciting subject.

- JCW[1]

The purpose of this paper is to outline the contextual origins and vision of the Mobile Theological Training Team (hereafter referred to as MT3[2]) together with basic philosophies, strategies and key principles. The ministry of MT3 is to train national leaders primarily in the non-Western world through providing visiting faculty to partner institutions. This paper is a working effort to place in written form the

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[1] Dr. Whytock serves as the Team Leader of MT3.
[2] The Mobile Theological Training Team formally began in 2003 and received its name in 2004.

above mentioned matters, and it is understood from the outset that this will be expanded, revised and refined.[3]

1. Origins and Context

The last fifty years have seen incredible changes in global Christianity, mission approach, strategy and need. MT3 is representative of many of these developments both globally and methodologically in the delivery of theological education.

a.) Global Christianity: The Overall Context

We see here briefly the dramatic change in Christianity around the world in the last fifty years, perhaps the most significant in at least a two hundred year period of modern missions. The following statistical comparison says a great deal:

1960 67% of Protestants lived in the Western world[4]
2000 75% of Protestants lived in the non-Western world

We may "tweak" these statistics slightly depending upon sources, but the reality is more than clear. Since 1960 a radical shift in the centre of the numerical Protestant majority has taken place. This is being described with language such as Western, non-Western, the rise of the global south, the globalization of Christianity, etc.[5] Obviously this shift applies to Christian leadership as well. South Korea is now the second largest nation in the world for sending Christian mission workers, while the United States still ranks as number one.[6] Some may query these statistics, but they are becoming increasingly difficult to ignore. Things have changed greatly since 1960, not just in where Protestants

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[3] I am indebted to many over the years who have helped me with my thinking on this subject. I dare not name names for fear of missing someone!

[4] The terms "Western world" and "non-Western world" have certain aspects of fluidity within their definitions. In this paper the term "Western world" is basically used to mean Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. For many the term "non-Western world" is interchangeable with *developing world, majority world* and *two-thirds world*.

[5] Many studies have been emphasizing this shift. See Philip Jenkins' two works, *The Next Christendom: The Rise of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) and *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[6] Jane Lampman, "How Korea Embraced Christianity", *The Christian Science Monitor* (March 7, 2007), http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0307/pl4s01-lire.html (11 March 2007).

are located, but in the make-up of the missions force itself, and these shifts appear to be realities for the foreseeable future.

b.) Short-Term Missions (STM): The Contextual Missions Phenomenon

Since 1960 there have been other significant changes. One of the most significant relates to travel and the rise of short-term missions (STM). It is now clearly recognized that short-term workers far outnumber the traditional "career missionaries". In 1960 one would have been very hard pressed to find mission agencies employing coordinators for short-term missions. Today virtually every sizeable mission agency has "retooled" itself in some fashion to include these ministries. In 1960 you would not have found such things as "The Seven Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission" or national, annual conferences devoted to short-term missions. An entire range of literature and professional teaching has arisen around STM.[7] Surely it is significant that the *Evangelical Missiological Society* devoted its September 2007 National Conference to the theme "The Short-Term Volunteer Movement: Missiological Implications". There is clearly a new level of interest in critically assessing the STM movement, both positively and negatively.[8] A very concise and well-crafted article on STM has just appeared in the new *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* reviewed elsewhere in this journal. I highly recommend this short article by I. Makuku and V. Calver.[9]

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[7] For a sample of recent literature on STM, see J. Mack and Leeann Stiles, *Mack and Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000); Tim Dearborn, *Short-Term Missions Workbook – From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003); and Chris Easton and Kim Hurst, *Vacations with a Purpose: A Planning Handbook for Your Short-Term Missions Team (Leader's Manual)* (Colorado Springs: Cook Publications, 1991). Also see www.stmstandards.org and www.nstmc.org .

[8] See Robert J. Priest, Terry Dischinger, Steve Rasmussen, and C. M. Brown, "Researching the Short-Term Mission Movement", *Missiology* 34 (4) (October 2006) 431-450; Edwin Zehner, "Short-Term Missions: Toward a More Field-Oriented Model", *Missiology* 34, no. 4 (October 2006): 509-510. Zehner summarizes well both the positive and negative aspects of short-term missions.

[9] I Makuku and V. Calver, "Short-term mission", in *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, ed. John Corrie, cons. eds. Samuel Escobar and Wilbert Sheck (Nottingham/Downers Grove: IVP, 2007), 360-362.

c.) Theological Education by Extension (TEE), etc.: The Contextual State of Theological Education

Since this paper's focus is theological education, we must note one more missiological trend since 1960. Prior to 1960, theological education in the mission context emphasized a residential model. However, in the early 1960s this began to change with the rise of models such as Theological Education by Extension (TEE).[10] Such models stressed contextually appropriate learning, practical field work exposure and a variety of learning modes – self-study/correspondence, seminars, workshops, etc. Some of this, i.e. the technology, may have been new, but in reality not everything associated with TEE was as novel as sometimes thought.[11] From the 1960s onwards there has been much more variety in the theological training of national Christian leaders thanks to work such as TEE or consortium networks, etc. There is a whole vocabulary that is stressed today in the delivery of theological education reflective of these changes: commitments, mobility, flexibility, cultural appropriateness, worldview integrations, educational creativity, outcomes assessment, cooperative agendas/partnerships/networks.[12] The number of new theological training agencies, institutions and networks which have been arising since the 1960s continues to multiply. Several of these did not exist as recently as ten years ago.[13] Within this movement we are seeing certain

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[10] There is a vast area of literature about changes in theological education in the mission context since 1960. Some of these include: Ralph D. Winter, ed., *Theological Education by Extension* (South Pasadena: William Cary Library, 1969); F. Ross Kinsler, *The Extension Movement in Theological Education: A Call to the Renewal of the Ministry* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981); Lester Hirst, "Making TEE Serve the Needs of the Churches", *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (October, 1986): 420-424; Robert Newton, "Neocolonialism and Theological Education: A Philippine Case Study" (unpublished manuscript, 1989); and Douglas L. Rutt, "Some Caveats for Theological Education by Extension" (private paper, 1991), 1-19.

[11] See Jack C. Whytock, "Theological Education and Training and the Modern Rise of Distance Learning", *Haddington House Journal* 5 (2003), specifically pages 11-12 on a brief historical excursus.

[12] See Larry J. McKinney, "Evangelical Theological Education: Implementing Our Own Agenda" [delivered at the 2003 ICETE International Consultation for Theological Education (in High Wycombe, England)]; Gary M. Floyd, *Theological Education by Extension: an Annotated Bibliography* (1996); and Gregory Lund, *Theological Education in Africa: An Annotated Bibliography* (Wheaton: Billy Graham Center, 1992).

[13] Such as Third Millennium (IIIM), website: www.thirdmill.org.

characteristics develop that are distinct from the early 1960s. Here I think of the ethnic diversity of the Western Christian Church and the rise of nationals from the West assisting nationals outside the global West. Some of these are approaches within an overall movement. Again, mission agencies are responding with a new emphasis on nurturing leadership. Gone is the "colonial" approach. Now the desire is to liberate national leadership and thus lose the caricature (some of which may have been justifiable, some of which I believe has been over-reactive) of a failure to develop a nurturing indigenous leadership arm in missions. The point is clear – since 1960 the delivery of theological education in the mission context has seen many developments.

d.) Observations leading to conclusions:

- The point certainly is well taken that Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East are transforming world Christianity and its shape today. In many of these locations, the evidence is numerical and manifests a clear need for the "training mandate" to be stressed in the nurturing of leaders, many of whom have little formal theological training.

- Missionary approaches via short-term work and continuing changes in the delivery of theological education (1960-2000) are factors we must bear in mind as we consider the ministry of MT3.

- As a Christian historian, I see a providential context for the work of MT3 today. Given many of the pedagogical changes in theological education, combined with the short-term phenomenon and the changes globally, the door is open for work in this area of mission. Surely the time is right.

- Though MT3 may at first be viewed as part of this short-term phenomenon, it is only such to a degree. MT3 develops "personal relationships" through regular trips to the same fields by team members over a "long term". Hence the proposal to use the term "long-term short-term" as the strategic term of MT3 is an attempt to make the distinction from the short-term volunteer movement.

- Some may continue to see the travel by MT3 missionaries as in the volunteer category of short-term missionaries. This will present problems of perception about MT3 full-tier members, who are really career missionaries, but in a mobile mode,

undertaking their calling as theological educational missionaries, similar in mode to the traveling evangelist or traveling preacher to a globally dispersed people group.

2.   The Second Prong of the Great Commission: Nurturing Requires Leaders

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,[20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

                                                    Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

The Great Commission, as we have come to popularly express it, found in Matthew 28:19, 20, is a solid starting point for a scriptural understanding of MT3. It is one unified commission, yet in essence it contains two aspects. These are well outlined in the Westminster Confession of Faith, 25:3: "Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, *for the gathering and perfecting* of the saints in this life…." [italics mine] There is the gospel call (*gathering*) and initiation into the Church: "…make disciples of all nations, baptizing…". Yet disciples are always nurtured (*perfecting*) in the faith. This occurs in various places and at different levels. The nurturing process is aided through leaders; and we desire to see nationals taking up this nurturing ministry together, of course, with evangelism. Thus we devote time to the training of nationals for the ongoing ministries of nurture and evangelism. Hence theological education is used to equip leaders who will "teach[ing] them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you". The foundation of evangelical theological education maintains a strong commitment to this second prong of the Great Commission – "the training mandate" – recognizing that much of the fruit of gospel work is surely put at risk without the nurturing of leadership.[14]

Article eleven of the Lausanne Covenant (1974) concisely articulates the place of nurture, leadership and education:

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[14] *Overseas Council International Strategic Plan 2001-2010* (Indianapolis: ICI, 2003), 2.

Education and Leadership

We confess that we have sometimes pursued church growth at the expense of church depth, and divorced evangelism from Christian nurture. We also acknowledge that some of our missions have been too slow to equip and encourage national leaders to assume their rightful responsibilities. Yet we are committed to indigenous principles, and long that every church will have national leaders who manifest a Christian style of leadership in terms not of domination but of service. We recognize that there is a great need to improve theological education, especially for church leaders. In every nation and culture there should be an effective training programme for pastors and laypeople in doctrine, discipleship, evangelism, nurture and service. Such training programmes should not rely on any stereotyped methodology but should be developed by creative local initiatives according to biblical standards. (Col. 1:27, 28; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5,9; Mark 10:42-45; Eph. 4:11,12)[15]

3. What Trained Leaders Do

For a moment let's unpack more about what we believe trained Christian leaders do in terms of the Great Commission and the two aspects of that Great Commission.[16]

(1) Trained leaders "*model*" the Christian faith. They set before the world and fellow believers what the Christian faith looks like. They ideally incarnate a living Christian faith and practice, not just as a testimony or example, but one worthy of imitation in the correct biblical sense. (See 1 Thess. 1:5, 6.)

(2) Trained leaders develop and conduct a whole range of specific ministries. It is interesting to observe these ministries "coming alive" as the Church grows and matures. The range is wide – environment, addiction ministries, care facilities, counselling, Christian education, training centres, etc. As leadership

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[15] "The Lausanne Covenant (1974)", *Haddington House Journal* 9 (2007): 176.

[16] I have adapted four summary points from The Overseas Council International and expanded these. Thanks to Dr. Manfred Kohl for bringing this to my attention.

develops, the Church engages in a holistic range of Christian work. The New Testament model in Acts and Paul's and John's epistles provide us with hints of the diversity of ministries and the leaders behind them. (Acts 6:1-7)

(3) Trained leaders assist the Church in her particular culture to discern "what of culture can be affirmed and what needs to be changed".[17] Leadership has a prophetic role to play, first in the Church and also in society. (See Phil. 3:20 and Matt. 5:13-16.) Likewise, this is connected directly with the maturing and nurturing of the saints who must come to discern the world in which they live.[18]

(4) Trained leaders lead the church in her worship and ministry. The leading of worship and preaching are generally conducted by designated leaders in most Protestant churches worldwide. The training of expositors and worship leaders who shape the vocabulary of liturgy and praise and the content and the delivery of messages is surely a critical task assigned to leaders. Without vital leadership, new believers will be ". . . infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming" (Eph. 4:14).

4. The Niche of MT3

There are many theological institutions outside of the Western world where the training of nationals needs strengthening. Many are not seeking full faculty from the West yet are open to assistance. The under-girding missiological philosophy of MT3 is that contextual training is generally the most effective for pastors and others. As has been written:

It is particularly important that leaders be trained within their own cultural context in order to most effectively minister in that context. While training in the West is often biblically sound and academically excellent, it cannot effectively address the challenges that are unique

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[17] *Overseas Council International*, 2.

[18] See Gerald Bilkes, "The Culture We Need", *The Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth* 17, no. 3 (March 2009): 74-76. Bilkes' article is a helpful summation on this issue.

to non-Western cultures. Contextually trained leaders are essential to the growth of a healthy indigenous church.[19]

MT3 recognizes the diversity of callings within the Body and how this applies to locations for theological education. The majority of non-Western national leaders will not gain access to theological education in the West, yet often they can receive training in their nation. But many of these training institutions do not have a full complement of instructors. Thus there is often a need for occasional faculty. It is normally much more cost effective for basic theological education of nationals to be conducted in the national's country or even region of origin. At the same time, it allows for a contextualized training which is closer, if not parallel, to the nationals targeted ministry group. Historically, if nationals leave their country/region in the non-Western world for education in the West, three negatives can occur:

- Sometimes the curriculum is irrelevant to their ministry needs.
- There are relocation or family separation issues.
- A "brain drain" in the loss of leaders who do not return to either the country or region of origin is produced. Statistics show that 75% to 85% of Christian leaders who come to the West to study do not return.

In 1980 an occasional paper was issued by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. This has become known as the *Lausanne Occasional Paper 18: Christian Witness to People of African Traditional Religions*. In section seven on Practical Recommendations part "c" we read, "The advantage of training national church leaders at home [i.e. in Africa] cannot be overemphasised" and in "p", "*Select best people* . . . it follows that people whose traditions and background are closest to the unreached people may be best suited to reach them." Such statements have tremendous implications, not just for evangelistic strategy but also for theological education and training in the national and indigenous context.[20]

Stan Guthrie summarizes this phenomenon well in one paragraph:

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[19] *Overseas Council International*, 2.

[20] *Lausanne Occasional Paper 18: Christian Witness to People of African Traditional Religions, Report of the Consultation on World Evangelization Mini-Consultation on Reaching Traditional Religionists (Africa)* (Pattaya, Thailand, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1980).

One common partnership problem that is little discussed occurs when Westerners bring African or other Christians from the Third World to study in the United States or Europe. The problem is not (always) the theological education received, but that many of the Two-Third World students decide to remain in the West when their schooling is over. The temptation to stay in more comfortable and affluent surroundings is simply too great, even though the primary needs are in their home countries. *The issue is causing some wiser Western agencies to seek ways to provide education and ministry 'on the field'.* [italics mine][21]

Yet there are many benefits to Western education, particularly today at the post-graduate level. Thus at the outset we need to recognize there are diversities of callings within the Body, and in no way do we imply that the way MT3 does it is the only way it must be done. There continues to be a need for some from the non-West to come to the West to study theology – especially those who are already church leaders in their own country. MT3 desires to train that large segment of students who will not be able to do this for a whole range of reasons. We are philosophically committed to their training in their national context.

Given the rise of short-term missions, combined with the changes in theological education delivery in the last fifty years, the numerical need in the non-Western world and the benefits of contextual training, we see the emergence of MT3 as the timing of the Lord.

5. Four Levels of Training in the Non-Western World

The pyramid below is an effort to show the four levels of theological training common in much of the non-Western world. There are also parallels to the Western world in the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century, but our focus will be the non-Western world.

The pyramid is widest at the bottom where it is representative of the largest numerical group. The top, where the pyramid is narrowest, reflects the smallest number being trained.

Level 1 represents "informal" teaching and training of lay leaders and pastors. The "student body" here may have had some Bible college

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[21] Stan Guthrie, *Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century*, revised and expanded edition (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2004), 123. See also page 181.

training, but it is likely that a large percentage have had little formal college/seminary[22] training. I have heard missiologists say that two million ministers stand to preach every Sunday in the Third World, 90% of whom have had no formal theological education. At this level, MT3 provides training by way of continuing education conferences for pastors and laity. Generally these are two to five days in length, and there is no formal assessment. This level of training is addressing a very legitimate need. There are several benefits well beyond the imparting of knowledge, including fellowship, prayer, the networking
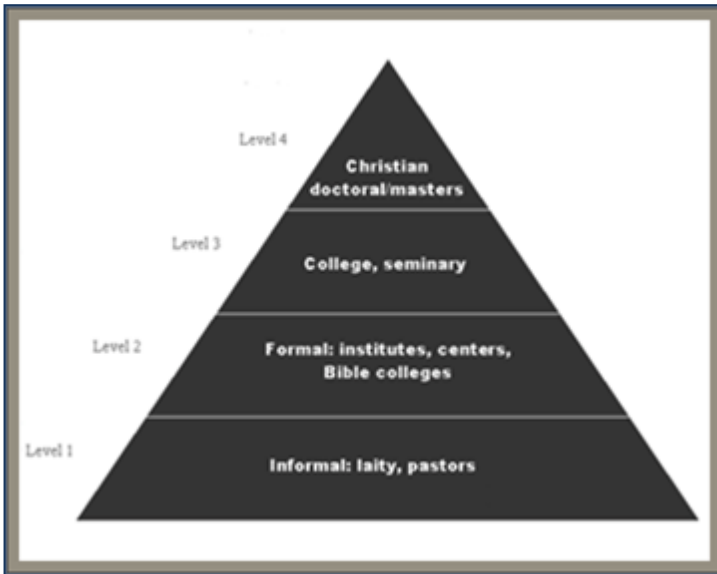
of people and resources, etc. Often level one training takes the form of an annual or bi-annual event and is well attended, sometimes even into the hundreds. The location can vary between church, college, conference site, etc.

Level 2 represents "formal" teaching where there is generally an application process, some form of outcome assessment and a goal to work towards "graduation". Usually, but not always, teaching is at the institution's centre of operation, typically a church or its own facility. The nomenclature used here is a Bible school, a learning centre, a Bible/theology institute or even a "Bible college". Entrance standards

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[22] For the purposes of this paper, I will use the terms "college" and "seminary" interchangeably. Seminary may not necessarily mean Master's level as in much of the non-Western world.

vary between elementary and secondary level education. Often these institutions do not have government or external accreditation requirements. However, sometimes such an institution works under an accredited partner institution to provide an academic covering and assistance to the work. A noteworthy example of this would be the Nehemiah Bible Institute in South Africa and its relationship with the University of Pretoria for accredited certificate work. Course delivery modes vary by using a combination of the standard residential system and seminars/modular periods together with distance work. Some may even be completely correspondence based. Typically the words used to describe these programmes are "certificate" or "diploma" level.

Level 3 is the "formal" college/seminary and generally involves external accreditation and both diploma level and degree based curriculum. Usually entrance requires secondary school certification, although students also could move from level two to level three once they have obtained a qualification at a Bible school in level two to prepare them. Again, delivery of theological education can be within a traditional residential term/semester system or in modular/blocks combined with distance work. Some colleges require students to leave home and reside on-site, while others allow students to remain at home and take evening or block courses. There is much more variety of delivery than was the case prior to 1960. Generally instruction for level three would be at the bachelor's level, although some institutions are starting to add master's level work. There is a wide range of ways the students' spiritual life is emphasized.

Level 4, "Christian doctoral/masters", is the smallest group and strives to achieve accreditation level status for masters and doctoral degrees. Research, theses and/or "projects" are the norm for doctoral work. Here it is hoped that MT3 team members will also become involved as examiners of theses or projects. This will not be found in levels one to three. (Here, having MT3 team members with proper qualifications becomes very important.) There is a variety of systems in place, including residential, distance and combinations of each. Level four courses are offered either at a Christian university, a theological college/seminary or an advanced level "school of theology" (graduate).

The ministry of MT3 is such that on occasion it reaches into all four levels of teaching and training in the non-Western world. Thus we require specific qualifications for team members in order to ensure that they are both acquainted with these levels of training and possess the suitable background to teach at all levels.

6. Team Qualifications

> "And the things you have heard me say in the presence
> of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will
> also be qualified to teach others." (2 Tim. 2:2)

MT3 desires members who possess these chief qualifications:

- We want members who, because of their love for Christ, combine evangelical passion for the world with a passion for nurturing and maturing Christian leaders. We want team members who have large hearts for souls world-wide and for leadership development. Members must have a clear sense of God's call in their lives for this and a passion to see this accomplished.

- We want members who have had positive pastoral and teaching experience, thus bringing a maturity to the work (ordinarily ten years of such experience to make for seasoned leaders).

- We want members who have been exposed to cross-cultural teaching and possess a disposition that will complement the providential missiological approach in the world today to walk humbly as leaders and professors.[23] Such members will

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[23] This qualification issue goes beyond the academic into issues of demeanor and character. I have discussed with many missiologists some of the problems which Western theological professors have stumbled into while doing short-term teaching in the non-Western world. Here are the five chief complaints which are often leveled against Western professors of theology teaching in the non-Western world.

- Many are completely non-incarnational.
- They dress inappropriately in the context.
- They often want to live more as tourists at "five-star" hotels than accepting the local hospitality without complaint.
- There is basically an assumed theological superiority of the Western professor as representative of his denomination or institution in comparison to the non-Western church or institution, an attitude which makes for "turn-off".
- The goal appears not to be to form a partnership with the national leaders and institutions, but more one of being "over" these leaders and institutions.

In no way does this mean that universally happens, but rather we all need to be clearly aware that just because someone is a professor in the West does not

understand contextualization in theological education and strategic flexibility.[24]

- We want members who have earned graduate degrees, ordinarily for full-tier members that would be a Ph.D. or Th.D. We want to be able to serve at all levels of theological education as needed, inclusive of level four. Thus team composition or team members must satisfy the requirements of accrediting bodies of certain colleges where MT3 may teach.

- We want team members who desire to work in harmony as a team, complementing one another in ministry. Also, we want team members who will work as team members of the partner institution while they are there.

- We want to consider also the providential circumstances of the individual's life, home and family. Because of the nature of the mode employed by MT3, including extended absences from home, there may be domestic or health matters which will deem it not a suitable fit for all theological educators.

7. Team Composition

A theological institution operates well with a diversity of interests and training specializations. This is also true of MT3, where that same diversity of teaching interests, training specialization and ministry experiences comes together to form a whole team. The goal is not the creation of a team with similar specialities, but one with a balance of diversity yet a unity of passion for training national leaders.

As a team we should work towards the overall composition of having members who together constitute the theological encyclopedia curriculum of biblical theology, systematic theology, church history and practical theology. The goal is a team which complements one

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automatically mean that they will have a good fit teaching in a non-Western context.

[24] See the "Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education" and the twelve articles of the Manifesto. This was first adopted in 1983, with a second edition in 1990. *The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education* (ICETE). The twelve articles are:

1. Contextualization
2. Churchward orientation
3. Strategic flexibility
4. Theological grounding
5. Continuous assessment
6. Community life
7. Integrated programme
8. Servant moulding
9. Instructional variety
10. A Christian mind
11. Equipping for growth
12. Cooperation

another in diversity, not duplication, of teaching interests. Thus full-tier members should represent this diversity, and an initial or primary goal would be to develop a four-member team representative of this overall four-fold diversity.

Associate members may then fit within any of these four main departments and may very well represent a very specialized role within one of these four. For example, within the area of practical theology, a partner institution may ask for a specific counselling course. Here we would hope to have one or two associates to draw upon when full-tier members may not have that specific specialty.

This also relates back to the matter of team qualifications, discussed in section six above. Someone teaching a counselling course in a Western seminary or theological college may have a D.Min. but not a Ph.D. in counselling. Accrediting bodies will generally find that acceptable, for this in the practical department. MT3 will strive to follow these overarching principles when expanding the team.

8. The Ministry Focus of MT3

The primary ministry focus of MT3 is to teach nationals. Thus the main venue will be the classroom or continuing education for leaders. However, there are other needs, such as with the faculty of colleges and with administrators and governors or trustees. As partnerships are formed and mature and trust builds on all sides, other avenues of ministry emerge related to national leadership. This will be both informal and formal and may range from private meetings to seminars and full faculty and/or governor/trustee retreats. We see a long-range goal developing whereby we could become facilitators to improve institutional effectiveness, not just for faculty but also for administrators, governors or trustees. This will require wisdom, respect, a servant spirit and missiological awareness of national context and need. This also will lead into both curriculum and library consultation and development. Thus the role of MT3 expands beyond the classroom and once again reinforces the importance of the team qualifications.

In summary, we can say the ministry focus of MT3 includes these five areas:

- To teach modular courses in colleges in the developing world.
- To assist faculty, institutional administrators and governors/ trustees in development/training and networking.
- To assist with library consultation and development.

- To assist with curriculum consultation and development.
- To reach national pastors/leaders who may not have had Bible college training by offering leadership conferences alongside the colleges.

Conclusion

In our mission work today as evangelical Christians, we must attempt to grasp the context of realities of the global numerical shifts of the Protestant community and missionary personnel. When doing this, the challenge quickly presents itself of the need for nurturing more Christian leaders. Theological education in all its diverse delivery modes and settings is the key to meeting this need.

The modern contextual phenomenon of short-term missions can be re-tooled as long-term short-term and may be used strategically in the global training of leaders. This needs to be done with clearly defined levels of pedagogical training and with clear direction of missiological philosophy for indigenous training. Theological education is more than imparting knowledge; it is spiritual transformation, modelling and mentoring. Therefore, clear criteria are developed for the right mix of instructors with partner settings and relationships spread over a longer time-frame. Thus this model employs the benefits of short-term missions while setting a stress on the relational aspect over the long-term.

This raises a serious question: Is MT3 really "short-term missions"? MT3 has a stress upon long-term, strategic partnerships. Team members of MT3 function as "permanent" adjunct faculty. Surely this is qualitatively different from short-term, volunteer mission workers. Could this not validly be seen as a new architectural design of one aspect of "career missionary" work? The answer appears to be overwhelmingly "yes". This concept is in accord with missiologist Ramesh Richard: "Indeed, an entirely new architecture for global missions is needed for the new millennium, beyond the traditional and indigenous missionary paradigms."[25] And thus for Westerners in missions, it will mean a shift in thinking will be needed. " . . . It will be more as partners, trainers, and encouragers, and less as leaders."[26]

Developing a network of partners for a mobile theological faculty brings about continuity, trust, a wider impact (beyond just teaching

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[25] Guthrie, *Missions in the Third Millennium*, 182, quoting RREACH's chairman, Ramesh Richard.
[26] Guthrie, *Missions in the Third Millennium*, 164.

students) and a dynamic synergy in theological education globally. Both Western and non-Western partners are enriched. Teams such as the Mobile Theological Training Team are positioned to offer an impact on the direction and depth of world-wide evangelical theological education and thus bless the Church.

"Everybody is a theologian. We have notions about God, about the world, about human beings, about meaning and fulfilment, about death and what comes after, and so on; and they may come from all sorts of places. The real question is not whether we are theologians or not, but whether we are good theologians or poor ones – or, to be more exact, whether our beliefs – and so our lives – faithfully reflect the truth that has been spoken by the living God, or whether they simply bear the imprint of the societies we live in, and of our own fallible human wisdom and pragmatism. It is a vital matter, for issues of eternal life and death hang on the answers we give to crucial theological questions – like the one Jesus asks, 'Who do you say I am?' (Mat 16:15)"

— Africa Inland Mission, OpSheets,
Theological Education
{a ministry of multiplication}