

**A Different Perspective: Asian and African Leaders' Views on Mission, Edited by
Stuart M. Brooking (Sydney: OCA Books, 2006)**

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With A Different Perspective: Asian and African Leaders' Views on Mission, Overseas Council Australia launches a pioneering series. What makes this book special is its contributors. Stuart Brooking has gathered contributions on the task of mission from theological leaders in Asia and Africa. As such, the collection represents considered, yet current wisdom of those whose voices are often unheard, from the very parts of the world where the Western church is seeking to make substantial contribution. It is, in fact, a different perspective.

Many have predicted that the key developments in the 21st century in our understanding of the Bible, theology and mission will come from non-Western insights. In addition, we in the multicultural West need help from our brothers and sisters in other cultures – both in the specifics of apologetics and evangelism, and, more generally, in gaining the cross-cultural skills of learning to love our neighbours. Furthermore, hearing and honouring the voice of those in the developing world is one of the key ways of expressing our love for our brothers and sisters there. To these ends, OCA has taken a very significant step of service. This book is a wonderful gift to the church. To the church in the non-Western world, it says, "We believe in you, and want to provide a place for your unique voice to be heard and honoured." More than that, it says, "We need you. We want to learn from you." And to the church in the West it says, "Listen! We do not know everything! Our non-Western brothers and sisters have much to teach us – if only we will do the hard work of hearing!"

I was particularly humbled, for example, by the grace and love evidenced by Purnawan Tenibemas, from the Tyrannus Bible Institute in Bandung, Indonesia, as he writes of how God's people should respond under persecution. Lal Senanayake of the Lanka Bible College in Sri Lanka writes sensitively about the factors influencing Christian corruption. I also appreciated the conviction and call by Siegfried Ngubane at George Whitefield College in South Africa, as he writes of how the church should respond to the massive impact of AIDS.

In addition to the articles from Asia and Africa, Stuart Brooking has written an excellent précis of Overseas Council's vision and strategy. He reminds us of the value of training leaders in situ, or at least in a context not too different from their home culture. Financially, emotionally and missiologically, local theological education must be favoured over the expensive, stressful alternative of moving students to the West, where it becomes so hard to return home and contextualise learning. Stuart also reminds us that great theological institutions are not built overnight – we need to be thinking in "two hundred year" terms (166). This brings perspective, realism, clarity and confidence.

Complementing Brooking's article, David Williams, Principal of Carlisle College in Nairobi, Kenya, summarises the particular advantages and disadvantages missionaries bring, recognising that "in

the 21st Century, the Two-Thirds (Developing) World is becoming by far the largest missionary sending church" (146). Both Brooking and Williams provide economical and exciting ways forward, while warning of problems outsiders may exacerbate. Both speak in that rare role of knowledgeable and gracious ambassadors for both the Western and non-Western church.

Of course English is not the first language of a number of the contributors, making their viewpoint not as immediately accessible. But any dis-ease on the reader's part is exactly the point. We are so used to imagining the world in our terms and behaving accordingly. It takes energy to put ourselves in others' shoes (as they have already done, often!), and serve from a position of identification and humility. This is the way of the gospel, as Paul reminds us in Philippians 2. And in this wrestling we are transformed. To that end, an excellent Study Guide is provided, making the book an ideal tool for growing Christians in our understanding of what it means to be a body of "all nations". For those who dare to serve as missionaries the collection will be mandatory reading as part of their training.

Those in the non-Western world have much to give us in the West, especially in the areas of spirituality, faithfulness, love and mission. OCA has done a sterling work in bringing us *A Different Perspective*. I look forward to future volumes.

(This book is available from Overseas Council Australia, Locked Bag 140, Silverwater, NSW 2128, Australia)

N.B. Readers of this journal will be interested to know that Dr David Williams, Principal of Carlisle College in Nairobi, Kenya, has accepted a position with the Church Missionary Society, and will be based at St Andrew's Hall, in Parkville, Melbourne.

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is Norm Allchin lecturer in Evangelism, Lecturer in Ministry Skills and Church History at a lecturer at Ridley Melbourne. After graduating in Social Work and Psychology from Sydney University, Adrian worked as a social worker for the Royal Australian Navy. He then joined the staff of St Barnabas' Broadway, where he was extensively involved in congregational and student ministry, before undertaking formal theological studies at Gordon-Conwell, Massachusetts and Princeton Seminary, New Jersey (USA). He is an ordained Anglican clergyman and is committed to the renewal of the Anglican Church, especially through evangelism, preaching, and leadership development.