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Missionary Formation through Formal Education

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A young man dashes into a mission's office with the news that God has called him to be a missionary. He is excited and eager. How soon can he be sent...anywhere! How will his request be received? Will he be told to get a passport, raise some money and plan for departure? Or will he be advised to get himself to a seminary for a four-year training stint? Is formal education optional ... or necessary?



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The issue of the importance of formal education for missionaries is not foreign to Mennonite Brethren [MB]. The early MB missionaries, whether from Russia or United States, were surprisingly well educated. In Russia, Abraham and Mary Friesen felt called to missionary service in 1885. They studied at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Hamburg for four years before leaving for India in 1889 as the first MB missionaries to go abroad.¹ In North America, Aaron and Ernestina Janzen from the Mountain Lake Church in Minnesota headed for Africa in November of 1912. They were the first MB missionaries to Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo). She was a nurse. He was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and had attended the German Baptist Seminary in Rochester, New York.² The MB founding missionaries in Japan in the 1950s were Ruth Wiens and Harry and Millie Friesen. Wiens was a graduate of Wheaton College; Harry Friesen, upon completing Tabor College, attended Dallas Theological Seminary (1945-49).

For MBs and other denominations in North America the Bible school movement was critical in the early 20th century for the enlistment and training of missionaries. Nyack Missionary College was established in 1880; Moody Bible Institute in 1886. The two schools, Nyack and Moody, were pioneers in mission education. George Konrad reports that by 1961 the number of Bible colleges and institutes in the United States and Canada totaled 234.³ Among these was the Herbert Bible School in Saskatchewan (1913-1957), the first MB school in Canada and among the first in western Canada.⁴ In the United States, Pacific Bible Institute (Fresno, California) was established in 1944. These Bible schools were recruiters of missionaries and also provided substantive training. J. B. Toews notes that “Seventy-five percent of the missionaries sent by the Mennonite Brethren Church [between 1913-1963]... studied at these Bible institutions.”⁵ While not all Mennonite Brethren missionaries in more than 150 years of history have had formal education, many have.⁶

Modes of Leadership Training

One may think of leadership training in three modes: informal, non-formal, and formal education. *Formal training* refers to organized institutional education, as in a Bible College, recognized by society (e.g., Colombia Bible College, Canada; MB Centenary Bible College, India; University Missionary Center, Democratic Republic of Congo; and also online courses). *Non-formal* refers to semi-organized training, such as workshops and seminars, which takes place outside the formal structures. Currently [2013] the Matthew Training Centre in Guadalajara illustrates the non-formal model, though it seems to be moving to the formal model. *Informal* education

takes place in the normal activities of life. Mentoring of a junior missionary by a senior missionary would be an example.⁷

The focus of this essay is on formal education and so will concentrate on institutional instruction. The stage is set by a brief historical survey of MB missionary education. Following is a list of factors that prompted attention to formal education. We comment on the pluses and the minuses of formal education. A case study in formal training in the majority world concludes the essay.

MB Practices in the Formal Training of Missionaries

Whether or not mission sending agencies required formal education for their candidates, the Bible Schools and Bible Institutes assumed, as is evident in their general purpose statements and in their course offerings, that formal education for missionaries was necessary. The following examples leave largely unmentioned the Canadian MB Bible schools, themselves engines in missionary recruitment and training. Their story is told elsewhere.⁸

Tabor College, founded in Hillsboro, Kansas in 1908 offered itself as a training place for missionaries. Tabor's *Annual Catalogue 1909-10* (p. 4) states in the German language that the purpose of the school is to offer to the supporting constituency a place where one can be prepared for the teaching profession and for ministry, including work (*Arbeit*) in domestic and foreign mission fields.

Similarly Pacific Bible Institute (PBI), founded in Fresno, California in 1944, lists among the aims of the school, "to train and equip students for pastors, evangelists, S.S. workers, missionaries and personal soul winners."⁹ Its catalogue for the following year lists the "History of Missions," which is required both for the two-year general Bible course and for the three-year graduate course. Students in the three-year program were required also to take a course in "Non-Christian Religions."

The Mennonite Brethren Bible College, founded in 1944 in Winnipeg Canada, lists two specifically mission-related courses in its inaugural year: "History of Missions" and "Principles and Practice of Mission."

The Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, founded in 1955 in Fresno, California, was "dedicated to the training of Christian leaders as pastors, evangelists, missionaries and Bible teachers." The first catalogue lists eight course offerings in the Department of Missionary Training, including "History of Missions," "History of MB Missions," "Philosophy of Missions," and "Principles and Practices of Mission." The training of missionaries took an emphatic forward turn with the addition in 1978 of Dr. Hans Kasdorf as Professor of World Mission. "For some twelve years starting in 1976, Hans Kasdorf led a six- to nine-week summer missionary training

school for MBM/S candidates called Church Mission Institute or CMI.”¹⁰ The Seminary Board of Directors and the Seminary faculty designated the decade of the 1980’s as the “Decade of Mission.”¹¹ With the addition of faculty member Dr. Henry Schmidt, course offerings in the mission department in the 1981-82 catalogue numbered eighteen, including a course on “Church Planting and Church Growth.” Through a joint effort by the Seminary and the denomination’s mission agency, the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism was established in 1984. In the decade of the 1980s and somewhat beyond, eighteen students graduated with a Masters in Mission, most of whom entered missionary service; others had a major in missions for their Master of Divinity degree.

Over the past one hundred and fifty years of MB history, the post-secondary schools of the denomination have been more than hospitable to the concept of formal training for missionaries; they have provided that training. The mission office has sometimes rigorously mandated formal training, but at other times formal training has been less emphasized.

Factors Prompting Formal Education

Several considerations account for a focus generally on the formal training of missionaries. These arise out of the denomination’s commitment to Scripture, the on-the-field experiences of missionaries, the rising profile of social sciences, the felt need for apologetics, the existential reality of church growth with the issues that such growth brings, and the emergence of fresh thinking on missionary methodology.

Theological Orientation

Justification for the formal training of missionaries could readily be rooted in Scripture. Moses, if not a missionary in technical language, was certainly a leader who, as Stephen points out in his sermon, was trained in the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22). Moses received his formal training thanks to an African scholarship! In the period of Israel’s divided monarchy there were schools of the prophets where, one infers, some formal training took place (e.g., 2 Kings 2). Jesus trained his disciples before sending them out. Paul, the peerless missionary of the church, was formally trained (e.g., Acts 22:3).

Missionaries, as in India, bumped up against other religions. It was quickly apparent that effective missionary work entailed more than simply declaring the gospel. For example, one must know the appropriate cultural/religious contact points in presenting the gospel. To cite one example: there are different understandings of the human predicament. The Westerner sees the human problem as essentially that of

sin, which generates guilt; humans need salvation from sin. So the gospel is preached with the invitation to bring God into one's life, to accept Christ's forgiveness and to follow him as Lord. But some complications emerge. One is that in the West the understanding of sin is largely disobedience to God's command. However, when Congolese are asked to list sins, they routinely itemize social taboos.

Consequently various concepts of what salvation entails are in circulation. In the West "salvation" is about freedom from burden of sin; freedom from self, freedom from aimlessness in life. In Africa, salvation would be cast in language of power. The spirit world is real, always impinging on decisions and behaviors. The human predicament is defined as living in fear of the spirits; hence salvation is in terms of power. The gospel then becomes good news because Christ has overcome the powers; it is understood that there is a God more powerful than any other power.

For Hinduism the human predicament is that of ignorance. Salvation comes through learning. For Buddhism the problem is suffering, which is said to come as a result of desire. The solution is to numb the desires through meditation, and to follow the eightfold path. In Asia the human problem is centered on an honor-shame axis. Salvation then would be the redress of shame. In the light of these various understandings of salvation, the seminarian who was overheard in corridor conversation to say, "What I want from my years here is a clear and crisp understanding of the Gospel message" was right on target.

Missiological Studies

The social sciences affected the training of missionaries in several ways. Psychology, for example, propounded that people learn in different ways. Cultural studies pointed out that the significance of certain events, such as marriage, vary from culture to culture. Research in communication made clear that the message sent is not necessarily the message that is received because the message passes through mental filters. If this is so within a culture, how many more complications might there be in the transmission of a message cross-culturally? A book like Paul Hiebert's *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* showed the importance of being conversant with current research and theory in these areas.¹² By the latter half of the twentieth century, knowledge of social sciences was hardly optional for missionaries.

It is a given that the gospel message does not change. It is also a given that culture and world conditions do change. So the challenge is to know the gospel, know how it addresses a culture, and know what changes in methodology may be required over time. There must be an intellectual space for the sorting out of philosophy and practices. Time for such reflection while engaged in ministry is scarce; hence the legitimacy of setting aside time to devote energy to study, reflection and readjustments.

Reflection on missionary approaches, on holistic mission, and on leadership training calls for some concentrated formal education. The building of hospitals and orphanages, the experiment of building dairies, the development of skills for future employment, while laudable in their own right, certainly need evaluation from both practical and theoretical vantage points. At the very least, missionaries need the benefit that comes from knowing the literature in these fields, and that knowledge is best imparted and analyzed in formal settings.

New methods of financially supporting the missionary effort keep emerging. New policies are put in place by mission agencies that require, for example, that missionaries raise their own financial support. The missionary needs to learn new skills, must learn how to forge and cultivate strong personal relationships, and much more. To be sure, much can be learned “on the run,” but instruction, analysis and supervised practice are weighty plusses that argue for formal education.

Missionary Experiences

Very quickly Mennonite Brethren encountered the mindset of peoples in other cultures. Facility in language was necessary to grasp the contours of foreign cultures, but so were sensitivities to cultural matters generally. Missionaries felt inadequate in communicating the message in ways appropriate to the culture. Though they certainly meant well, their good intentions were often misinterpreted. The missionaries’ lack of understanding served as a goad for formal training in cross-cultural communication.

In the Catholic-saturated culture of the Congo, for example, where the Jesuits had set up schools, the missionaries’ efforts in establishing schools soon became the object of governmental investigation: what educational degrees qualified the teachers to set up schools and teach? What was being taught? If one desired credibility in that foreign setting, educational degrees were not a luxury but a necessity. Field experience was a powerful motivator to send even returning missionaries into institutions for formal training. Missionary J. N. C. Hiebert, for example, long ago said that Indian Brahmins could “talk rings around him” in philosophy.

Teaching new believers also represented a challenge. The missionaries, understandably delighted at responses of adults and children to the message of the gospel, were not always adept in training disciples. As one missionary statesman explained, there are levels of complexity that need to be taken into account in the transformation work that follows conversion. For example, one can urge change in clothing patterns: nakedness is not acceptable. Drinking intoxicating drink, whether *toddy* in India, *cerveja* (beer) in Brazil, or *primus* or *skoll* (two kinds of beer) in Congo, is disallowed. These overt actions can be observed, adjudicated and corrected.

But there are more substantive matters often embedded in the culture that are unchristian. The practice of polygamy is an example. If a husband with many wives becomes a Christian, should he be required to undo the marriages by choosing one of his wives as the permanent wife? So what then happens to the remaining wives? If they cannot return to their home of origin and need to resort to prostitution, has a truly Christian solution been achieved? Such questions have persisted through the centuries. What are the acceptable answers that are aligned with the gospel? The experience of long-term missionaries may be helpful, but close classroom analysis is indispensable.

Key Ingredients for the Formation of Missionaries in a Formal Setting

When the question of which subject areas were necessary for the formal education of a missionary was put to the founder of Schools of Missions in four countries, he supplied a list without hesitation: Bible, mission and evangelism (content), church history (the story of mission in the church), cultural anthropology, and world religions. The list is a good beginning.

Knowledge of the Bible

In learning the Bible, emphasis should not only be given to the New Testament (NT), though it contains the missionaries' core message. The Old Testament (OT) deserves careful exploration, partly because its background makes the NT message intelligible. When missionaries shied away from the OT narratives of war and violence, they thought they were protecting listeners from problem areas of interpretation. Instead they found that once introduced to the tribal conflicts recorded in Joshua, Judges and other OT books, the indigenous folk in Africa became excited, if a little incredulous. "This," they said, "is our story." Connections between their own story and the Bible's story were quickly made, and that to good effect.

Clarity about the gospel's message is essential. Not only must the heart of the gospel be identified and embraced by missionaries, but also the role of indigenous leadership, the place of education, and financial subsidy must be incorporated and prioritized.

Knowledge of Mission History and Foreign Cultures

The value of church history is the glimpse it provides of God at work. At the same time a review of the practices of missionaries can forestall mistakes in current endeavors. We have already alluded to the value of cultural orientation.

Generally speaking, the more the missionary understands the culture in depth, the more effective will be the preaching of the gospel and the training of leaders. Much the same can be said for an in-depth understanding of the indigenous religious beliefs and rituals.¹³

Skills in Spiritual Formation and Leadership Training

To these subject contents there should be added a course on spirituality. The missionary is not simply a conduit for the verbal articulation of the gospel message. The missionary will flounder, if not fail, if his/her own spiritual life does not remain vibrant. Cultivating intimacy with God is not alone a means to an end; in some sense, it is the end (Jer. 9:23-24; Phil. 3:10). If the role of the western missionary is conceptualized as a trainer of leaders in addition to, or even as supplanting evangelism, then another set of courses come into play: pedagogy, leadership styles, functions of leaders, and much else. If the conviction is that the mission of God should inform any theological training, then Andrew Kirk's essay on the subject is a helpful starting point.¹⁴

Knowledge of the Times and the Trends

Course content, however articulated, is shaped by trends and vision. Paul Hiebert, noted Mennonite Brethren missiologist, after examining historical trends, offers a discussion on the content of missionary training for the next half century. The section has the title, "Training Missionaries for a Global World." A simple list will stir the educational juices.

1. We must move from discussing theology and the social sciences to a discussion of a biblical world view.
2. We must move from indigenization and contextualization to inculturation.
3. We must move from a stress on the autonomy and independence of national churches to interdependence and partnership in mission.
4. We must move from a stress on the church and world, to God and God's kingdom.
5. We must move from positivism and instrumentalism to a critical realist epistemology.¹⁵

Clearly the times and seasons, not to mention theorists, philosophers, missionaries and administrators, will influence the curriculum for missionary training.¹⁶ Such a curriculum, once devised, will not remain static. A fast-changing world demands

depth perception and flexibility. These suggestions for subject-area courses are by no means exhaustive.¹⁷

Perceived Benefits and Liabilities of Formal Education of Missionaries

In addition to gaining some tools for ministry, there are other benefits that come to missionaries engaging in formal education. As with most endeavors, there are also risks and lurking liabilities.

Benefits

On the benefit side, one might think of the advantages accruing both to the missionary and to the institution. One large benefit to the missionary taking a year or more for formal study, aside from gaining knowledge and skills, is meeting fellow students. The value of camaraderie which such study engenders cannot be assessed in material terms. Dialogue, debate, vision-casting and much more happens as colleagues engage with one another. Many will testify to the career-long connections which make for spiritual maturity, mutual encouragement and much else. For example, the students who become pastors have a series of options in selecting speakers when they plan for mission conferences. Networking is even more needed as our society becomes global in orientation.

But the institution also benefits, especially in the ethos which emerges with the presence of prospective missionaries. More than one seminary administrator will bear testimony to the strong and positive influence which students in the mission programs had on an entire student population. If the calling of Matt 28:19-20 represents a major aspect of the church's preoccupation, then all ancillary endeavors of the church should buttress or in some way aid the fulfillment of the missionary mandate.

A distinct benefit of formal education for the missionary is the stretching of horizons. The Kingdom of God is larger than any one denomination. In school the missionary should be helped to become a lifelong learner, not taking himself/herself too seriously, and able to flex with changing situations while remaining stable in his/her principled convictions. Such flexibility will be necessary for the missionary "on the ground."

Liabilities

For all the positive elements that formal education brings to prospective missionaries, one should not be blind to some liabilities. Some who enter a training program excited and energetic, tend over time to become less enthusiastic about their

calling. Or they may find that the academic study of the issues is so intriguing that they pursue professional degrees; their missionary career is sidelined. Though it may also be that their calling shifts to an academic ministry of research and writing. It is a mistake to think that non-ending schooling will qualify the candidate finally to embark on missionary service.

One of the dangers is that the theoretical base of studies may not be relevant to present needs. Overwhelmed with ideas and theories, and inundated with information, the student may find it is easy to minimize the work of the Holy Spirit. Personal character and especially the experience of the empowering of the Holy Spirit are more than a supplement to education; they are foundational to the formation of a missionary. For all the importance of anthropology, cultural studies and world religions, the missionary must remain rooted in Christology: God reached out to the human race through the incarnation of his Son; Jesus Christ is the world's savior.

Another potentially negative outcome of formal education is that theoretical knowledge may be put ahead of practical engagement. Some years ago, one of the MB missionary executives observed with sadness and concern that seminary graduates, even with majors in mission, were inept or fearful of witnessing one-on-one to Jesus Christ as the Savior. He pleaded for more hands-on experience. With that plea firmly etched in the minds of seminary administrators and department heads, changes were initiated.

A Case Study: Formal Education in the Majority World

A Perspective

Formal mission training is shifting from the mainline traditional school to new approaches to processing the Great Commission within diverse cross-cultural settings. Dr. Nzash Lumeya from Africa is founder of missionary training schools in several regions: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Jamaica, and Fresno, California. He observes that more local churches would participate in sending their members to spread the gospel if there were careful dialogues between mission trainers and local church leaders. Drawing on his experiences both in Africa and in North America, he says:

“Church leaders that I have been in touch with in most of these countries have not fully practiced the Great Commission because they believe they must have the finances required before sending anybody abroad. Nowhere in the Bible can we find this prerequisite. On the contrary,

loyalty to Yahweh is the engine that motivates Israel to be the light for the nations. Obedience to Christ will send His followers as His Spirit-filled messengers to the end of the world.”

Some Stories

The School of Missions in Bangui, Central African Republic, came into existence in 1988 when local pastors determined to move from ethno-centrism to Christocentrism. They trusted the Lord to use them among pygmies and other French-speaking Africans within the region. A call to be trained formally in a Bible mission school was put before local Christians, and many answered that call. Questions were raised about which courses should be taught for a mission certificate; also what time of day was best. An appointed academic committee proposed that biblical studies, evangelism, history of missions, cultural anthropology, African belief systems, survey of church history, and studies of sects be considered as the core of the mission degree. The classes were held at 6 p.m. in order to accommodate professionals such as the national director of transportation and high school teachers. The school was recognized as legitimate by the denomination. At the end of the program students were encouraged to reach out to their neighbors in the forest and beyond. Central African churches are now sending missionaries to the tropical forest (where there are now more than 7000 Christians), to the DRC, and to Burkina Faso. This school is still training trainers today (2013).

In 1990 a mission school was founded in Kinshasa, DRC, to train local Christians to be witnesses of Christ in their country and around the world. The five-year program entailed introductory courses such as Introduction to Theology, Biblical Geography, Survey of the Old and the New Testament, World Religions, Panorama of Church History, African Belief Systems, Cultural Anthropology, African World View, African Initiated Churches, African Theologies, Pluralism, Exegesis of OT and NT, Biblical Hebrew and Greek Grammar, Pastoral Theology, Hermeneutics, Research and Methodology. At the end of this program students defended a thesis to obtain a Master's degree in missiology. Some former students of this school are serving within cross-cultural settings in the DRC, the Republic of Congo, Burundi, South Africa, Angola, Canada and the US. In Burundi and Angola, similar efforts in the formal training of Africans to spread the Gospel locally and globally are being made. Angolan missionaries are sent into Cabinda and Namibia. Burundians are spreading the Gospel among pygmies.

The Fresno School of Mission was started in 2005 to equip local leaders in cross-cultural ministries within Fresno, where more than one hundred languages are spoken, as well as abroad. A program targeted to African-Americans and Latinos

offers a diploma in mission. It includes such courses as biblical theology of mission, biblical studies, language acquisition, Christian counseling, church history, Old and New Testament survey, and women in mission. Graduates are ministering in short-term mission trips to the Philippines, Haiti, Jamaica, DRC, South Africa, Russia, Colombia and Australia.

Students are reminded, as should all who are involved with the formation of missionaries, that a degree does not make a faithful missionary, but a sensitive missionary needs a transformational training to assist him/her to make balanced disciples of Jesus Christ across cultures (Mathew 28:20).

Notes

- ¹ Hans Kasdorf, "A Century of Mennonite Brethren Mission Thinking, 1985-1984" (Ph. D. diss., University of South Africa, 1986, vol. 1), 276.
- ² J. B. Toews, *The Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire* (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, 1978), 43.
- ³ George Konrad, "Institutional Education and the Mission of the Church" in *The Church in Mission. A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to J. B. Toews*, ed. A. J. Klassen (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature Mennonite Brethren Church, 1967), 210.
- ⁴ Bruce L. Guenther, "Training for Service: The Bible School Movement in Western Canada, 1909-1960" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2001), 124-128.
- ⁵ J. B. Toews, "In the Mission of the Church Around the World" in A. J. Klassen, *The Bible School Story 1913-1963. Fifty Years of Mennonite Brethren Bible Schools in Canada*, (no listed publisher), 13.
- ⁶ J. Dudley Woodberry notes that "Traditionally these groups [Evangelical and Charismatic churches] have had less concern for the formal education of their leaders than their main-line colleagues." *Missiological Education for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, et al (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 8.
- ⁷ For details on these distinctions see Robert J. Clinton, *Leadership Emergence Theory: A Self-Study Manual for Analyzing the Development of a Christian Leader* (Altadena: Barnabas Publishers, 2003).
- ⁸ For details see the well-researched work by Guenther, *Training for Service*. For a brief historical sketch of these schools, see also Klassen, *The Bible School Story, 1913-1963*.
- ⁹ Leaflet introducing *Pacific Bible Institute Course Offerings* (Fresno Pacific University Archives, 1944), 2.
- ¹⁰ Harold Ens, *Mennonite Brethren in Global Mission. Observations and Reflections, 1966-2006* (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2010), 41.

- ¹¹The Seminary's vision statement is set out in Hans Kasdorf's booklet, *It's Sunrise in World Mission* (Fresno: Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1984).
- ¹²Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985).
- ¹³Timothy Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010). The chapter "An Evangelical Theology of Religions" (191-226) would be a good starting point.
- ¹⁴Andrew Kirk, "Re-envisioning the Theological Curriculum as if the *Missio Dei* Mattered" in *Theological Education as Mission*. Ed. Peter Penner (Schwartzfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2005), 15-38. For a look at courses of study at the School of World Mission, a decade after its establishment, see *The Means of World Evangelization: Missiological Education at the Fuller School of World Mission*, ed. Alvin Martin (Pasadena: The William Carey Library), 1974.
- ¹⁵Paul G. Hiebert, "Missiological Education for a Global Era," in *Missiological Education for the Twenty-First Century*, 34-42. His list is found on pp. 37-41. As a follow-through of his first point, Hiebert has written, *Transforming World Views: An Anthropological Understanding of how People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).
- ¹⁶Kenneth Mulholland lists the courses The Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) regarded as essential in mid-century: History of Missions, Principles and Practices (including the Indigenous Church), Bible Basis (Philosophy) of Missions, Anthropology, Non-Christian Religions, Languages (Phonetics and Linguistics), Area Study, and Hygiene and Sanitation. "Missiological Education in the Bible College Tradition," in *Missiological Education for the Twenty-First Century*, 43-53 [51].
- ¹⁷Missionaries on furlough frequently engaged in formal studies and even pursued degrees. Three examples are: J.N.C. Hiebert (1929-56) completed a thesis for his M.A degree, "The Role of the Princes in the Constitutional Development of Modern India" (University of Southern California, 1947); Victor Wiens wrote a doctoral dissertation for the Inter-Cultural department at Fuller Theological Seminary: "From Refugees to Ambassadors: Mennonite Missions in Brazil, 1930-2000;" and Andy Owen, missionary in Thailand, completed his MA degree (2013) in Global Leadership at Fuller Seminary with a thesis, "The Glory Train: A Model for Developing Individuals and Teams in Christian Organizations."

Recommended Reading

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- Fleming, Dean. *Rediscovering the Full Mission of God. A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing and Telling*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013.
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- Peters, George W. *A Biblical Theology of Missions*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1972.
- Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010.
- Terry, John Mark and J. D. Payne, *Developing A Strategy for Missions: A Biblical, Historical and Cultural Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.
- Toews, J. B. *The Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire*. Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, 1978.
- Woodberry, J. Dudley, ed. et al. *Missiological Education for the Twenty-First Century*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996.

Study Questions

1. What were some of the factors that prompted giving more attention to formal education in the past? Are there any that you think are especially relevant for today? Why?
2. Discuss the timing of formal missionary training as it relates to cross-cultural experience (i.e. before, during, after). When do you think is the best time for formal training? Why?
3. The article raises the caution that students undertaking formal training are inundated with ideas, theories and information which can result in minimizing the work and role of the Holy Spirit. Suggest some ways that this concern could be addressed.
4. The authors explain how formal education provides “intellectual space” for ongoing missionary training. Reflect on your own journey regarding this matter.
5. In the opening paragraph the author raises the question of whether or not formal education is optional or necessary. How would you answer that question?