
FOMenter — March 2007

FELLOWSHIP OF MISSIONS Email Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



Gerald K. Webber, President FOM

A GOOD ARGUMENT OVER ICE CREAM

Don't you just love a good argument? Well, maybe not an argument, really. Debate, that's it—a well-mannered, passionately argued (there I go again), thoughtfully articulated exchange of ideas. Some call it "dialogue."

I read such an exchange recently. It was a two-part series in Dr. Kevin Bauder's weekly stream of essays under the broad heading, *In the Nick of Time*. Bauder is President of Central Baptist Seminary in Plymouth, MN, and was the keynote speaker for our 2005 Annual Conference in Grand Rapids. You can find the complete texts on the seminary website (www.centalseminary.edu) under "Publications/In the Nick of Time/Archive."

Gentleman that he is, Bauder allowed one of his profs the first word (or perhaps saved the last word for himself.) Dr. Jeff Straub led off the exchange with an article entitled "Church Planting and Ice Cream." As a lover of ice cream and a practitioner, student and teacher of church planting for nearly three decades, that got my attention. Whatever could this pair of my favorite things have in common?

Straub was making the point that (in his words), "The efforts of some church planters are

little more than a preference for variety. Churches are planted, not because an area needs to be evangelized, but because a particular variety of church does not exist in a given locale." This raise the question, he says: "Is variety a suitable motive for church planting?"

Using the Atlanta area as a case in point, he argues that "Some people think Atlanta's problem is that there aren't enough French Vanilla churches!" There are plenty of other flavors, and there *is* plenty of ice cream in Atlanta. Shouldn't our churches be devoting their personnel and resources to the delivery of "ice cream" to countries like Yemen, for example, that have none?



He closes with a "knock-out punch," saying, "When we talk about church planting, let's have a world perspective. The United States is the most evangelized country in the world [*I'm not so sure about that—ed.*] Atlanta is among the most evangelized cities in the world. Let's plant churches—lots of churches. But let's talk realistically about missions."

Bauder follows in the second week (2/09/07) with a rejoinder: "Is Variety the Issue?" He offers a qualified admission to one of Straub's assertions, "True, North America does have a wide variety of organizations that call themselves churches, but they should not be compared to flavors of ice cream. One chooses a flavor of ice cream because of taste, but one chooses a church because of obedience."

He continues, "The purpose of missions...is not merely to present the gospel to lost people. The purpose of missions is also to initiate the observance of the ordinances, to instruct the Lord's people in all the counsel of God, and to plant rightly ordered churches according to the pattern of the New Testament." Bauder uses himself as an example of someone who once moved to a city in the Bible Belt, and looked in vain for a local church where he and his family could be fed and biblically nurtured. He makes it clear that he wasn't looking for an "ideal" church, just one that "shared some understanding of what the ideal should be." He finally planted a church there, at least partly to provide for the spiritual wellbeing of his own family.

He, too, closes with pregnant words: "There's not a flavor of ice cream that I don't like. But if somebody unplugs the freezer, I'm not going to lick up the mess from the floor. I'm going to make some new ice cream. Somebody has unplugged the vast majority of American churches, and the mess is unbelievable. We need a whole new generation of rightly ordered, New Testament churches. The time to plant them is now."

Well, that was stimulating, wasn't it? At some point, there is to be a third installment, and I'm waiting for it with bated breath. Whether or not there is a "winner" in this debate, it should stimulate some profitable discussion. I recommend that you search out the website, read the essays in their own contexts, and come to your own conclusions.

At this point, I'm putting my money on Bauder—after all, he *is* Straub's boss!

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2007 CEO MEETING TO BE HELD IN WILLIAMSBURG, VA

The FOM CEO retreat is scheduled for September 15-17 in Williamsburg—timed to coincide with the 400th Anniversary of Jamestown. The CEO Retreat is just prior to the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Fellowship of

Missions in Virginia Beach, VA September 17-19. You will not want to miss this exciting time in Williamsburg. Plan now to set aside these dates!

2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 17-19 IN VIRGINIA BEACH

Our invitation to tour the nuclear carrier USS Enterprise during our 1998 Annual Conference in Virginia Beach was a once-in-a-life-time experience. Missions to Military, headquartered in the center of this vast military complex, has again volunteered to host another annual meeting and may have other surprises in store. Please mark your calendar to reserve these dates September 17 – 19, 2007. The theme will be *Ethical Issues in Missions*.



Dr. David Doran, author of the mission's text, *For the Sake of His Name*, will be bringing the plenary addresses of the conference. Dr. Doran is Senior Pastor of Inter-City Baptist Church and President of Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. Informative workshops will focus on ethical issues in missions such as:

- Ethically Managing a Christian Testimony in Restricted access fields
- Bi-vocational Missionaries
- Support Schedule Accountability
- Ministry among illegal immigrants in the USA

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GOSPEL MISSION OF SOUTH AMERICA: OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

Join us in prayer for an office manager and a U.S. director for our Fort Lauderdale office. These are not paid positions. Volunteers need to depend on the Lord for their living needs. We can provide furnished housing within walking distance of the office.



Perhaps you know of a returning missionary or a retired person(s) who has a "heart for missions" and would like to continue serving the Lord for several more years. If you are interested please contact Rev. Terry Thompson, General Director, Gospel Mission of South America—email tthompson@gmsa.org.

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IRS to Waive Estimated Tax Penalty for U.S. Citizens or Residents Living and Working Abroad

Mac McBride (FOMConsulting) has forwarded this information regarding the IRS decision to wave Estimated Tax Penalties. Read on....

IR-2007-32, Feb. 13, 2007

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Treasury today announced that they have released guidance on the estimated tax penalty for citizens or residents of the United States living and working abroad.

The Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005, Pub. L. No. 109-222, 120 Stat. 345 (TIPRA), enacted in May 2006, changed the maximum amount of foreign earned income and housing costs that may be excluded from gross income under section 911 of the Internal Revenue Code.

TIPRA increased the maximum amount of foreign earned income that may be excluded from gross income to \$82,400. The law also limited the amount of housing costs that may be excluded or deducted under section 911. TIPRA further provides that the tax applicable to income not covered by the foreign income exclusion will now be calculated as though the exclusion had not been elected. These changes are effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2005.

Because these changes are retroactive to the beginning of the taxable year, persons relying on the law as it existed prior to the enactment of TIPRA may have underpaid their estimated tax liabilities for 2006 and may be liable for an addition to tax under section 6654(a). The IRS will waive additions to tax under section 6654(a) to the extent that the underpayment is attributable to the changes enacted under TIPRA.

This waiver is only available to qualified individuals who file a Form 2555, Foreign Earned Income, or Form 2555-EZ, Foreign Earned Income Exclusion, with their timely filed Form 1040, U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, or Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return.

About 300,000 individual taxpayers filed Form 2555 and Form 2555-EZ for tax year 2004, the latest year for which data is available.

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Searching for Ethnic Ministry Possibilities within North America?

Go to www.peplegroups.info/Default.aspx To find people groups in the United States or Canada. Simply select one of the datasets (nationality, language, ancestry, race, and ethnicity, people groups) and then choose your geographic criteria (city, county, ZIP code) from the drop down menu that appears followed by the "GO" button. Once you receive your search results, be sure to click on the country, language, or people group links for more information.

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CHURCH STARTED IN IRAQ'S ANCIENT CITY OF NINEVEH

A Christian Aid-supported ministry in Iraq started a church in the city of Nineveh, a particularly difficult region for believers to spread the gospel. Three pastors were killed there in 2006. Church meetings will be held secretly until the situation improves. The first meeting was announced to a select group of people on New Year's Eve.

Christian Aid Mission, P.O. Box 9037
Charlottesville, VA 22906

Missions Insider: Vol. 8, No. 1; February 28, 2007

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PRINCE PHILIP WORSHIPED AS GOD

As unlikely as it sounds, the people of Yaohnanen and surrounding villages worship 85-year-old Prince Philip as a god.

They believe him to be the son of an ancient spirit who inhabits a nearby mountain, on the island of Tanna. Determining exactly how these people came to believe in the prince's divinity is very difficult. It appears that at some point in the 1950s, they melded Christian beliefs in a returning messiah with the respect accorded His Royal Highness by the British authorities in what was then the colony of New Hebrides.

Telegraph.co.uk 19 February 2007

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