

# **“Pastoral Training as a Missions Mandate: Part II”**

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<https://aqueductproject.org/conference-room/>

## SUMMARY:

Early in the dialogue, Rob Blanks outlined his goals for the discussion: (a) to increase unity between theological training institutions and missions agencies, (b) to develop a clearer picture of the needs of the global Church in the area of pastoral training, and (c) to generate ideas on how institutions of theological education and missions agencies could work together to resolve these needs [5]. Blanks proposed to explore these goals by asking a series of questions, including: how theological institutions can support missions organizations, how missions organizations can support theological institutions, and what practical steps can be taken in the near future [25, 82, 95].

One major theme that resurfaced throughout the discussion was that training initiatives must be careful to support, rather than replace, indigenous pastoral training [36, 55, 67, 114, 116]. Specifically, the aim of training initiatives must be self-theologizing rather than a mere transplanting of Western theology [41, 60, 62, 70, 93-94, 102-103]. In part, this could be accomplished by seeking to understand and support the development of non-Western styles of training [51-52, 61-62, 70-72, 87]. Additionally, this would require someone to act as a “cultural translator”—i.e., an individual who understands Western theological models, is able to isolate the core content from Western models, and is able to re-package that content in a culturally sensitive and helpful way [60-62, 70, 72, 102, 118].

Two additional questions regarding the specific role and methods of global pastoral training were also raised: (a) What is the specific need for training and (b) what is the role of certification in that training? Regarding the first question, it was noted that trainers would have to discern what is universal, separating this from what is culturally specific [62]. Delivering the content of the Bible, along with basic methods of interpretation was considered central in this regard [65, 67, 96, 99]. Second, a broad desire for certification as a recognized symbol of accomplishment was observed [42, 45, 47-49, 61].

In the course of this conference, it was noted that one of the greatest potential failures of Western training models is a tendency to neglect the practical implications of theology [34, 38, 50, 89]. Missions agencies, in turn, frequently have to work to resolve this through additional mentorship and discipleship after one has already received a formal, theological education [32, 87]. In seeking ways to overcome this tendency, it was determined that this was an area in which Western training models could learn from non-Western models [79-80, 82], in as far as theological institutions in the West assume (either overtly or implicitly) that theology is best done within the academy and in isolation from practical ministry training [75].

Several institutions, in recognizing this tendency, have begun to seek to incorporate practical training in their curriculum [77-78, 110], primarily by increasing requirements for students to be involved in applied ministry throughout their education [77, 90]. This enables students to translate formal theological training into concrete ministry skills [78]. The primary goal, then, instead of producing academic theologians, would be to enable students to serve in ministry, using theological training as one avenue toward this end [109-110]. Additionally, increased

partnership between missions agencies and institutions of theological education would raise awareness among students concerning the actual needs in the mission field [27, 111–112].

Near the conclusion of the conference, several commented that continuing to provide avenues for open dialogue between representatives of different fields will bear lasting fruit [107, 108, 114, 122]. Blanks asked Harvey Kwiyani to close the discussion in prayer [124, 127].

## **TRANSCRIPT:**

**[1] Rob Blanks:** Why don't we go ahead and get started, and if anybody jumps on later, that's great. And so, I would just like to take this moment to welcome everybody to this call, hosted by the Aqueduct Project and Dr. Jonathan Armstrong, discussing the question: "How can theological colleges and mission agencies collaborate more effectively in the task of global pastoral training?"

**[2]** Before we get into that, I want to say some "thank yous" and set the groundwork for how the call might proceed, and then we can jump in with some brief introductions and get into it. First, I did want to thank Jonathan, even though he is not here, for his leadership with the Aqueduct Project. I'm fairly new to this, so it's exciting to see these initiatives bringing together sister schools and agencies and churches for the glory of God for accomplishing the Great Commission, this missions mandate. So, I want to thank Jonathan. I also want to thank Matthew Dereck, who is here with us, for all of his behind-the-scenes work in putting this together. And I want to thank each of you for giving your time this morning. I know at least for me, Saturday mornings are prime time, and so that's a precious resource. Thank you very much for giving your time.

**[3]** My name is Rob Blanks, and I have the privilege to get to work with Lancaster Bible College and Capital Seminary, and I actually work remotely from Colorado; that's where I'm calling in this morning. I'm in western Colorado, so if you could send some of that snow out here, that would be great! [There was a large snowfall in the Chicago area the night before.] We haven't even had a flake.

**[4] David Bohyer:** Glad to do it!

**[5] Rob Blanks:** I work remotely from Colorado, leading and facilitating an online program training pastors in Uganda. And so as we think about the call this morning, a few goals that I would love to see if we could have achieved: if we could have an increased unity between theological education, theological colleges and mission agencies, that would be fantastic. If we could additionally have an increased perspective on the current reality of the state of the Church, the global Church, and the global needs for pastoral training, and an increased resonance between sister schools and agencies in terms of responding together to this need—first understanding the need clearly and then resonating together, working together as a team, each in our different ways, together responding to that need. And then, hopefully, we will produce ideas for future steps as we think about continuing this work, future steps that we might be able to take together.

**[6]** As we jump into the call, a couple of procedural items: when you talk, if you could identify yourself, just say your name, and then we can know who is talking. The discussion is going to be transcribed and then emailed out to all of us, so just know that that's coming. Don't feel like you're under pressure to write something down. That's going to be a great service that Matthew Dereck and Jonathan will help us with. Finally, we're planning to end the call in 90 minutes, so we'll do our best to end right at that time and then you guys can get on to your next engagements, whatever those might be.

**[7] Dave Semmelbeck:** Yeah, I'm going to be golfing.

**[8] Rob Blanks:** You'll be golfing and somebody's going to be sledding! We'll do some introductions, and then I'm going to pray. Then, let's jump into our conversation and the discussion question, and then as we move through that, maybe switch and transition to future steps—you know, where do we go from here, what does this mean—and then we'll conclude. So, let's start with introductions. If we could keep this brief so we could get right into the topic, that would be great. If you could say your name, say your agency or organization, say your role within that organization, then your location where you're calling in from this morning. Whoever would like to start....

**[9] Dave Semmelbeck:** My name is Dave Semmelbeck. I'm with Biblical Education by Extension World. I live in Colorado Springs, and my role is president.

**[10] Rob Blanks:** Thank you, David.

**[11] Dave Beine:** Well, since there are so many Davids here, I'm Dave Beine, Professor of Intercultural Studies at Moody – Spokane. I've been doing that for about 12 years; prior to that, about 28 years with Wycliffe SIL as an anthropologist in South Asia and Spokane, Washington.

**[12] Dave Deuel:** Since the theme is Dave, I'll go! My name is Dave Deuel; I'm the founder and designer of the Master's Academy International, which consists of 17 training ministries located in different places over the world. Right now I work full-time for Joni and Friends, designing training programs for people with disabilities, so if any of you are interested in doing that, I'd love to help, love to encourage you. I also serve remotely, in upstate New York, where the snow is deep this morning also.

**[13] David Bohyer:** Okay, well my name is Dave also, David Bohyer, so this must be the Dave team! I live in Chicagoland—so, in a suburb of Chicago—and I'm currently involved with a ministry called Leadership Vistas. We do pastoral training in Central Africa, in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Congo. I've been a pastor for over 40 years, so I'm pretty new at all this compared to you guys. I appreciate being able to be here and learn from you. We're very thankful for what God is doing, as you are as well. Thank you.

**[14] Marc Canner:** Well, I guess I'll jump in here. My name isn't Dave! I'm Marc Canner, and I also live in the Spokane area. Dave Beine is a colleague of mine. I serve as president of Language and Culture Training International; it's an interdenominational missionary training agency, and it's been in operation for about 25 years. We train folks for the former Soviet Union, now China, and hopefully soon the Middle East. I'm a linguist by trade, but I also serve at Moody – Spokane as Professor of Intercultural Studies.

**[15] Mike Klontz:** Well, since there are a few of us here from Spokane, I'm Mike Klontz, also in the Spokane area. My wife and I served as missionaries with what is now Ethnos360, known for 75 years as New Tribes Mission. We served down in Bolivia, South America, and then for over 20 years now as mission mobilizers, representatives for the mission here in the Northwest. I have taught for a number of years as adjunct faculty at Moody – Spokane as well.

**[16] Harvey Kwiyani:** I am Harvey Kwiyani, currently located in Liverpool. I'm teaching at Liverpool Hope, but spent a good 7 years in Minneapolis and St. Paul up until 2013. My role at Liverpool Hope is currently teaching African theology. I also lead a mission training organization that we recently founded, called Missio Africanus. What we do is provide pastoral training to African Christian leaders in the diaspora, so they can go into the mission world where they are.

**[17] Alvin Hull:** I'm Alvin Hull, if you can hear me, from Lancaster. Bad internet connection—we'll see if it holds up here. I've been with Pioneers for 36 years, initially church planting among animist groups and then Muslim groups. Now I'm in a training role, and the main reason I'm joining you all today is that we are involved in a training program in the Middle East, training nationals who are going back into places like Sudan and Egypt and other parts of the Middle East. That's part of my role. I'm also an adjunct professor here at Lancaster Bible College.

**[18] Samuel Naaman:** Good morning everyone, this is Sam Naaman. I'm originally from Pakistan, and I teach at Moody – Chicago in the Intercultural Studies department. We also started a ministry called the South Asian Friendship Center years ago in Chicago, reaching Muslims and Hindus, and my ministry is basically in West Asia and the Middle East. It's good to be here!

**[19] Al Bridges:** Good morning! My name is Al Bridges. I'm with Biblical Education by Extension, and we've been serving in extension training for about 40 years. We work in about 50 countries, and so I'm here because of that.

**[20] Ed McCallum:** I'm Ed McCallum, calling in from Phoenix, Arizona, where the sunshine is very deep. [Laughter]. I could go out and play golf today if I wanted to. I'm with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church [EPC], and I served for many years as their Assistant Stated Clerk in their national office, but now my wife and I have been for the past six months or so with EPC's World Outreach in their International Theological Education Network where we're developing partnerships in 10 different places around the world to train pastors, to train trainers to train their own to be on mission and, hopefully, to reach the unengaged.

**[21] Rick Hudson:** Good morning! I'm Rick Hudson. I'm a missions mobilizer with Fellowship International Mission. As a representative of our mission, we have several training and educational institutions around the world, several in the Middle East and North Africa.

**[22] Rob Blanks:** Is that everybody? Did everybody get a chance to introduce themselves? Did we miss anybody? Okay, why don't we go ahead and pray together? [Rob Blanks opens the conference in prayer.]

**[23]** As we think about this question, jumping right into it here: How can theological colleges and mission agencies collaborate more effectively in the task of global pastoral training? All around this call, we've seen the statistics. I think that probably many of us here have seen much of this with our own eyes: the need for pastoral training in the global context. There's that statistic that we had in the letter: 2 million pastors, mostly in Africa and Asia, are completely without any theological education of any kind. The last call—this is actually the second call on

this topic—the last call on “Pastoral Training as a Missions Mandate: Part I” which occurred last July, focused on the “why” question: Why do we consider pastoral training to be a missions mandate? This morning, I’d like us to transition from the “why” question to more of the “how” question: How can we come together and partner together?

**[24]** Just seeing who is on this call, we have some amazing folks from different backgrounds, representing institutions of higher education, theological colleges, as well as mission agencies, and, in a number of cases, it seems like you guys are engaged in both at the same time. How do we come together?

**[25]** To start the conversation, I wanted to ask this question. As we think about theological colleges and then mission agencies, these two together, and how can one help the other, I would like to ask the question to those representing mission agencies in some capacity. As a representative, as a leader in a mission agency, what would you say if somebody from a theological college—Moody Bible Institute, Lancaster College, theological college with the name X, whatever group it might be—if one of these Bible colleges or theological colleges were to come to you and your agency and say, “Here we are! We would like to help you in so far as we can. How can we help you in this global effort of training pastors? How could we help you? What can we do?”

**[26]** I think we can also ask the question vice versa, if the agencies were to ask the same question of the schools. But I’d like to start with the scenario that the theological colleges were to ask this question of the agencies. For those of you who represent agencies, what would you say?

**[27] David Bohyer:** Well, I can jump in here just briefly. Again, my experience has been relatively brief, compared to most of us. I’m involved in a missions ministry and agency, you might say, in Central Africa. And the founder of our ministry was a graduate of Dallas Seminary; he founded the ministry and brought with it some of his training from seminary that helped us. One question that I would have would be: “What currently is going on in seminaries and Bible schools that is preparing people for pastoral training in the broad context, in the context of formal training, in the context of non-formal training, and also in the context of what we could maybe call informal training?”

**[28]** I guess I would assume that, for you who are involved in that, you know that this is already going on currently in seminaries and Bible schools. But that would be one question that I would have because of the different kinds of pastoral training. Particularly, I’ve recently just become interested in what God is doing in some of these new movements, such as the church planting movement and the disciple-making movement that have a unique, fresh concept of pastoral training. That would be a question that I would have.

**[29] Rob Blanks:** Thank you, David!

**[30] David Bohyer:** Yeah, does that make sense what I’m saying?

**[31] Rob Blanks:** Yes!

**[32] Mike Klontz:** It's a multifaceted question. Coming from the standpoint of the mission field and as a mission mobilizer, it's not only what prepares someone to want to go to the mission field and have an effective ministry, but also to be able to stay on the field, in terms of being prepared for possible long-term missionary service. There's a lot that could be said. Part of what mission agencies feel they are responsible to prepare their candidates for is what doesn't—or, possibly, can't—happen at the theological level as much because it's something that involves life-on-life discipleship, equipping in conflict resolution—some of the very things that might send someone home from the mission field, or make them less effective in their ministry once they get out there.

**[33] Rob Blanks:** Thank you, Mike!

**[34] Harvey Kwiyani:** I'm involved in both theological education and cross-cultural missions, and, of course, there is usually a tension between what can be offered where. The people that I work with in cross-cultural missions training are somewhat not keen to engage in theological conversations. It doesn't give them the practical skills that they need to be effective in their work, so they say. But also, the theological education systems that I have encountered in several places in the West—not everywhere, but just a few places—are not really interested in those practical aspects of the ministry. They are more interested in the shaping of their minds.

**[35]** Now, the way I've tried to balance this in my own work is to operate under the conviction that theological education is not complete without a missiological foundation. So, I try to bring in as much mission as possible—and that would include the practical aspects of the ministry—into the theological conversations, theological discussions that I'm having with my students. But I also make it a point to bring in theology into the cross-cultural mission conversations, to try to narrow the gap between theology and missiology, theology and practical ministry, as much as possible so that these two should not be looked at as, "You choose one and you let go of the other," but that you try to work with both as you journey along. That's what I try to do.

**[36] Al Bridges:** If I'm looking at what we do in the areas where we work, we have a variety of the educational levels of the students. Most of it has to be done in their own language, and I'm trying to think how we could partner especially with Western institutions. One of the things that might be worth looking at in the future is that a lot of our students wouldn't have the capacity to go on to what is the normal theological education that we would have in the West, but some of them are very bright—some of them would like to do that. There's some kind of partnership at some stage when they're ready. When they have the time and the capacity—and probably when they can speak English—a partnership where schools could help us provide additional education for them through their life ministry as they have their goals and need more training would be good. That could be a way to do that.

**[37] Rob Blanks:** Al, in terms of your context, is your agency working on the front lines, in most areas, with low levels of educational opportunities for those who you are working with?

**[38] Al Bridges:** Yeah, most of them, but it would depend on the situation. I think in some countries where they've had a good education system, they do quite well at a higher level. Say



Vietnam, where we've had a lot of experience. They had a good education system; they can do the work. Our training is at the Bible college level in our materials. They do quite well. Other countries where they haven't had the education or they do not normally have a pattern of study—a lot of times they don't read—it's not built into their culture, and so you have lower levels. You try to work with both. And you bring the guys up—or, the women up—and they have the potential, but it's a difficult process, and most of the people that we serve are already pastors; they're already in the field. It's more adult education—meeting the needs that they have, and a lot of it is practical—like our other brother said, being able to apply theology, what they're learning in their ministry, giving them the ministry skills [35]. Those are their specific needs, and there's something new regularly. But some of them would like to have additional studies, but of course they have the same problems all of us have: time, finances, and ability. But for the future, we do need some right people in the countries that can continue and lead their own theological education processes.

**[39] Rob Blanks:** Thank you!

**[40] Alvin Hull:** Representing from the Middle East, this is Alvin. Brother Mafti, who is an Egyptian brother who's leading a movement in the Middle East, has come to three different formal institutions here in the States, asking the very question you're wanting us to answer. And here are the things he asked for, as I'm trying to remember the things we've discussed. Number one, he wants trainers who will come out and help him, who have the experience. Talking about what Harvey said earlier, Mafti said, "I don't want theory. I want people to come out who have experience in missiology who are going to teach theology" [34–35]. So raising up pastoral church planters or apostolic church planters, Mafti says, "Please, if you can supply trainers to us. Short term trainers who come out for a week or two who have got experience, who will speak into how to train our pastors in theology."

**[41]** The other key thing he brought out was that they are looking for people who are culturally sensitive. Instead of taking the Western model and just transplanting it from the West and coming out and giving our Western theology, he's looking for trainers who have got the experience in cross-cultural settings also to act sensitively to the cultural dynamic.

**[42]** The third thing he would bring out—and this is a big one; he's going to three different schools asking this, and no one's been able to help him yet. They've already started a program that's probably going to develop into 10 different training schools across Central Asia and the Middle East. And no one's willing to recognize this one-year training program. All his guys want just one piece of paper to say this is an adult education program or some kind of something where these guys can finish their training and be recognized for having completed one year of training from some school in the States, and that's very important to them. So far that has not happened.

**[43]** And the fourth thing that he's asked for that's come out—and he's trying to get me to do this, and I'd like to see others jump in and do it—is mentoring. As one of our brothers said, life-on-life [32], but it's really long-distance mentoring for our friends in these different countries how they can do this. So it's not us doing it from here, but how we can coach them and mentor

them and help facilitate their vision for training, so we can see them step up and fly instead of us doing it from here. Those are probably the four things that he would say if he were trying to answer that question for you this morning.

**[44] Rob Blanks:** Thank you, Alvin. You were talking about not receiving recognition for the one year program? Is he after recognition for one year of accredited scholarship, or he is talking about more of a certificate?

**[45] Alvin Hull:** More of a certificate. Finish the one year of training, and then if these guys want to go on to an accredited program, they could then talk to that school and consider that, but right now, he is seeking just some kind of recognition that they've completed one year of training.

**[46] David Bohyer:** Yeah, Rob, this is David Bohyer again, just real briefly. I appreciated what you just shared. In Africa, we have found the same request coming from the people that are being trained there, and it's for some reason a desire that they have some kind of official recognition that culturally would mean something for them in their own ministries. Yeah, we see that also.

**[47] Marc Canner:** I have a question about that. When they're yearning for certificates here—brother Alvin, I think you mentioned they want to be certified [42], maybe a one-year certificate kind of program or something—what is the motivation behind their desire to become certified?

**[48] Alvin Hull:** Here's what I'm hearing as we continue with the training program there. When they go back into their cultures—when they go away for a whole year and come back after a year of training, when they have that certificate—it's a formal recognition that they are now—in the cultural eyes of the Church there—trained. They're respected now. When they come back with nothing, they come back, saying they did it. That's all they've got, just their word on it. So, culturally, it's really important to them. Now, you know, I hear it from my end and I'm like, "No big deal!" But to be sensitive to them, it is a very important cultural piece of their respect, that they have actually completed a course of study. That's what they're telling us.

**[49] Marc Canner:** It kind of reminds me of the demand across the world for international certifications for any teacher. They're not even looking at bachelor's degrees, or master's degrees. In most contexts, they want this official-looking certificate. It kind of makes me think—when we're talking about theological training in these cultures, I think brother Harvey mentioned this as well [34–35]—a lot of the pastors want practical training, right? I'm just trying to wrap my mind around the difference between this motivation to have some official certification or certificate that tells the Church in the context, "I'm certified to teach," or "I'm certified to fill this role."

**[50]** I think there's a kind of disconnect between that and the actual—you know, brother Harvey mentioned—the practical aspect of things. One of the research things I've read was done in Central Asia, and the pastors who were surveyed—over a hundred of them in places

like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan. Our organization trains a lot of folks in that particular region. When they were surveyed, the question was posed: “What is the usefulness of Western, theologically trained individuals in your context?” And the vast majority of them said, “These people are kind of useless to us. They have this official kind of training, this certification, but they don’t have the practical skills that we’re really looking for.”

**[51]** Perhaps, I could pose a question there for the consortium about what we’re doing here, what we’re involved in here. What kinds of questions are being asked about what the training is that is actually needed on the ground versus what we would typically offer in our Western context in theological training?

**[52] Dave Deuel:** An underused concept that some of the larger theological agencies are using is field education, and it doesn’t seem like it has caught on well with evangelical training schools, which is unfortunate because field education is local and can [connection ends].

**[53] Samuel Naaman:** We lost David.

**[54] Rob Blanks:** David, can you hear us? We lost you about a couple seconds into what you were sharing.

**[55] Dave Deuel:** Yes, I apologize for that; I’m not sure what happened. Let me just start from the beginning quickly, and I’ll summarize the first part. An underused concept in training that is being used effectively in some circles is field education; and field education doesn’t de-prioritize or de-emphasize the classroom, but it takes the weakness of the classroom and puts it out in the community. It’s practical in orientation; it’s contextual; it’s supervised. And probably one of the neatest aspects of it—maybe it’s just my ecclesiology showing—but area pastors get involved in supervising. Not just the pastor of the church where, let’s say, an intern is functioning as an associate pastor, but other pastors in the area as well. And so it still amazes me that field education has been around for so long, but it just doesn’t seem to catch on for some reason. In fact, many people haven’t even heard of it, it’s so underused.

**[56] Matthew Dereck:** Let me ask a follow-up question to that and then some of the discussion that’s been going with this. Now, we are hearing that there is a desire for a specific type of training internationally, and a desire for more education. And you mention field training, and that’s one model of going about it. Then there would also be one model where you have pastors meeting together locally, and then a third model would be having people come to a theological institution that’s already established in America or in Europe. What are the pros and cons of each of these models, and which one do you think would be most effective? Thank you!

**[57] Dave Deuel:** If the question is for me, I can see context for each one of those. In other words, it really would depend on what you want to do with theological education and where you want to do it, but each one could be optimally effective, I think, over the other two. Does that answer your question, Matthew?

**[58] Matthew Dereck:** Yes, thank you! And if anyone else would like to jump in on that as well, feel free to. Thank you!

**[59] Dave Beine:** I'll jump in here for a second. I feel a bit like I'm a day late and a dollar short in that I wasn't at the last meeting about the "why." But as a cultural anthropologist coming into missiology, I see—and so this goes to the question of what's being taught at the schools that the agencies ought to know—one of the perspectives that I try to bring in is a critical perspective, and it's not just mine. If you look back to, I think, around 2014, *Mission Frontiers* magazine, one of the questions comes as, "Whose theology are we bringing?" I heard Harvey say he teaches African theology [16]. And so, I know Jonathan, he's not here today, but he's well aware of this perspective. But as the conversation has gone on, a couple of the assumptions I hear underneath this is that the world is flat, and getting flatter.

**[60]** I'm not sure that I buy into that, and I'm not sure that I teach my students that, because what I heard, I think, David say is that there needs to be an understanding that—and this was the EMS's, the Evangelical Missiological Society's, theme last year: theological education to and from the global South. The assumptions underneath need to be pressed on a bit to say, you know, whose theology? Because we have to assume theology is wider. In my conversations with Jonathan, I basically said, "The only way I see this working is to have a cultural translator, either at the end, if we're going to be beaming in theological lectures from Spokane, Washington, to India."

**[61]** There's another question for me, right? The need. I know people say there's a need, but there are over 86 seminaries in India, so I'm questioning why people—back to Marc's question: what's the motivation for people saying that there's need. Having worked in South Asia, I also understand charlatanism, and people are going to tell me there's a need in order to have a connection with me, and I want to be aware of that as well, I'm going to teach my students that as well. But if it's going to be successful, you know, if I'm going to have a product, and it's my Western theology, and I package it and send it, it needs somebody to understand that it's in a package and that the package isn't appropriate for those receiving it. They need to be able to take the content out and repackage it into another setting, and this goes back to that *Frontiers Magazine* where Mari had an article that he argued—and, you know, from his own experience—that when he came to the West, he had to unlearn his culturally preferred orality, relearn another system in order to get his formal education at Asbury, and then he had to go back to Nigeria and take that out and put it back into a context in Nigeria for an oral society.

**[62]** I guess the aspect that I would say is what I'm training my students to understand is the important role of that cultural translator, that I can't just bring a product. That's a piece of the conversation. I don't even know if that's appropriate here; it's just the assumptions are that it's needed, or that the product is needed, and I guess I would push back a little bit, saying, "Well, we have to get to the heart of what is universal and how culture plays into this." So there you go.

**[63] Samuel Naaman:** Thank you, David. I think the challenge for our Western theological education maybe here in the universities, or even in the extension, is that we assume or we think that this is our product and this is what we want to deliver, and we'll deliver it from our model. And for us, coming from the East or from any non-Western culture or countries, we want to hang onto anything that we are given. In my understanding, I think it is crucial for the

mission agencies as well as those of us who are in theological education to first of all have a basic assumption and presumption: “What is the need of this country or this region?” We cannot even generalize “region,” because every country, even in that region, will be different. In some places you may have some believers. And in some places we may have to start from scratch. But I feel that many times we are so focused on theology as compared to basic Bible training—foundational training! Like, you know, the chronological Bible study method. Mike, as you know, your mission developed, and others have developed this. One does not even have to have basic education in order to understand!

**[64]** I’ll just give you one example. Years ago, we had a very high-level judge from Pakistan, he was a Hindu convert, and he was in a seminar, and someone talked about John Calvin and “John Calvin says...” and “John Calvin says....” And he’s an advocate! And then towards the end he called me, he said, “Sam, they keep on talking about John Calvin, John Calvin.... Is John Calvin a professor?” And so what I’m saying is that even an educated person and a person who has been a believer for years still may not be able to understand all the history and all of those things.

**[65]** I think it is probably crucial for us to evaluate and come alongside some places that are there. I mean, in some countries you have all theological education by extension, and that is where I think Al and David’s ministry, BEE World, is really effective, in my understanding, that it gives us biblical content. Start from there. Be sensitive also to the cultural aspect.

**[66]** I have struggled—I have been in this country for 22 years now, and I still feel that even the missiology that we learn, present, teach—it is from our Western perspective. And we sit here in the West, and we say, “This is what needs to happen for you. You go and do this and this will happen.” And the reality on the ground could be very different. And so, I don’t know. I think that cultural sensitivity, sensitivity not only in a mere academic sense, but on the ground, is very crucial.

**[67]** And I will respond to Alvin [42], what you mentioned about recognition of one-year programs. Part of it may be that my brother is suggesting that if they have a paper, it gives them respect, and I hear that loud and clear. You know that you have done something, you have been at least recognized that this is a good education for you. We have always had that temptation. I think that demand will always be there. Going back to what David said, let’s say India [61]. You have solid theological education in seminaries. I know that you have the liberal aspect; I get it. But you have, you know, SAIACS [South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies] and other places in Bangalore and others which are very solid! Instead of doing everything from here to there, could we at least explore? Or there are probably some indigenous organization who long, and they don’t care about the certificates and all those things. And they already have the infrastructure. We say, “Okay, can we come alongside you in the non-accredited, non-traditional thing?” They just want to know the Bible; how they can effectively teach in a rural setting how they can effectively teach their pastors and then slowly build on that.

**[68] Rob Blanks:** Thank you. Thank you, Samuel, that’s excellent, and also Dave, I really appreciate what you said about asking the questions about the underlying assumptions [59].

Those are very important things to address and think through. As I'm listening to this and thinking about it, one question that I have is: "Okay, so we have our theological colleges in the US; what is their set of expertise? What is it that they do well? Then look at the mission agencies. What are their areas of expertise? How might we be able to use each other?"

**[69]** You mentioned, Dave, the idea of a cultural translator. My perspective from LBC [Lancaster Bible College]—I didn't mention this earlier, but my family and I were missionaries in Mozambique for a while, and so my perspective from LBC is that we're interested in helping, being part of the Great Commission, of this mandate. However, we want to be wise with it, and so as I look at it, what is it that we do well? What is it that we really don't do well, that we haven't done, and we need somebody to help us with? And might there be somewhere where we can come together?

**[70] Dave Beine:** This is the synergy part, right? I was asked to translate Grudem's *Systematic Theology* for Nepal. And Tom Steffen presented a paper at the EMS this year on "Whose theology?" And I'm thinking, "Systematic theology is whose system?" What we don't do well is train people to understand that we have a system and we're seeing it through glasses, and to unpack that so that the package is ready, what is universal. There's the part that we have to be careful of in our theological settings, to help people understand.

**[71]** We have a preaching class at Moody, and I've asked the professor there, "Who are we training them for?" We're very clear that we're training them to preach in North America using North American culture and North American style. But that's not universal, so he has now implemented that to be able to bring that into the classroom, to let students know that right up front, because their assumption is, "Oh there's one way, God's way, and this is it, and I'm learning it, and now I'll go elsewhere and teach it." He's now able to recognize that there is a cultural perspective, this is done in a cultural way, and I'm only training you for one particular way. If you're going to go somewhere else, you're going to need to take the content out and you'll need to learn the way in which messages are delivered in that culture, which is a learning process.

**[72]** That's where we are, I hope, beginning to put more attention into teaching people how to learn cultures, if they're going to be these cultural translators. Things like systematic theology are not universal. The idea of doing something systematically might be, but our systems don't match. Those are the areas where I hope we're being a little bit more careful. When I think of an aqueduct, it's a figure, a symbol of Roman hegemony around the world, and I don't want to carry that. That's not what I want to bring—my forms. As Samuel said, we need to be very aware of that.

**[73] Marc Canner:** Dave, I appreciate what you just said because, as some of you may have read, Timothy Tennent's article back in 2005. He was writing about ecclesiology, specifically, in various contexts, and one of the things that came out in that article was that among Hindus, Muslims, and others, many of the followers of Jesus will not conform to Western-inspired church expressions of Christianity, because of various reasons he was talking about, because of the negative connotations with even the terms "Christian" or "church," or whatever.

[74] And so, I would like to piggyback off of that. If you're talking about ecclesiology or whatever aspect of theology you're teaching, perhaps an important question that we need to be asking is how our Western formulation of theology comports with that particular context. Or what forms should it take if we're going to train them? You guys have talked about translation. As a former professional translator, there are so many—whether it's cultural translation or linguistic translation—there are many inherent problems with translation. I guess we're all trained to see our theology from the perspective of our teachers. It reminds me of what Einstein once said. He said, "The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education."

[75] **Harvey Kwiyani:** Let me add something there. I grew up in Africa, and going through the Western education system, and the assumptions that theology is done—or, better, learned—within an academic setting. You do theology within the academy, and then you have to go somewhere to learn the practical aspects of the ministry as you go to be a missionary somehow. If we were to re-imagine that from a well-informed African perspective, that would not stand. We would look for ways to deliver both at the same time, probably in an oral manner that does not really require all the hoops that we have to go through within a Western education system.

[76] But even after we've done that, as has been highlighted, there will be a need for recognition at the end. So the certificate becomes important to sort of say, "You have gone through the process, you have gone through some training of some kind." But if we are to imagine this from an African perspective, we would have to find ways to deliver theology and missiology together, without separating them.

[77] **Alvin Hull:** Harvey, that was excellent. A school we have in Ghana is doing what Harvey is explaining. They do a one-week training, and then they go out for three weeks. And so whatever they may learn in that one week, if it's theology, if it's practical ministry, they have to walk it out for three weeks. Then they come back in and debrief and keep building on that. It is a one-year program. In the Middle East we do something similar as well.

[78] And we've brought it now into LBC. We've decided, "Hey look, if we're hearing this from everywhere..." Now when I teach church planting or discipleship and evangelism here on campus, we spend 25% of the class time out on the streets with a pastor, and it's changing our perspective completely. It's getting us that field education that Dave was talking about [52, 55]. We're bringing it into the classroom because we're realizing that we've hung out too long on the academia, thinking that if we can just get the knowledge into their heads it's going to translate into practice somehow.

[79] We're trying to change that here in the West, so I think we're learning from the global South. I think there is a way to bring these two together. I'm looking at this, and I'm watching the people come out and help us in Egypt in our training, and it's those who have that cultural sensitivity to say, "Look, I'm bringing it from my perspective and this is my lens. Now let's bring it into your context," who are requested to come back again. The guys who come out and only deliver it from their Western perspective, I'll call up and say, "No, don't invite those guys back. We don't want those guys."

**[80]** There are those people who have enough experience, again, bringing the two together: missiology and theology. I think we have them in our schools. I think it's identifying those people and getting them over there, having them be our trainers that help, and it does move us forward in incredible ways. For what it's worth, that's what we're experiencing, and we're trying to bring it into the West now, because we're seeing it in the global South as well.

**[81] Dave Beine:** Just a quick addition here. In my school, in our school here, there's no connection between intercultural and theology, so when we held the EMS conference here—where, you know, theology meets missiology—only one theologian came from our own campus. Moody Bible Institute. One theologian came. And that was the speaker that we invited, Jonathan Armstrong. There isn't an integration between intercultural where I teach these things, so there's nothing in the curriculum that requires a theologian or theology major to take cultural anthropology or intercultural communication. It's not part of their curriculum. Whoever else is teaching, and insofar as you have impact in settings where students actually have to study, that would be one way for us to do better, and we're not even doing it internally at home.

**[82] Rob Blanks:** That's interesting! What I hear the discussion turning to now is flipping that question that we opened with on its head: "What can the agencies do to help our schools?" Provided those of us who are teaching and who are administrators and leaders have ears and eyes to see, and say, "We welcome you! Please come and help us with these things!" That's good! I appreciate that. Thank you!

**[83] Dave Deuel:** I think one of the answers or responses to both questions is ultimately that we have to keep before our eyes that the best work that we do is when we train nationals to do the work. Even from the beginning of endeavors, whether it's in this country or in another country as a missionary teacher, getting the nationals to do the leading and the teaching is incredibly important. A good read on this—and probably some of you have already read it—is Conrad Mbewe's study from Zambia, where he demonstrates so clearly once again that the sooner the Americans and the Westerners in general can step back and turn the ministry fully over to nationals—not just certain levels of instruction or administration, but the entire training ministry, however it's structured—the better off we'll be. He does such an effective job of communicating that. I highly recommend that book! I can give you the title if you want me to.

**[84] [Several]:** Yes!

**[85] David Deuel:** Let me run and grab it. Go ahead and keep talking; I'll bring it back!

**[86] Mike Klontz:** As mission agencies, obviously, we count on biblical educational institutions to give that foundation that missionaries who, together with the local church, we're wanting to send out. We count on them to have some good solid biblical foundation, but inherent in their having not only completed twelve years of schooling in this country and then another possible four or more years of theological education and hopefully some practical training along the way, is that they then feel that they have arrived, that they are the qualified teachers rather than recognizing their need.



**[87]** This is true in the North American context as well as overseas. Their need to be learners, their need to be open and flexible to seeing the world when they get out there from a different grid, from a different framework. That is part of what we do as a mission agency to prepare people to recognize that they don't know it all. I'll never forget the quote by Walter Duff, who was the founder and initial president of Village Missions, a U.S. based mission organization to supply rural pastors and so forth, and he said, "You know, we send these students to Bible college for four years, and then it takes them ten years to undo it so that it becomes practical!" Part of what we are doing as mission agencies is wanting to take what these candidates have learned in their schooling and make it practical and help them to see that they need to be open to doing things in different ways when they go to different, especially overseas, locations.

**[88] Ed McCallum:** When I say I'm an evangelical Presbyterian, you realize that that automatically brings a whole sense of theological and ecclesiological positions—and in my mind, just where I come from, probably most of it's true! I'm wrestling with a number of things here. Thank you for everybody's contributions. I was immersed in a world of pastoral development and ecclesiology and polity for our churches here in the States, and now I've switched over to focusing on more of a global pastoral training and the needs globally.

**[89]** One of the things we recognized as we surveyed our recent graduates, our fairly new ministers in our denomination. I would have guessed, coming from a Presbyterian and Reformed background where we value educated clergy—but the great majority of our newly ordained ministers said they were not really that pleased with the education they had received because it didn't train them for the job that they were called on to do.

**[90]** We've begun to address that on the domestic level. We've been in conversations with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, their Charlotte branch, and they're working with us to develop a program called the Mentored Apprenticeship program. It's a drastically reduced tuition cost. 50% of the class is the lecture that Gordon-Conwell has already produced, but 50% of it depends on a mentor, and a practical project that the student does right on site with their mentor based on the academic thing that they're learning. That's just emerging; we're just beginning that, we don't have a track record yet to see how it goes, but the whole idea is to return the practical aspect to theology.

**[91]** And we could have an interesting conversation about how that all happened. How did we get that separation between practicality and theology? In my mind, if the theology isn't practical, it's a bad theology! Theology should impact our worldview, which impacts the decisions we make, how we do ministry, and so on.

**[92]** That's on the domestic front. As we're thinking internationally, a lot of people assume we have a program. That we're going to set up evangelical Presbyterian schools around the world, or we have a curriculum that we're going to take around the world. But that's not the situation at all. We're looking for national partners. Perhaps we can. Where there's a kind of symbiotic thing where that develops, there are good relational strengths there, and it looks like we can be some catalytic partners for a period of time.

[93] And this is going to lead into one of my questions here. We will feel that we will have been successful down the road—maybe ten years from now, I'm not sure how long—but we will have been successful if pastors that have been trained and if leaders that have been trained through our partnerships are now sending people to the unengaged people groups around them; if we have a church in another country that has a biblical basis but is now self-theologizing.

[94] That's a value we have but, frankly, we're so new at this that we don't know what that's going to look like. My most recent visit was to a partner in Myanmar in Yangon. The partner there was trained here in the West and now is back, and is starting a training school there. They have reached an unreached group already, but I'm not sure they're self-theologizing and, frankly, I'm not sure what that's going to look like. I'd be very interested if some of you are further down the road with that idea of seeing groups that you've trained that are now sending to the unengaged, and have you seen groups that have begun to do some self-theologizing. Harvey, it sounds like you've been doing that yourself, teaching African theology. I'd be very interested in hearing your reflections on this. Have you seen that happen? Anyone further down the road than we are that can help us with some of the inevitable pitfalls we're going to hit along the way?

[95] **Rob Blanks:** Thank you Ed, I really appreciate that. I think even that question that you raised, talking about the tension between theology and missiology, theology and what's practical, should that even be a tension? If theology is not practical, then what's going on? That's an excellent question. I teach some theology, and so that's a question that I love. We've got about 20 minutes left, and it's been great for me. I really appreciated just getting to listen to the wisdom here and the perspectives. As we chew on the discussion, some things that have come out: theology versus missiology, theology versus practical, should this tension be a tension? The idea of the cultural interpreter: how do we do that? Is there anything that comes to mind in terms of steps, tangible things that we could do in our respective roles, either if we're on the education side to help mission agencies, or mission agencies helping education? Any thoughts on that? Steps forward, action points? What can we do? It's been a good discussion, a lot of good questions. We could go for a long time on these questions. Any ideas?

[96] **Samuel Naaman:** Let me just affirm you about one thing. I think the beauty of the Word of God, the Bible, is that it was written by God's help and God's blessing, and that is basically important in every culture. What we do with that teaching.... I think my request for my Western friends will be: "Please, allow the nationals to figure out what will be the ways to present this basic biblical foundational message to our context." My request to both missiologists and theologians in the West will be, please do not carve out theology and missiology sitting in the comforts of the West, and then suggest to us, "Well actually, this is what we should do."

[97] I think this is where I see a lot of tension. When people from here, also, go and give seminars, and so on, what they have heard and learned from different places is they say, "Well, this is how the movements will happen, and this is how it needs to work out because somehow we created a manual, maybe in Colorado Springs." I mean, nothing against that. I think that's where the tension comes in and if somehow the nationals are a little bit hesitant or reluctant or

even if there was their concern, they're just, "Well, actually, you don't know, because we have done our research." Well, you may have done your research on something else. The next step would be to give us the Bible, give us the basic foundational biblical teaching, and then could you allow us from the non-Western cultures to figure out a way?

**[98]** And it takes some time, as Alvin suggested. You know, we are represented here: Asia, Africa, the Middle East. Allow us to figure it out and then walk with us. Don't just abandon us, but walk with us. And it could be a very simple Bible school teacher in the remote parts of Afghanistan, maybe someone up there. Allow him, or even her—let's not only say him—or her also to say, "Okay, how will I reach women in Iran? Or Tehran?" In my context, it's that part of the world. "And what is there for me?"

**[99]** That will be my request. As we think and process, and all of you are teaching in different institutions, give us basic biblical exposition. By God's grace we have linguists and all those things. I always encourage students at Moody, "One thing that fascinates me is how many of our students are passionate about Bible translation! And you have that ability, you have that gift of analyzing and all that!" We need Bible translation, but please give us the gospel, and then allow us to drink it in our own cup of tea. Don't give us Starbucks. Don't give us Starbucks; that's not going to happen, that's not going to work. I'll stop here!

**[100] Rob Blanks:** Thank you, Sam, I appreciate the specific feedback.

**[101] Rick Hudson:** This is Rick Hudson with Fellowship International Mission. I've been really enjoying listening to you all. Just to jump in here at the end, I wonder, in answer to the question about some practical steps to make some changes—and I want to say up front that I don't come from an academic background but rather from practical missiological experience in Latin America—I guess my question would be (and I hope to talk about systematic theology): "What if we change the way we present our theology?"

**[102]** I have a flashback to Dr. Jim Greer from Cornerstone. One of the last times he spoke, he said, "I want to apologize to all of my theological students for teaching you systematic theology when I should have been teaching you narrative theology." Toward the end of his life Dr. Greer was really focusing on more of a meta-narrative approach to theology. Would that be a helpful step to at least offer special international students, majority-world students, a theological approach from a narrative viewpoint, under the assumption that narrative is probably more innate to their culture than a Westernized systematic approach?

**[103]** That's one thing that I was thinking about. I do appreciate everybody who was talking about self-theologizing. I look forward to seeing a church mature to the point where its own theologians are doing their work. I wonder if we in the West could do a better job of teaching how to theologize rather than just the theology. This is one of the questions we need to be asking ourselves in our church, and then answer those questions from the context of our culture. So anyway, that's my little bit. Thanks everybody, I really enjoyed being a part of this.

**[104] Rob Blanks:** Thank you, Rick. That's a great question!

**[105] Dave Deuel:** Hey Rob, I put the bibliographical information for Conrad Mbewe's book that I recommended highly in the chat box.

**[106] Dave Beine:** People can look for Tom Steffen's book; I'm not sure if it's even come out yet, but it's called *Oral Hermeneutics*. His whole hypothesis is that our whole educational system is textually based, so we do textual hermeneutics. Our theologies are based in scientific philosophy, wrapped in that. He's asking that very same question. I believe it's either out or due out in days—Tom Steffen's *Oral Hermeneutics*.

**[107] Rob Blanks:** Good. Any other thoughts or ideas, in terms of practical things about which we could continue the conversation with one another?

**[108] Dave Semmelbeck:** This is Dave with BEE World, and a colleague of Al's. One of the things that hits me in all of this is making sure that we have a good definition of what we're trying to produce. One of the questions, the purpose question you had was, "How can theological colleges and mission agencies collaborate more effectively in the task of global pastoral training?" Maybe coming together a little bit more on what that target looks like, because I hear all kinds of different aspects of our own. Everybody's bringing something good to the table from their experiences, but we need to make sure that we're somewhat consistent in what we're trying to produce. I had two forms of training, basically. One was through the Navigators, which was discipleship and, at least for me, gave me a system in a practical use of learning the Word and then turning around and equipping others. And then going to seminary. I remember at seminary there was—you know, I just go into the system which takes me down on what I assume I need to know, and then afterwards everybody tells you that you really didn't learn what you needed to be a pastor in seminary, but it's a great starter package. A very expensive starter package, but it gives you a lot of foundation. But basically it's all the other things I wrap into it.

**[109]** And so as a pastor, what are we really trying to produce? Do you want a theologian? Or do you want a biblicist? Do you want a person that's going to stand from a pulpit and tell everybody what they need to know, or are we going to try to equip people that can equip people to think and to get into the Word? Are we going to equip a pastor to disciple other people so that he isn't the only worker in the church? Or are we going to equip a national pastor to be able to equip other pastors? Do we care about the quality of the person? Is he going to be a servant leader? Or is he going to be the trained theologian that leads every other leader in his culture? And so, you know, we've talked about mentoring, we've talked about these different things, but how do you get to that product more? Well, first we have to know what that product is.

**[110]** I think from a theological school we want theologically trained people. You get people that are putting together curriculum that kind of have that mindset. On the other hand, what do we really want in a church in some location, from the United States to anywhere in this world, that's going to be the type of person that represents what Christ wants? And that's a shepherd who can feed his flock and build up his flock. I think sometimes that gets lost in some of the discussion, and then once we can kind of go with that, we can add these disciplines and

knowledge to the degree that we can together, and just work like crazy to work together versus talking about working together. It's going to take a lot of effort.

**[111] Mike Klontz:** To answer your question, Rob, as far as mission agencies and theological institutions working together, besides continuing communication between the two, one of the things that mission agencies grapple with is the exposure to what they are doing and how they go about it and what kind of candidates they're looking for in the context of those educational institutions. From the side of academia, it's hard to integrate into the curriculum the time that it takes to bring the various mission agencies there apart from a missions week or a missions conference.

**[112]** I know even when I was teaching Christian Missions there, there were requests from many different mission agencies that wanted to come and present, and that's hard to incorporate into an already-designed curriculum, into the program for the semester or for the year. I don't know if there's an easy solution, but from the side of mission mobilizers, it's hard to communicate to theological institutions what we are doing so that they will be able to prepare even more effectively those who might want to serve with the mission agencies.

**[113] Dave Beine:** In answer, it isn't easy, because you're asking the question what a good shepherd looks like. The answer is: a good shepherd looks different in lots of different contexts. Because of that, that makes what we want to do very, very inefficient. And efficiency is a high cultural value for us. We want one model. So, it's very, very, very important, but it is very, very, very inefficient because it's going to look different in each place we're trying to serve. It's so, so, so important, but we hesitate to do it because of the cost involved in training each of those people for each of those specific locations.

**[114] Dave Deuel:** I think one of the ways we can facilitate how theological schools can collaborate with mission agencies is just what we're doing here today. This is very refreshing because I have the opportunity of hearing other perspectives. I'm usually locked into the seminary context, and that's not a good place to get other perspectives, frankly, because seminaries develop their own cultures as most of you all know. But I think more of the same, more of this, maybe different manifestations of this, would be great, so thank you for the good work that you're doing in putting this together.

**[115] Dave Semmelbeck:** Definitely.

**[116] Marc Canner:** I just want to comment on what Samuel was saying earlier about how important the cultural context is [96–98]. Dave was also talking about the same thing. It reminds me that, historically speaking, the most effective efforts in missions are typically the ones that actually transform a culture, are those that encourage this indigenous kind of expression of biblical Christianity that arises out of the context and then spreads out from there. It occurs to me that an effective form of theological training abroad would probably look something like this. It empowers, like Samuel was saying earlier, local believers to express biblical doctrines in their own culturally relevant ways. I have the feeling that otherwise, if we can't somehow develop a system like that, our efforts may even serve to marginalize those we train from their own people.

**[117] Alvin Hull:** Rob was asking how to find “bridge people.” We have found—as I’m sitting here listening to all this—we’ve got a guy in Brazil who knows the West, but who also knows Brazil. He makes an ideal bridge person. He is coming out with some excellent things in theology and missiology. We’ve got a guy in Ghana who knows the West and knows Ghana. He has become an incredible bridge person for us. So we’re seeing in our bridge people, the guy in Egypt, Mafti, he just finished his D.Miss. or D.Min. at TEDS [Trinity Evangelical Divinity School], but he’s Egyptian, and he totally understands that world. He’s bringing the training in through that lens.

**[118]** We’re finding our best bridge people, or identifying people that have got a foot in both cultures, who can then identify the best trainers to get the points across in their own context. And we from the global North ought to get out of the way, if I could say it that way. Our job is to mentor and coach, walk the journey with them, but really, let’s empower them to do it, let’s find our role in this. Finding those key bridge people has been very important for us to get some traction.

**[119] Marc Canner:** That’s excellent.

**[120] Rob Blanks:** And that’s a synonym then for what Dave was saying earlier—a cultural translator [60].

**[121] Alvin Hull:** Yeah.

**[122] Rob Blanks:** To bridge those worlds; that’s wonderful. Well, we’re about at the end of our time here. I really appreciate each one of you, your years of work and service and wisdom and the honest, open dialogue. To me, it’s refreshing. Around this conversation, we’re not all going to see the finer points of theology the same way. We’re going to have some distinctives that we hold, but in Christ we can be together and hopefully be unified in the gospel. To me that’s very encouraging, to have open dialogue, even if we might have disagreements on conclusions, that’s just going to make us sharper, hearing the perspectives, and so thank you all for what you’ve shared. Thank you for this time.

**[123]** Just by way of review, here are some of the themes that we talked about. The tension of theology versus practical versus missiology. Is this a tension, is there real tension, should there be a tension? The idea of a bridge person, a cultural interpreter. The idea of self-theologizing. Then the question: “What is it that we’re trying to produce? What are we after here?” If we don’t understand that, it’s then hard to try to accomplish that goal. And then also, thinking about some of the assumptions. What are some of the underlying assumptions that are under the surface of these questions?

**[124]** I really appreciate all the advocates on the agency side, and my hope is that, as a representative of an institution of higher education, we can unplug our ears and listen to you guys, and there will be increased unity, partnership, and listening in the future. Harvey, I think that you are the only one who is off the North American continent, so could I call on you to wrap us up and close with a prayer. Thank God for what he’s doing, thank God for the conversation, and then we’ll wrap it up. Would you be willing to do that, Harvey?

**[125] Harvey Kwiyani:** That's all right.

**[126] Rob Blanks:** Thank you!

[Harvey Kwiyani closes in prayer.]

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