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SIM – Strengthened through Diversity?
An Examination of the Origins and Effects of Cultural
Diversity within a Multi-national Christian Mission Agency
1975-2015

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Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Edinburgh
2019

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

Date: 3 February 2020

Abstract

SIM – Strengthened through Diversity?

An Examination of the Origins and Effects of Cultural Diversity within a Multi-national Christian Mission Agency 1975-2015

Through a historical analysis of the mission theology and practice of SIM, an evangelical mission organisation that was originally dominated by North Americans but is now increasingly multi-national, this thesis seeks to understand where the organisation's vision and commitment to diversity originated and how it has adapted to accommodate its stated goal: 'strengthened through diversity'. Focusing on 1975-2015, this research explores the experience of one 'faith mission' in the context of the growth of Christianity as a global religion and the developing mission vision of churches in countries which previously only received missionaries. It asks how SIM has adapted to embrace diversity, a process of change not previously addressed through academic research. Through archival research and interviews with past and present SIM leaders and serving missionaries, this thesis illuminates the challenges of cultural diversity SIM has faced. It reflects on the role of individuals in SIM's history who have worked out the lessons of their own mission experience during a later period of leadership at international level. Relating SIM's experience to other evangelical mission organisations, this thesis suggests that SIM's story is indicative of wider trends, and that it was at the forefront of organisations seeking to encourage cultural diversity. This study employs a primarily historical methodology, but also makes use where appropriate of anthropological perspectives and of concepts from

management science in order to offer some theoretical exploration of issues faced by SIM in the outworking of everyday multiculturalism.

After setting SIM in the context of conservative evangelical missions in the 20th century and wider debates taking place amongst mission thinkers, the thesis traces the origins of diversity in SIM and the process of internationalisation, demonstrating the way in which the emphasis on strength through diversity recaptured something of the original vision of SIM's founders. It then explores the ways in which diversity has been defined within SIM, recognising different understandings, the primary emphasis on cultural diversity, and the limitations to diversity. The following three chapters explore the effects of increased cultural diversity in SIM through examination of the changing shape of mission-church relations as the organisation broadened its approach to a new model for mission which supported missionaries from new sending nations; the governance and structural changes implemented to move from a shareholder to stakeholder model of governance, and give voice to an increasingly diverse mission workforce; and an exploration of the challenges and benefits of multicultural teams, highlighting the complex layers and nuances of culture and ethnicity. Two case studies of leaders - one Singaporean and one Nigerian - who made significant contributions to the organisation illuminate different contexts and attitudes towards the process of change in SIM as it intentionally pursued its aim of strength through diversity. The thesis concludes with wider reflections on the significance of the cultural diversification of SIM, and the potential applications of SIM's experience for other similar organisations.

Lay Summary

SIM – Strengthened through Diversity?

An Examination of the Origins and Effects of Cultural Diversity within a Multi-national Christian Mission Agency 1975-2015

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When I joined the SIM UK team in December 1997, recruited on a 12 month contract by Malcolm and Liz McGregor, I could never have imagined that 22 years later I would be completing a PhD focused on one of SIM's core values. Even when I left my job at SIM after 16 ½ years to move to Edinburgh and begin a Master's degree in World Christianity, a PhD was not in my future plan! Twenty two years after I first met the McGregors, and five years after my move to Edinburgh, I find myself at the end of four years of fascinating research and hard work focused on the mission agency I joined for 12 months.

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Allie Douglas
Edinburgh
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List of Abbreviations

AEAM	Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar
AEF	Africa Evangelical Fellowship
AIM	Africa Inland Mission
CIM	China Inland Mission
COMIBAM	Co-operation in Missions in Ibero-America
CWME	Commission for World Mission and Evangelism
ECWA	Evangelical Church of West Africa (from 2010, Evangelical Church Winning All)
EFMA	Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies
ELWA	Eternal Love Winning Africa
EMS	Evangelical Mission Society (of ECWA)
EMQ	Evangelical Missions Quarterly
IBMR	International Bulletin of Missionary (now Mission) Research
ICF	International Christian Fellowship
IFES	International Fellowship of Evangelical Students
IFMA	Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association
IJFM	International Journal of Frontier Missions
IMC	International Missionary Council
IVCF	InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
OCLA	Office Connection for Latin America
OMF	Overseas Missionary Fellowship
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SIM	Serving in Mission (founded as Sudan Interior Mission)
WCC	World Council of Churches
WEC	World Evangelisation for Christ (now WEC International)
WBTI	Wycliffe Bible Translators International

Introduction

In 1971, Kenyan John Gatu called for a moratorium on the sending of missionaries and resources from the West to Africa.¹ In 1978, Elliot Kendall wrote of *The End of an Era: Africa and the Missionary*² advocating a similar position, while Adrian Hastings suggested in his work on African Christianity published in 1979 that western missionaries had become essentially irrelevant by the 1970s.³ These sentiments rest on the popular image and understanding of the missionary as white and western. In the decades since these observations were made, this concept of a ‘missionary’ has become increasingly divergent from reality. This thesis is a study of one Christian mission agency over a period of forty years, 1975-2015, in which the generalisation of mission and missionaries as white and western has been increasingly challenged. The thesis will explore some of the issues raised by the diversification of the concept of the missionary, and in doing so challenge the assumption that missionary equals western.

The thesis is to some extent a study of the recovery and substantial expansion of a lost heritage of embryonic ethnic diversity in one particular Protestant mission agency, now known as SIM (formerly the Sudan Interior Mission).⁴ This research examines how, over the last four decades, SIM has responded to the development of increasing cultural diversity, and has encouraged it, actively pursuing an ethos of cultural diversity and identifying it as a source of strength for the organisation.

¹ John G. Gatu, *Fan into Flame: An Autobiography* (Nairobi: Moran Publishers, 2016), 128-132.

² Elliot Kendall, *The End of an Era: Africa and the Missionary* (London, SPCK, 1978).

³ Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity, 1950-1975*. African Studies Series: 26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 224. See page 18.

⁴ See chapter 2, page 66-7.

During the period of my research, SIM experienced a process of internationalisation as it pursued cultural diversity as an ideal. Scholars have identified a number of beneficial outcomes for those who have had significant exposure to multicultural situations, such as characteristics of greater flexibility, more openness to effective intercultural communication, and less likelihood to be ethnocentric.⁵ It is the perspective of cultural diversity as a potential source of strength for a given community which this thesis will consider. This analysis of SIM's story offers a case study of cultural diversity within a Christian mission agency which can be compared to other similar organisations.

Hitherto the study of cultural diversity within organisations as opposed to entire societies has been mostly confined to the field of management science. The body of literature in this field addressing the topic of how cultural diversity should be handled in business organisations has increased gradually since the 1990s, when works such as Geert Hofstede's *Culture and Organizations: Software of the Mind*,⁶ and Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner's *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business* were first published. Identity, expectations, concepts of time and communication, and leadership across cultures, have been addressed in the consideration of how to handle cultural difference within a business and organisational setting.⁷ The studies and research that were behind this

⁵ L. A. Arasaratnam, 'A Review of Articles on Multiculturalism in 35 Years of IJIR', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 37 (6): 676-685.

⁶ Geert H Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (London: HarperCollins Business, 1991 and 1994).

⁷ See for example Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business* (Second ed. London: Nicholas Brealey, 1998) and Elisabeth Marx, *Breaking through Culture Shock: What You Need to Succeed in International Business* (Paperback ed. London: Nicholas Brealey Pub., 2001).

literature reflected a growing recognition of the need to acknowledge and understand the influence of cultural diversity in order to operate an effective business organisation. The importance of understanding across cultures was developed by Earley and Ang in 2003 when they introduced the concept of cultural intelligence as the capability to function effectively in intercultural contexts, rather than simply understand cultural difference.⁸ These insights from the corporate world have a broader application in relation to religious bodies. This thesis analyses how one particular Christian organisation has handled the same increasing diversity, attempts to assess to what extent it has been a source of strength or challenge, and discusses how the organisation has had to adapt its structures in response.

Introducing SIM

This research project studies the recent history of SIM, a large multi-national Christian mission agency, with 1,562 mission members across the globe in November 2016, with an additional 403 associate missionaries.⁹ A direct comparison with other organisations is not entirely straightforward as mission personnel statistics seem to be recorded in a variety of different ways. The following figures suggest that SIM is currently one of the larger Protestant missions. OMF International (previously the Overseas Missionary Fellowship) records that it has just under 1,400 mission members; the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) gives a figure of 1,000 missionaries in a promotional video on its website.¹⁰ The Southern Baptist International Mission

⁸ P. C. Earley and S. Ang, *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions across Cultures* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

⁹ Figures from 'Members and Associates by Primary Citizenship' supplied by SIM International Personnel Office.

¹⁰ See <https://omf.org/uk/about/> and <https://aimint.org/us/about/>. Accessed 21 August 2019.

Board reports 3,562 field personnel as of 31 December 2017, a figure which includes employed field personnel and ‘team associates’,¹¹ and more than 5,000 people from 89 countries of origin are affiliated with SIL International.¹² The way SIM records the number of workers who make up the organisation has changed in recent years, and it now publicises a figure of ‘4000 mission workers serving in over 70 countries’ on its website; this figure includes local staff working in SIM offices around the world in addition to mission members and associates.¹³

‘SIM’ originally stood for Soudan Interior Mission when the mission was founded in 1893. The organisation underwent a series of name changes in its early years: Africa Industrial Mission (1898), Africa Evangelistic Mission (1905), reverting to the original name with a slight change in spelling, Sudan Interior Mission, in 1907. The change to SIM International (1980), and Society for International Ministries (1992), reflected mergers with missions in Latin America and Asia. The meaning of the acronym most recently changed to Serving in Mission (2002). The mission began in 1893 when Canadians Walter Gowans and Rowland Bingham, and American Thomas Kent, had a vision to evangelise the peoples of the interior of sub-Saharan Africa who were substantially unreached by existing Protestant mission agencies. Gowans and Kent died the following year, leaving Bingham who went on to found the ‘Soudan Interior Mission’. Originally confined to West Africa, SIM’s work began to expand into Ethiopia in 1927 as a result of the first of a number of mergers

¹¹ See <https://www.imb.org/about/>. Accessed 21 August 2019.

¹² See SIL Annual Update for 2018 at <https://www.sil.org/about/reports>. Accessed 21 August 2019.

¹³ <https://www.sim.org/about>. Accessed 21 August 2019.

to take place in the history of the organisation.¹⁴ In the 1980s, mergers with other missions expanded the ministry into Latin America and Asia, and in 1998 a merger with the Africa Evangelical Fellowship (formerly the South Africa General Mission) extended the work into countries in Southern Africa. More research could be done on the individual missions that have now merged with SIM; however, that is beyond the scope of my project which focuses on SIM in the period from 1975 to 2015. These dates were chosen because the origins of diversity in SIM appear to date back to 1975 when, according to most commentators within SIM, the first Asian applied to join the mission.¹⁵ The year 2015 was selected for the end of the period of this research because it was the year in which the first SIM Global Assembly was held. A new governance structure designed to reflect the increased cultural diversity of the mission was implemented at that Assembly.

Although SIM did not begin recording the national offices through which missionaries were sent until the time of the First World War,¹⁶ records of missionary sailings in the period 1901-1910 indicate that at least fifteen of thirty-one missionaries are thought to have been Canadian; the nationalities of the remainder are not certain.¹⁷ In 1952 94% of the missionary workforce came from North America or Europe, including 57% from the United States, 28% from Canada and 9% from the United Kingdom/Europe.¹⁸ The statistics for 1983 were similar: 56%

¹⁴ Merger with the Abyssinia Frontiers Mission took place in 1927, Gary R. Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations – A Short History of SIM* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Credo House Publishers, 2018), 111-119.

¹⁵ Dr Andrew Ng was born in Malaysia and applied to join SIM through the SIM office in Australia in 1975. See chapter 2, page 75 and chapter 7, page 293.

¹⁶ Tim Geysbeek, SIM Historian, email correspondence, 24 January 2016.

¹⁷ ‘Sailings of Missionaries 1901-1933’, MM3, Box 162, SIM Archives.

¹⁸ Figures for 1952 list the UK and German missionaries together, Box 565, Composition of SIM Missionaries, SIM Archives.

were from the United States, 20% from Canada, 8% from the United Kingdom. Yet by 2014, the missionary workforce of 1,958 represented 66 nationalities with 49% from the United States, 9% from Canada, 9% from the United Kingdom. The remainder included 7% from East Asia, 5% from Korea, and 3% were missionaries sent by new offices in Latin America, West and East Africa.¹⁹ SIM personnel statistics record a total membership of 1,178 mission members in 1975 which had risen to 1,541 by 2015.²⁰ SIM missionaries are members, not employees of the mission. Membership status indicates commitment to the values and purpose of the mission, requires active participation in the ministries, and gives the member the right to be involved in the organisation’s decision-making processes through entitlement to vote.²¹ The changes in the composition of the workforce from 1901 to 2014 are illustrated in the chart below.

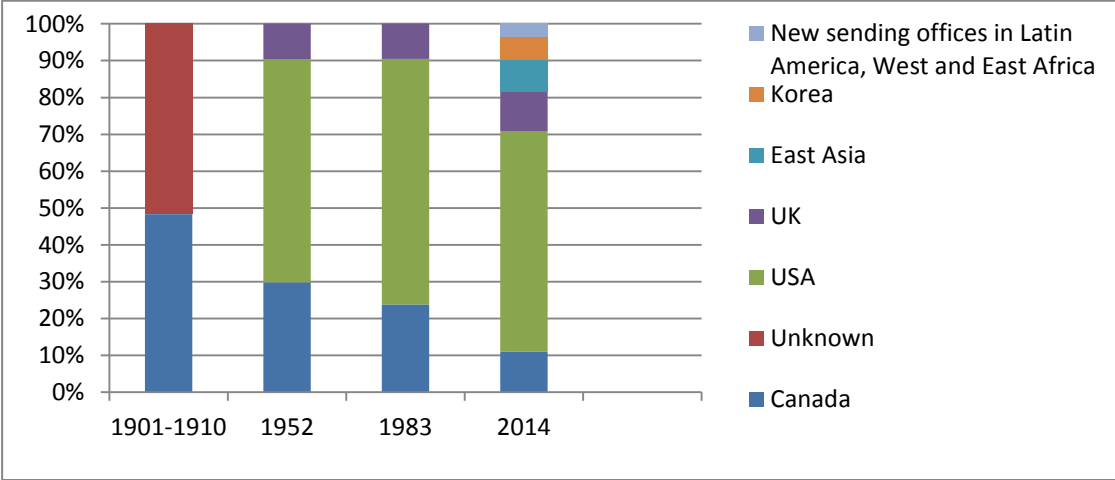


Figure 1: Growing diversity in the SIM missionary workforce from 1901-2014, showing nationalities represented as a percentage of the total workforce at the time.

¹⁹ 2014 statistics taken from ‘SIM in Numbers’, supplied by email, SIM International Personnel Department, December 2015. Missionary workforce total includes Associates as well as members. Associate missionaries serve for less than four years and are not full members of SIM.

²⁰ SIM Personnel Statistics supplied by International Personnel Department by email, 28 November 2016 and 1 August 2019.

²¹ SIM Manual 1984, Section 3, 26, and SIM Manual 2010, Personnel Section, 6.8.1, SIM Archives.

A declared commitment to an ethos of cultural diversity has been reflected in the establishment of offices in Asia (since 1992) and Africa (since 2010) to recruit and send missionaries, and in the radically altered governance structure which took effect in 2015, increasing the number of signatory nations to the SIM mission agreement²² from eight to thirty-two. Nigerian Dr Joshua Bogunjoko was appointed as the first non-western International Director of SIM in 2013. This thesis will investigate the growth of diversity in SIM, chart the transformation in the ethnic composition of its missionary workforce and assess its implications for the organisation, and consider what other similar organisations might learn from SIM's experience.

Christianity as a World Religion

The developments which have taken place within SIM in its pursuit of greater cultural diversity are significant in Protestant mission history, highlighting the implications of the growth of Christianity as a global religion, and its impact on world mission as Christians in countries which traditionally only received missionaries increasingly discovered a vision for cross-cultural mission. David Killingray has suggested that 'the role of indigenous Christians was increasingly recognised in the mission churches of the late 1940s-60s, the decades of decolonisation and the emergence of new independent states in Asia and Africa'.²³ Long-established mission organisations have been forced to adapt to a new situation. As the cultural diversity within SIM has increased, so has the need for a greater

²² This 'joint venture agreement' forms the governance and decision-making structure of the organisation.

²³ David Killingray, 'The Role of Indigenous Christians in the Global Church' in Paul Woods, *Shaping Christianity in Greater China: Indigenous Christians in Focus*. Regnum Studies in Mission. (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2017), 11.

understanding of cultural difference. One of the objectives of this thesis will be to assess the extent to which the growing awareness among Protestant missions since the early twentieth century of 'culture' as an anthropological reality has resulted in a greater sensitivity to cultural differences within the missionary force itself.

The relationship between anthropology and Christian mission has been a complex one. Harries and Maxwell have argued that 'anthropologists had long been critical of missionaries',²⁴ and Larsen has noted a perception that throughout its history, 'the discipline of anthropology has an anti-faith bias.'²⁵ However, these observations were made in the introductions to their recent volumes which have in fact highlighted the historical mutual interdependence of mission and anthropology; both books emphasise the pioneering work of missionaries and its contribution to human and natural sciences²⁶ and give examples of anthropologists who have progressed towards faith rather than away from it.²⁷ These works dispel the notion that Christians and anthropologists have been perpetually at war, illustrating examples of closer relationships that have existed in the western study of non-western peoples. Kathryn Tanner has emphasised the way in which 'the anthropological understanding of culture bridged theological schools of thought and topics', suggesting 'theology be viewed as a part of culture, as a form of cultural activity'.²⁸ The recent development of the 'anthropology of Christianity', seen, for example, in the work of Joel Robbins,

²⁴ Patrick Harries and David Maxwell, *The Spiritual in the Secular: Missionaries and Knowledge about Africa*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2012), 3.

²⁵ Timothy Larsen, *The Slain God: Anthropologists and the Christian Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014), 9.

²⁶ Harries and Maxwell, *The Spiritual in the Secular*, 29.

²⁷ Larsen, *The Slain God*, 223.

²⁸ Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Guides to Theological Inquiry (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 62-3.

has advocated the anthropology of Christianity as a self-conscious, comparative project.²⁹ Robbins counts the rise of the anthropology of Christianity since the new millennium as one of a number of responses to the changing role of religion, in which it has come to occupy a more public role in the world once more, and highlights the rise of the new discourse of ‘world Christianity’ which recognises that Christianity is no longer best described as a ‘western’ religion.³⁰ While nothing in my research suggested that SIM’s leaders were aware of this recent trend, this study will attempt to measure how far the study of culture in anthropology has influenced those in leadership of a mission that was itself significantly influenced by the growth of Christianity in the non-western world, the increased globalisation of today’s world, and expanding diaspora communities.

One of the objectives of this thesis is to assess the respective roles played at different levels of the organisation by foundational theological convictions, strategic reflections on the changing postcolonial context, and reflection on the practical issues raised by the interaction of missionaries of different cultural backgrounds working together. The interaction between Christianity and culture is a question faced by all missionaries working cross-culturally. As noted above, the relationship between the study of culture in anthropology and Christianity generally, and mission more specifically, has been complex. In his introduction to Charles Taber’s book *The World is Too Much with Us*, Wilbert Shenk notes that missionaries at times borrowed

²⁹ See Joel Robbins, ‘The Anthropology of Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions: An Introduction to Supplement 10.’ *Current Anthropology* 55, no. Supp.10 (2014): 157-71, and ‘What is a Christian? Notes toward an Anthropology of Christianity.’ *Religion* 33, no. 3 (2003): 191-99.

³⁰ Robbins, ‘The Anthropology of Christianity’, 160.

too uncritically from anthropologists and sociologists. Taber suggests that they tended to use anthropology pragmatically, too much influenced by the theories of functionalism prevalent in the second quarter of the twentieth century, and did not keep up with more recent developments which would have been helpful in dealing with the cultural realities they faced.³¹ By the 1950s the study of anthropology was considered an important part of evangelical mission training in North America, being taught, for example, at Wheaton College, and the Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission.³² The introduction of additional cultural perspectives into a missionary team further increases the importance of understanding what Charles Kraft describes as a ‘culturally informed perspective on Christianity and Christian theology’.³³ In addition to an understanding of the various cultures represented in the team and the culture in which it is working, the way those cultures perceive each other plays a significant role in the dynamics of the team. An important part of this research therefore has been to understand how anthropology and its understanding of culture was influencing SIM and its leaders.

SIM is a Christian organisation whose members’ evangelical convictions underpin their actions and commitment to serve in a cross-cultural mission. The stated core values of the organisation declare a belief that cultural diversity ‘best expresses the nature of the body of Christ in the world’, and that the ‘richness of diversity’

³¹ Charles Russell Taber, *The World is Too Much with us: ‘Culture’ in Modern Protestant Missions* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1991), xiii, 157.

³² Taber, *The World is Too Much with Us*, 131-2.

³³ Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1980), 18.

contributes to the effectiveness of ministry.³⁴ These convictions lie behind SIM's intentional pursuit of an ethos of diversity. The governance and structural changes that have taken place within the mission during this period, and the way this originally western agency has responded ideologically and theologically to the challenges of greater diversity and the desire to become a mission agency 'from everywhere to everywhere',³⁵ offer potentially important insights for the study and understanding of similar Christian organisations responding to the growth of world Christianity and the complexities of multicultural teams.

Research Questions and Objectives

SIM proclaims its commitment to a set of 'core values', of which the ninth is as follows:

Strengthened through Diversity:

We are intentionally interdenominational, international, and multi-ethnic. We believe this expresses the unity of the body of Christ in the world. We believe we will be more effective in ministry as we incorporate the richness of cultural diversity in SIM and celebrate our oneness in Christ.³⁶

The core values of the organisation were originally framed in 1994 and updated in 2004, following a strategic review process initiated by newly appointed International Director, Malcolm McGregor. This core value combined two of the previous values, written in 1994 by McGregor's predecessor, Jim Plueddemann: '*International* – We are intentionally international because we believe this best expresses the nature of the

³⁴ 'SIM Core Values' leaflet, 1997.

³⁵ This term was popularised by Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali's book, *From Everywhere to Everywhere: A World View of Christian Mission* (Collins: London, 1990).

³⁶ The core values are listed on the SIM website, www.sim.org/core-values. Accessed 19 August 2019.

body of Christ in the world. We believe we will be more effective as we incorporate the richness of cultural diversity in our membership’ and ‘*Interdenominational* – We desire to reflect the biblical unity of the body of Christ. We value the fact that we are made up of Bible-believing people from many denominations seeking to work together in unity’.³⁷ Signs of greater cultural diversity within SIM were becoming evident in the 1980s, as SIM General Director Ian Hay acknowledged in a 1986 article in which he called for mission agencies like SIM to ‘rearrange their thinking and adapt’ to the growing missionary force from non-western churches. Hay explained that ‘SIM seeks to integrate all nationalities into a common workforce [and already has] Asians, Europeans, North Americans, and Australasians working together in their assignments’.³⁸

This research set out to answer the following three primary questions:

- What were the origins of the pursuit of cultural diversity in SIM?
- What was the extent of the increased cultural diversity achieved within SIM between 1975 and 2015?
- How far did this increase in cultural diversity prove the source of strength to SIM that the organisation’s leadership hoped?

In order to answer these three questions, the research pursued the following five objectives:

³⁷ ‘SIM Core Values’ leaflet, 1997.

³⁸ Ian Hay, ‘Rearranging our Thinking’, *SIMNOW*, May-June 1986. See chapter 2, page 89.

- To investigate how the commitment to diversity adopted by SIM related to the changes taking place in world Christianity and the changing climate in Christian mission in this period
- To identify the various understandings of diversity (whether cultural or otherwise) held by leaders and members of SIM
- To investigate how SIM responded to the issues that have arisen through increased cultural diversity
- To identify the benefits and challenges to the organisation created by its commitment to diversity
- To investigate the ways in which SIM's commitment to diversity influenced the ministry of its missionaries and their cross-cultural relationships to indigenous people and church leaders

Key Concepts

Within this research, the terms 'diversity', particularly 'cultural diversity', 'multicultural' and 'multi-ethnic' are key. The concepts of culture and ethnicity overlap as a shared culture is often characteristic of an ethnic group, which has a shared history and often a sense of solidarity, and has a greater emphasis on common birth or lineage. These concepts are further complicated in the globalised world of the twenty-first century in which distinctions between particular national cultures tend to be increasingly blurred as migration flows lead to greater cultural plurality within ethnic blocks. The terms were widely used within SIM and in literature related to this topic; however, they were used and understood in different ways. The

SIM statements quoted above suggest some lack of clarity and precision in the use of these terms within the organisation. The explanatory text of the organisation's core value 'strengthened through diversity' appears to suggest a narrowing of focus from the reference to 'international, interdenominational and multi-ethnic' to an emphasis on cultural diversity; it will be important to understand if this was always the primary focus when the term was used within SIM. For this reason, it will be essential to explore what SIM understood by these terms, both at leadership level and amongst its members, and indeed what differences in meaning or interpretation may be discerned within the organisation. It is important to note that when the core value 'strengthened through diversity' was developed in SIM in 2004, the immediate understanding of diversity to include gender identity was not there.³⁹ The wording of the core value 'did not reflect any of the nuances or meanings that the word "diversity" has accumulated in the last decades related to gender identity and the LGBT movements'.⁴⁰ This understanding of diversity will demand the time and attention of SIM's leaders in future, if it is not already doing so; however, this aspect of diversity is not within the scope of my research. Its significance within societal discussions surrounding diversity has risen rapidly in very recent years, but during the period of my research it was not the focus of SIM's commitment to diversity, which was on ethnic and cultural diversity. For this reason, and due to limitations of space as well as limited access to archival data on this aspect of diversity, it is beyond the scope of this project.

³⁹ Malcolm McGregor, interview, 26 September 2016.

⁴⁰ Dave Bremner, email, 5 January 2017.

Originality and Significance of the Research

While much has changed within SIM in the last fifteen years,⁴¹ no academic research has yet been carried out on the process of change that appears to have taken place, the origins of this change, and its impact on the strength or effectiveness of the organisation. The specific questions of this research have not previously been asked of SIM, although related questions have been asked of similar Christian organisations, such as OMF International (previously Overseas Missionary Fellowship, formerly China Inland Mission), InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), and Wycliffe Bible Translators, and these studies provide some helpful insights.⁴² Kirk Franklin's work on the Wycliffe Global Alliance⁴³ sheds light on the process of change and development another mission organisation experienced as it responded to increased diversification, while EunSun Hong's research on effective multicultural leadership and followership in SIL International explored similar themes to those addressed by SIM in its response to the growth of multicultural teams in the organisation.⁴⁴ A stated desire to celebrate diversity is found in the recent literature of both OMF and SIM; one of the concerns of this research is to

⁴¹ Figures available for the number of missionaries in the organisation from North America highlight a decrease from nearly 70% in June 2004 to 55% at the end of 2014. In 2010, SIM members represented 53 nationalities; this had risen to 66 nationalities by 2014.

⁴² In 1999, research was carried out on OMF International in the form of a Master's dissertation by Rosemary Aldis on 'Unity in Diversity – Partnership between East Asians and Westerners in OMF International', published in *St Francis Magazine*, June 2005. See also Warren R. Beattie, 'OMF International: An Assessment of Internationalism and Interactions with the Korean Missionary Movement from 1964-1998', MTh thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1998. The InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in the USA has a specific website for 'Multi-ethnic Ministries' outlining a commitment to pursue multi-ethnicity as a reflection of ethnic diversity in the United States. In 2010, Hyunmin Hong wrote a doctoral thesis on Wycliffe Bible Translators, 'Enriched by Diversity: The Transformation of Wycliffe Bible Translators USA into a Multi-ethnic Organization', PhD Thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2010.

⁴³ Kirk Franklin, 'The Wycliffe Global Alliance – From a U.S. Based International Mission to a Global Movement for Bible Translation', MA Thesis, available online at http://resources.wycliffe.net/pdf/K-Franklin_Thesis%20-The_Wycliffe_Global_Alliance_and_Bible_Translation_Movements.pdf.

⁴⁴ E. S. Hong, *A Grounded Theory of Leadership and Followership in Multicultural Teams in SIL*, PhD Thesis, Faculty of the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University, 2014.

trace the chronology of that determination. The thesis will draw comparisons with other similar faith missions and form a judgement on whether SIM was ahead of, in step with, or behind them.

The growth of Christianity as a world religion has been addressed by many authors including Philip Jenkins and Andrew Walls.⁴⁵ This global trend was made up of a series of twentieth-century conversion movements, above all in sub-Saharan Africa. Adrian Hastings has highlighted the rapid growth of forms of indigenous Christianity in Africa in the 1940s and 1950s as a result of what he described as ‘mass movements’.⁴⁶ This was particularly notable in one of SIM’s main fields, Ethiopia. SIM entered Ethiopia in 1927 led by Dr Thomas Lambie. During the years of Italian occupation, Protestant mission properties were expropriated and new sites were not offered. Peter Cotterell recorded that between 1927 and 1938, the date of withdrawal of SIM from Ethiopia, 92 SIM missionaries had served there. A former SIM missionary, Laurie Davison, made contact with the church in Wallamo, southern Ethiopia in 1941 at the end of the occupation. His report recorded: ‘We have found here as indigenous a church as Roland Allen⁴⁷ ever dreamed about, and it is our earnest hope that no member of our Mission will do or say anything to destroy the

⁴⁵ For example, Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (revised and expanded ed. Oxford: OUP, 2007), and *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: OUP, 2008); Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Edinburgh: Orbis Books; T&T Clark, 2002) and Andrew F. Walls and Mark R. Gornik, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Studies in the History of World Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017).

⁴⁶ Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa, 1450-1950* (Oxford University Press), 1996, 576-7.

⁴⁷ See chapter 4, page 140.

autonomous structure of this amazing Wallamo church'.⁴⁸ The church in Ethiopia had flourished in the enforced absence of missionary leadership, and demonstrates that well before the period on which this thesis is focused, SIM in some fields had seen very significant growth in churches, some of which were largely indigenous, not missionary-led. Hastings has remarked on the growth rates of the churches of Africa during the 1960s and early 1970s, highlighting in particular 'young but quickly maturing' churches in the Sudanic belt, which included the SIM churches in Nigeria, Niger and Ethiopia, forming the core of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM).⁴⁹ Thus this thesis is not a study of western missionary strategy alone: SIM already had a substantial indigenous Christian community by 1975.

The fact of large flourishing churches doing their own evangelism, and beginning to think more globally, significantly shaped the thinking of SIM's leaders during the period covered by my research. The most influential conservative evangelical leader in Africa in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Nigerian Byang Kato, was the product of SIM work. Kato, who was appointed General Secretary of the AEAM in 1973, became a Christian aged 12 at an SIM primary school.⁵⁰ His concern for the church in Africa and 'the fulfilment of its calling'⁵¹ was influential in SIM, both in his advice and correspondence with SIM leaders in Nigeria during the early 1970s, and

⁴⁸ F. P. Cotterell, 'An Indigenous Church in Southern Ethiopia' *B. Soc. Afr. Church Hist. Vol.3, nos 1-2* (1969-70): 85-6.

⁴⁹ Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity, 1950-1975*. African Studies Series: 26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 224.

⁵⁰ See chapter 2, page 82.

⁵¹ Keith Ferdinando, 'The Legacy of Byang Kato' *IBMR* 28.4 (2004): 169, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2004-04/2004-04-169-ferdinando.pdf>. See chapter 2, pages 82-3.

in his role as a mentor to Jim Plueddemann during Plueddemann's years as an SIM missionary in Nigeria when he served as the Secretary of Theological Education for the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA).⁵² The formation of ECWA in 1954 and SIM's turnover of responsibility for all its work in Nigeria to ECWA in 1976⁵³ is a sign that in parts of the SIM church community, devolution to African authority took place at a comparatively early date. Hastings has suggested that by the 1970s 'the foreign missionary had become, essentially, an irrelevance, or at least something vastly more marginal to African Christianity than he ever had before'.⁵⁴ While this was not true for the faith missions in the 1970s, SIM's story does demonstrate an increasing awareness in the leadership of the mission of the changing role of the foreign missionary, and significantly an internationalisation of the very concept of the 'foreign missionary'.

This research will use SIM as a case study to explore how one 'faith mission' has responded and sought to adapt to the new reality of mission in this context in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and will highlight the challenges faced by organisations like SIM during this period of significant change. Klaus Fiedler defines faith missions in historical terms, as missions which trace their origins back to the China Inland Mission (CIM) founded by Hudson Taylor in 1865. 'Faith missions' was not a term coined by the missions themselves, which more often used the term 'interdenominational missions' distinguishing them from the traditional missions of the mainline denominations; however, it was often used by others in reference to

⁵² Jim Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁵³ See chapter 2, pages 80-86.

⁵⁴ Hastings, *A History of African Christianity*, 224. See also page 1.

their principle of not explicitly soliciting financial support.⁵⁵ In addition to being interdenominational, these organisations shared an emphasis on evangelism for the least reached, motivated by their premillennial mission theology; they often focused on interior and inland areas, a fact at times illustrated in their names, for example the Africa Inland Mission (AIM), and SIM itself, founded as the Sudan Interior Mission. They were committed to a doctrinally conservative and clear evangelical statement of faith,⁵⁶ and the empowerment of the laity in mission.⁵⁷ In a reaction against what were perceived as denominationally heavy, bureaucratic and business-like missions, Hudson Taylor favoured a simpler approach, with authoritative spiritual leadership, and a strong link between a missionary on the field and the supporter at home, rather than through bureaucratic structures and intermediary agencies.⁵⁸ CIM's development into a transatlantic, multi-national mission following Hudson Taylor's visit to North America in 1888, led faith missions further away from the single, national tradition of the denominational missions. Through breaking 'the boundaries of the nation-state... the potential had been established for developing mission organisations that were inter-cultural'.⁵⁹ This was the start of the road to diversity which this thesis considers.

⁵⁵ Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994), 11.

⁵⁶ Joel Carpenter, 'Propagating the Faith Once Delivered' in *Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880-1980*, eds. J. Carpenter and W. R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 99.

⁵⁷ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 23.

⁵⁸ Brian Stanley, 'Where Have Our Mission Structures Come From?', *Transformation* Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 2003): 43.

⁵⁹ Stanley, 'Where Have Our Mission Structures Come From?', 44.

Moreover, both Fiedler and Corwin note that faith missions such as SIM and SUM in their early years accepted non-white Christians as missionaries.⁶⁰ The history of black American missionaries in Africa in the late nineteenth century reveals a complex mix of motivations and interests.⁶¹ The belief common in European mission attitudes that Christianity and civilisation were inseparable was taken on by many black American missionaries, spreading the theory of western supremacy.⁶² However, the belief that black American missionaries held the key to transform Africa through conversion to Christianity, through which the continent could rise to civilisation and power, unsettled European colonial governments in Africa. Furthermore, Killingray has noted that African Americans employed by white mission agencies ‘invariably functioned within structures that were discriminatory at home and in the field’.⁶³ By the early twentieth century, there was a growing feeling that the presence of black American missionaries was threatening, and from 1920 white mission boards in the United States withdrew them from work in Africa, thus accentuating the mono-cultural appearance of Protestant missions.⁶⁴

This decision is reflected in the wider history of the faith missions and it was not until 1957 that OMF decided to accept missionaries from all ethnic backgrounds and countries,⁶⁵ a decision which other missions later followed. Gary Corwin’s ‘short

⁶⁰ Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 141, and Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 207.

⁶¹ Sylvia M. Jacobs, *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982) and Walter L. Williams, *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa, 1877-1900* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

⁶² Williams, *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa*, 103.

⁶³ David Killingray, ‘The Black Atlantic Missionary Movement and Africa, 1780s-1920s’, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 1 (2003), 17.

⁶⁴ Jacobs, *Black Americans*, 21-22.

⁶⁵ Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 141.

history' of SIM, *By Prayer to the Nations*, addresses the sensitive topic in a chapter on 'issues of race and diversity' within the organisation.⁶⁶ Hence it is reasonable to argue that the recent embrace of diversity apparent in mission organisations such as OMF, SIM and Wycliffe Bible Translators is not entirely new, but rather marks a recovery of the values and intentions of SIM's founders.⁶⁷ In the intervening years, white racial attitudes in the USA appear to have had a strong influence on the approach of North American faith missions such as SIM. As Killingray argues, 'rigid racial lines drawn by American white agencies reflected the discriminatory social divisions of the US'.⁶⁸ The fact that the missions were dependent on the financial support of individuals who would have been influenced by prevailing social attitudes may have been a significant factor inhibiting acceptance of non-white missionary candidates.

SIM's history in West Africa is discussed in Barbara Cooper's examination of evangelical Christians in the Sahel, and most recently in *Transforming Africa's Religious Landscapes*, a volume of revised papers which were presented at an international conference on SIM history in Africa, held in Addis Ababa in 2013, and which includes reference to attitudes of paternalism and racial discrimination found in the history of the organisation.⁶⁹ The book's introduction notes that its underlying theme 'is that SIM missionaries and Africans who worked with them or the

⁶⁶ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 202-39.

⁶⁷ Geysbeek in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 207-8.

⁶⁸ Killingray, 'The Black Atlantic Missionary Movement and Africa', 19.

⁶⁹ Barbara M. Cooper, *Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006) and Barbara MacGowan Cooper, Gary Corwin, Tibebe Eshete, Musa A. B. Gaiya, Tim Geysbeek, and Shobana Shankar. *Transforming Africa's Religious Landscapes: The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), Past and Present* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2018).

organisations that developed out of SIM's work played a key role in transforming the religious landscape of Africa'.⁷⁰ The book draws attention to evangelists, community health workers, national leaders and 'other African pioneers who are shown to have played important roles in propagating Christianity in Africa'. Three papers, by Gwamna Dogara and Reuben Goje Maiture, both from Nigeria, and Tesfaye Yacob from Ethiopia, highlighted the stories and role of Africans 'whose names rarely appear in widely-published histories' in the spread of Christianity in Nigeria and Ethiopia.⁷¹ Yacob noted that although SIM as an organisation 'believed in indigenisation', some of its missionaries were 'ingrained with colonial thinking that resisted Ethiopians' attempts to establish self-governing churches'. He suggested that when the missionaries returned to Ethiopia after the war,⁷² they did not grasp 'the implications of the indigenous character of the movement'.⁷³ This thesis explores the internationalisation of SIM itself, and its relationship to the indigenous church it planted, the complexity of which relationship was also explored by Wendy James as she reflected on SIM's emphasis on urging new believers and the church in Chali in Sudan to 'stand on their own feet' and not become overly dependent on missionaries or SIM itself. At the same time, she described among the Uduk people 'a real tension between accepting benefits of various kinds from powerful and well-connected outsiders, while avoiding indebtedness to them and resisting their ambition to control you'.⁷⁴ Yacob and James highlighted the tension and complexities found in the relationship between the mission and the indigenous church it planted. The

⁷⁰ Cooper et al, *Transforming Africa's Religious Landscapes*, 1.

⁷¹ Cooper et al, *Transforming Africa's Religious Landscapes*, 28.

⁷² See page 16.

⁷³ Cooper et al, *Transforming Africa's Religious Landscapes*, 30.

⁷⁴ Wendy James, 'Remembering Chali: The SIM in the Sudan-Ethiopian Borderlands (1938-64) and its Social Legacy', in Cooper et al, *Transforming Africa's Religious Landscapes*, 182-3.

outworking of this relationship and its changing nature as the churches matured and the mission became increasingly international will be explored in this thesis.⁷⁵ In his ‘Afterword’ to Cooper’s volume, Yusufu Turaki commented on many mission archives which ‘de-emphasize the role played by African pioneering missionaries’ in their records. The papers shared at SIM’s history conference, and published in *Transforming Africa’s Religious Landscapes* both acknowledge ‘the dynamism of African Christianity’ and ‘connect the history of Euro-American missions to current transformations in Africa’.⁷⁶

Although there has been little research into the more recent period of SIM’s history on which this thesis will focus, Turaki’s study of the relationship between SIM and ECWA in Nigeria offers useful contextual insights from SIM’s early history and its developing relationship with the church it planted.⁷⁷ The significant and pioneering relationship between SIM and ECWA formed the case study for Harold Fuller’s work, *Mission-Church Dynamics*.⁷⁸ SIM’s leadership showed an awareness of the worsening political climate for western missionaries in newly independent Africa, evident in its changing relationship with ECWA, and in a significant decline in SIM missionary numbers from 1966-75, from 1,196 to 699, observed by Hastings, which he attributed to restrictive government policy in Nigeria and Ethiopia.⁷⁹ The likely tensions between large missions and the African churches they planted, in the context

⁷⁵ See chapter 4.

⁷⁶ Yusufu Turaki, ‘Reflections on the International Conference on SIM History in Africa’ in Cooper et al, *Transforming Africa’s Religious Landscapes*, 514, 516.

⁷⁷ Yusufu Turaki, *An Introduction to the History of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria, 1893-1993* (Jos: Challenge Press, 1993).

⁷⁸ W. Harold Fuller, *Mission-church Dynamics: How to Change Bicultural Tensions into Dynamic Missionary Outreach* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1980).

⁷⁹ Hastings, *A History of African Christianity*, 226.

of growing political pressure for devolution of power, could result in ‘very strained relations’ if the mission sought to maintain autonomy from the church, as in the case of AIM and the Africa Inland Church.⁸⁰ The relationship between AIM and the AIC is examined by Lionel Young in his recent thesis.⁸¹ In contrast to AIM, which remains a mission focused in Africa, this thesis is a story of a mission which began focused in Africa, experienced significant African agency and leadership, which was eclipsed over time, before being reaffirmed in recent years. Its expansion in more recent years into Asian and Latin American fields brought new dynamics. Indeed SIM’s name change reflects the process of change it has gone through.⁸² Its story is not simply one of the Western Church related to the African Church, but is now much more multi-dimensional.

With this historical background, it is important to understand how ‘strengthened through diversity’ came to be one of SIM’s core values, and to assess the extent to which it is now achieving that goal. Was the growing commitment a response to changes already taking place within the organisation itself, and the growing internationalisation of the mission workforce, or was it an acknowledgement of broader currents and changes taking place in world Christianity, to which SIM was called to make a response?

⁸⁰ Hastings, *A History of African Christianity*, 227.

⁸¹ F. Lionel Young III, ‘The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, 1939-1975’, PhD Thesis, University of Stirling, 2017. See also chapter 2, page 86.

⁸² See page 4.

Dana Robert, in her consideration of how Christianity became a world religion, suggests the most important story in the history of Christian mission in the mid-twentieth century was the growth of Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and commented on the transformation of the missionary movement by the end of the twentieth century ‘into a multicultural, multi-faceted network’.⁸³ The late twentieth century was a critical time for faith missions. In 1999 Wilbert Shenk drew attention to the need for mission agencies to respond to the changed shape of mission in the twenty-first century.⁸⁴ In the same year, Malcolm McGregor, then UK Director of SIM, highlighted the changing face of mission, and expressed the need for SIM to help churches in Africa, Asia and South America that were alive to the challenge of world mission to respond to that call. He wrote: ‘Mission is no longer the “West to the rest”, but is now everywhere to everywhere. The church in Africa, Asia and South America is alive to world mission and they are sending people to other continents’.⁸⁵ SIM’s leadership recognised this transformation and expressed a determination to be part of it, looking at its own structures to identify any change necessary to do so. They stressed that mission organisations could not ignore this new reality if they are to survive. Through analysis of the changes and development that have taken place within SIM, its governance, values and workforce, during this significant period in the history of faith missions, this research has examined the way in which the growth of Christianity as a world religion, and the increasing vision for cross-cultural mission amongst churches in the majority world, has influenced the

⁸³ D. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became A World Religion*, Chichester, (U.K., Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 69, 73.

⁸⁴ W. R. Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 185.

⁸⁵ Malcolm McGregor, ‘World Mission: into the New Millennium’, *Mission Together*, Winter 1999/2000.

ethos of a long-established faith mission. The thesis questions the assumption that missionary equals western.

This research has a broader significance beyond the role and nature of faith missions in the twenty-first century. As a result of globalisation and migration, diversity is an increasingly common experience in Christian organisations and churches. The realities and implications of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity are experienced at most levels of society; as a result, the need for different cultures to communicate and to understand each other well in order that they are able to live and work alongside each other is an increasingly topical issue. Since Geert Hofstede first wrote in 1980 on the significance for organisations of cultural differences, much has been written on the role of culture within secular (especially business) organisations, and the way different cultures approach key organisational processes, including Erin Meyer's recent cultural map in which she outlined eight scales representing management behaviour where cultural gaps are most often found.⁸⁶ Hofstede highlighted the following issues in particular: power distance – the way a culture relates to authority; individual or collective approaches to decision-making; ways of dealing with uncertainty; and attitudes to confrontation and conflict, as issues common to most organisations for which different cultures would have different solutions.⁸⁷ Charles Handy in *Understanding Organizations* emphasised the importance of understanding a situation in order to identify what should be done, or not done, and to 'reduce

⁸⁶ Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map - Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business* (New York: Public Affairs, 2014), 17 and 'Navigating the Cultural Minefield', *Harvard Business Review* (May 2014): 2-5.

⁸⁷ Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*.

disturbance from the unexpected'.⁸⁸ He highlighted a 'multiplicity of variables' to be found within the study of people in organisations, due to the unpredictability and uncertainty of the way people will behave or react. The added levels of complexity found in a culturally diverse organisation or team increase the need for mutual understanding if a team is to operate effectively and achieve its goals. This thesis provides a case study of one Christian mission organisation's experience of increasingly multicultural teams, its recognition of the 'privilege and responsibility' of welcoming majority world missionaries into its workforce and the need to offer diversity training,⁸⁹ to offer insight into the realities of diversity within an organisation already working across cultures. The combination of at least three or four cultural contexts in a particular situation, the various countries of origin of the missionaries, and the culture or cultures of the country in which they are working, will be explored in the context of organisational theory in order to better understand the role of diversity in the operational strength of an organisation. The relatively recent concept of institutional logics, first introduced by Roger Friedland and Robert Alford,⁹⁰ provides a further helpful insight into the way in which increasing diversity within an organisation influences its internal logic, unwritten rules and working assumptions, and how the institutional logic of an organisation may have to change as it diversifies.

⁸⁸ Charles B. Handy, *Understanding Organizations*. Fourth ed. (London: Penguin, 1993), 16-17.

⁸⁹ 'Seize the Day Final Report to the International Director', 8 January 2005, 112, McGregor personal papers.

⁹⁰ Roger Friedland and Robert Alford in 'Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practices, and Institutional Contradictions' in Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (eds.) *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 232-63.

Research Methodology

This research presents a historical analysis of the mission theology and practice of SIM to understand where the organisation's vision and commitment to diversity originated, and how it has adapted to accommodate that stated goal. Analysis of the vision and motivation of the SIM leadership to drive forward an ethos of diversity was conducted through the study of archival papers and reports, and by interviews with key personnel in leadership roles in SIM. This archival research was balanced with email questionnaires and oral research among SIM missionaries who had experienced the reality of an increasingly diverse mission workforce, been part of multicultural teams, and could offer a first-hand perspective on the extent to which cultural diversity has strengthened or challenged the organisation, and how far it has increased its effectiveness in ministry. The core value 'strengthened through diversity' also requires consideration of what constitutes strength, how this is measured and perceived within the organisation, both at leadership level and amongst missionary teams, and how close these internal assessments are to the conclusions of this research. The influence of increased cultural diversity on the organisation's ability to fulfil its stated vision and purpose is a key consideration in measuring how far diversity has been a source of strength, a particularly difficult question to answer definitively.⁹¹

My research is that of a previous insider; I worked in the UK office of SIM for sixteen years from 1997-2014, a key time of change and development for the

⁹¹ SIM's purpose statement was revised following the strategic review in 2005, and again in 2015 following the appointment of Joshua Bogunjoko as International Director.

organisation. I left SIM in 2014 to begin postgraduate study and no longer have any formal relationship with the organisation. Through my years of employment, I gained a knowledge and understanding of SIM, its structures and priorities, and experienced first-hand the process of strategic review in 2004-5 which is important to the topic of this research. I built strong relationships with missionaries serving from the UK, with personnel in leadership and in other SIM offices around the world. These networks and connections were of great benefit as I conducted my research. While no longer an insider, after so many years within the organisation I cannot be a complete outsider, and faced the challenge of distancing myself as far as possible from opinions and perceptions expressed from within the organisation in order to be objective, and being aware of the expectations I might encounter as a previous insider while conducting this study. I believe the advantages of my background and understanding of SIM, and the network of personal connections I have, outweighed the challenge of conducting objective research in the context of these existing relationships and experience.⁹²

Much of the earlier primary source material for the research is found in the SIM Archives, located in Fort Mill, South Carolina, USA, which have a growing digital collection, and full-time archivist. Access is made available to researchers on completion of registration and agreement to the set policies and practices. There is a 25-year restriction on access to unpublished materials held by the archives. However,

⁹² Boone Aldridge's recently published book *For the Gospel's Sake : The Rise of the Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018) offers an example of how a mission insider can still write an effective and at times critical academic appraisal of a mission. See Preface, xi.

I was able to conduct personal interviews with key players in relation to this project, and also to contact authors direct for the information I required. Through my previous involvement with SIM, I have a good relationship with members of the current SIM International Leadership Team who were supportive of this research project, and assisted me to access the data I required. Specifically, my previous relationship with SIM was helpful in securing interviews with past and present International Directors, and key members of the recent and current SIM leadership team in order to gain insight and understanding at the leadership level of the organisation. The lack of secondary scholarly material related to the later chapters of the thesis was one of the methodological issues faced.

In order to fully understand the dynamics and challenges of an increasingly diverse workforce ‘at ground level’, it was important to research the perspective of different cultures represented within the organisation, both those from traditional missionary-sending countries and those from the majority world who have more recently joined the mission. Questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of SIM teams, following up with Skype or personal interviews for greater understanding where key issues or significant experiences were raised. The use of questionnaires in a multicultural context is not without difficulty; Hofstede has highlighted that ‘even the minds of the researchers studying the impact of culture are programmed according to their own particular cultural framework’.⁹³ An awareness of the cultural complexities at work in the way respondents from different backgrounds may answer a questionnaire was important to the way questionnaires were structured and phrased.

⁹³ Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, 15.

A Level 1 ethics assessment was completed in May 2016 before personal interviews were conducted. A list of potential respondents for questionnaires was cleared with the SIM International Personnel Director before emails were sent inviting a response. Three of those invited to participate in the research did not respond. Twenty serving or retired missionaries did respond, representing nine different nationalities from Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America and Europe, and twelve different countries of service. It was noticeable that two respondents from new sending countries expressed their gratitude for having been invited to participate in the research.

SIM's appointment of Dr Joshua Bogunjoko as its first non-western International Director in 2013 marked a significant point in the history of the organisation. The thesis will seek to understand the process of change and challenge that led up to that appointment, how the governance of SIM and its missionary workforce have changed in response to the commitment to increased diversity within the organisation, and at what cost. It will consider in what way, if at all, SIM is unique in the origins and commitment to diversity found within the organisation, and how far its story is paralleled in other evangelical mission organisations.

Thesis Outline

The following chapter will give a brief history of SIM, and set the organisation in the context of conservative evangelical missions in the twentieth century, and of the wider debates taking place amongst mission thinkers, illustrated through mission

periodicals of the period in order to demonstrate how SIM was keeping pace with current issues and wider mission debates. The thesis then traces the origins of diversity in SIM and the process of internationalisation which took place in the mission, demonstrating the way in which the emphasis on strength through diversity recaptured something of the original vision of SIM's founders. The next chapter explores the ways in which diversity has been defined within SIM, recognising different emphases and understandings within the organisation, and demonstrating the primary emphasis on cultural diversity. The chapter also explores the limitations to diversity in SIM, highlighting particularly the boundaries resultant from its theologically conservative evangelical position. The following three chapters explore the effects of increased cultural diversity in the organisation. Chapter four examines the changing shape of mission-church relations as SIM broadened its approach to a new model for mission which supported missionaries from new sending nations. The next chapter explores the governance and structural changes implemented by SIM in order to move from a shareholder to stakeholder model of governance, and give voice to an increasingly diverse mission workforce. Chapter six is an exploration of the challenges and benefits of multicultural teams, highlighting the complex layers and nuances of culture and ethnicity. Chapter seven offers two case studies of leaders – one Singaporean and one Nigerian – who both made significant contributions to the organisation, in order to illuminate different contexts and attitudes towards the process of change in SIM as it intentionally pursued its aim of strength through diversity. The thesis concludes with wider reflections on the significance of the cultural diversification of SIM, and the potential benefits and applications of SIM's experience for other similar organisations.

Chapter 1: SIM in the Context of Conservative Evangelical Missions in the Twentieth Century

This chapter will provide a brief history of the agency SIM and set it in the context of some key developments and trends in conservative evangelical missions in the second half of the twentieth century. It will argue that the signs of growing diversity found in the history of SIM indicate that the organisation was at least keeping pace with the growing internationalisation of mission, a trend which was beginning to change the shape of mission in the second half of the twentieth century and challenge traditional mission agencies to respond. By examining the increasing attention and acknowledgement within evangelical missions of the importance of culture, the discussion around the relationship between anthropology and mission, and the ‘emerging missions’ movement from the non-western world, I will set the growth of cultural diversity in SIM in the wider context of evangelical missions at the time, and show that what was happening in SIM reflects some of the wider debates that were taking place amongst mission thinkers and leaders. The discussion of these themes will be illustrated by the way in which they were addressed as significant topics in the mission journals *Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ)*, the *International Journal of Frontier Missions (IJFM)* and the *International Bulletin of Missionary [now Mission] Research (IBMR)* from the 1960s to the present. Within SIM, diversity is claimed to be a source of strength;¹ the discussion surrounding the concepts of culture, multicultural teams and the implications of the emerging mission movement and a resulting new mission workforce found in these journals, illustrates

¹ ‘Strengthened through diversity’ is one of the stated core values of SIM; see <https://www.sim.org/core-values>. Accessed 23 July 2019.

the challenges of diversity, while also acknowledging its potential as a source of strength.

Historical Context

The wider historical context in which these developments were taking place was a period of great change. The rise of communism had resulted in the exodus of missionaries from China after 1949, and a crisis of confidence and identity followed for the western missionary ‘as a marked man’. In 1961, the American evangelical missiologists Eric S. Fife and Arthur F. Glasser identified the need for ‘rethinking missionary strategy’ in the face of internal and external crises the church was facing.² Decolonisation and the growing tide of nationalism had resulted in increasing ‘anti-white’ feeling, and the perception in former colonial countries that Christianity was ‘the religion of the white man’. Fife and Glasser observed that the ‘day of the white man’s undisputed supremacy’ was over, and identified the need for North American leaders to adopt a servant attitude: ‘there has probably never been a period in the history of the Church when leadership needed to be exercised with such humility and tact’. In response to these events, they also recognised the importance of encouraging missionary vision in younger churches in the non-western world, and the value of mission teams made up of diverse nationalities and backgrounds which would reflect the supranational quality of the Church, in fact predicting that the next decade may in future be called ‘the day of the non-Caucasian’.³ In 1971, Kenyan evangelical John Gatu, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, issued a call for a

² Eric S. Fife and Arthur F. Glasser, *Missions in Crisis: Rethinking Missionary Strategy* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961).

³ Fife and Glasser, *Missions in Crisis*, 89, 244, 161.

moratorium on the sending of missionaries and resources from the West in order to promote the development and independence of non-western, particularly African churches.⁴

Developments that were taking place within the World Council of Churches (WCC) at this time also had a significant impact on evangelical missions. Harvey Hoekstra identified a ‘reconceptualisation of mission’ within the WCC as a ‘new mission’ with humanisation as its goal and an emphasis on social justice.⁵ When the International Missionary Council (IMC), representing the historic missionary societies, was integrated into the WCC in 1961, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) was formed to take this emphasis forward. However, in the minds of most evangelicals, that was not the result, and the focus of the WCC appeared increasingly to move away from the unfinished task of evangelism. Hoekstra called for a return to programmes focusing on evangelising the unreached rather than on social action, and identified the need for a new missionary movement in order to accomplish this: a missionary movement that would be made up of missionaries from Third World churches.⁶ This background was evident in the Berlin World Evangelism Congress in 1966 and within the Lausanne Movement, formed after the Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974. There is a strong sense in which the conservative evangelical missions were re-emphasising the primary task of evangelism at these gatherings and, in the absence of support from the mainline denominational missions and the WCC, beginning to recognise the

⁴ John G. Gatu, *Fan into Flame: An Autobiography* (Nairobi: Moran Publishers, 2016), 128-132.

⁵ Harvey T. Hoekstra, *Evangelism in Eclipse* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1979), 12.

⁶ Hoekstra, *Evangelism*, 197, 201-202.

growing vitality of the church in the South and the potential new missionary workforce to be found in the younger churches. As early as 1961, Fife and Glasser had called for ‘total mobilisation’ of the Church and resources in the western and non-western world in order to accomplish the urgent task of evangelism. This emphasis grew in prominence in the decades which followed – non-western missionaries from an increasingly vital church in the South, in contrast to the declining church in the North, became an increasingly significant resource in the task of evangelism and were perhaps more able to go to countries in which western missionaries were no longer welcomed.

There has been relatively little discussion of trends in conservative evangelical missions during this period. The following brief history of SIM will illustrate the changing nature of mission as seen in one mission agency; the themes on which this chapter will focus have been chosen for their connection to the increasing internationalisation of mission and growing cultural diversity, and the issues these trends raised.

A Brief History of SIM

SIM, originally known as the Sudan Interior Mission, began in 1893 when three young men, two Canadian, one American, and of different denominations, formed an independent mission to reach the Sudan. They were Walter Gowans, Presbyterian, Tom Kent, Congregationalist, and Rowland Bingham, a former member of the Salvation Army later drawn to Brethren teachings. Klaus Fiedler identifies the

organisation as ‘one of the big “second generation” faith missions’. In common with other missions beginning at the time, its focus and priority was the unreached peoples who had not previously been contacted by Christian mission agencies.⁷

Mergers with other missions played a significant part in the development of SIM and the geographical expansion of its ministry. The first took place in 1927 when a merger with the Abyssinia Frontiers Mission opened up work in Ethiopia. SIM entered South America when it joined with the Andes Evangelical Mission in 1982, at which time the name was changed to SIM International, with the initials standing for Society for International Ministry.⁸ In 1986 SIM merged with Life Challenge, a South African mission working amongst Muslims in Cape Town; SIM had had a Council in South Africa since 1952. Merger with the International Christian Fellowship (ICF) in 1989 added ministries in Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia and Senegal to SIM’s work in Africa and South America. ICF General Director Merle Inniger commented that the merger would also ‘provide a broader structure to accommodate the growing potential of candidates from Latin American, African and Asian countries’.⁹ A further merger with Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) in 1998 expanded SIM’s work in Southern Africa.¹⁰

This thesis focuses on the origins and effects of cultural diversity within the SIM missionary workforce, which was originally very largely, but not entirely North

⁷ Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 48, 125-126.

⁸ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 131.

⁹ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 137.

¹⁰ The mergers are discussed in detail in Part II of Corwin’s book, chapters 8 to 13.

American. A number of developments highlighted by Gary Corwin in his outline of the history of the organisation are notable in this context.¹¹ In 1915, SIM adopted the policy that decisions regarding its work were to be made as close as possible to those affected; the structure of the organisation would go through many changes over the years to follow, but this willingness in the early years to ‘devolve’ decisions is notable when considered alongside the internationalisation experienced by the mission during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. A British Council, and in addition a separate Council for Scotland were formed in 1922; in 1957 ‘as an experiment on a one-term basis’ the General Council allowed up to six ‘non-white’ married couples to apply for membership;¹² in 1959 the first Northern European¹³ missionaries were seconded to SIM; in 1962 a Swiss Council was created for French-speaking Europe. In 1966 SIM stated that ‘candidates are considered without regard to race or nationality’. SIM’s first Asian missionary, Michiko Aoba from Japan, went to Nigeria in 1967.¹⁴ SIM’s first long-term African missionary was accepted in 1971. In 1975 Andrew Ng, born in Malaysia, applied to SIM; he and his wife Belinda joined the organisation in 1977, serving in Niger.¹⁵ In 1981 Sam and Sarah Kang became the first SIM missionaries from South Korea when they went to Nigeria after language study in England. In 1984 the first ‘career’ South American became a member of SIM. An SIM network of partner missions and committees was strengthened throughout East Asia in 1990, led by Andrew Ng, and in 1992 the East Asia Council became autonomous from the SIM Australian Council, becoming the

¹¹ See Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, chapter 14.

¹² See Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 220, and chapter 2, page 72.

¹³ ‘Northern European’ was used within SIM to refer mainly to missionaries from the German mission, DMG (Deutsche Missions Gemeinschaft), with which SIM entered into partnership in 1956.

¹⁴ See chapter 2, pages 76-7.

¹⁵ See chapter 7 for Andrew Ng’s story and discussion of his contribution to SIM’s cultural diversification.

eighth co-signatory of the SIM joint venture agreement.¹⁶ In 1993 the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) commissioned three couples including the future International Director of SIM, Joshua Bogunjoko, and his wife Joanna, to serve as missionaries.¹⁷ By 1994, SIM membership included 36 nationalities. SIM Korea was registered in 1999, and SIM Latino was established in Guatemala as a hub for sending Latinos around the world in cross-cultural ministry in 2003. In the same year, Malcolm McGregor was appointed as the first European International Director, forming an internationally diverse leadership team in 2005. A strategic review and report carried out in 2004-5 stated that SIM needed to ‘collaborate enthusiastically’ with emerging missions, and intentionally ‘pursue an ethos of multicultural diversity’.¹⁸ In 2013 Dr Joshua Bogunjoko was appointed the first African International Director of SIM.

In 1986, SIM General Director Ian Hay wrote an article addressing the growth of non-western missions and the response of western Christians and mission agencies to it, noting the need for organisations like SIM ‘to rearrange their thinking and adapt to what is happening’. He described SIM as a ‘unique kind of international mission’ as it has sought to ‘integrate all nationalities as a common work force. God has honoured that. Our mission has been strengthened’.¹⁹ To what extent SIM was

¹⁶ The governance and decision-making structure of SIM. See also discussion in chapter 5.

¹⁷ ECWA was established in 1954 with 400 SIM-related churches. In 1976, ECWA took over responsibility for all SIM work in Nigeria, see discussion in chapter 2, pages 78-84. Lessons learned as the partnership was worked out are discussed by Rick Calenberg in ‘Mission and Church Partnership Dynamics: Lessons from SIM-ECWA in Nigeria,’ *EMQ* (July 2005), <https://missionexus.org/mission-and-church-partnership-dynamics-lessons-from-sim-ecwa-in-nigeria/>. See chapter 7 for Joshua Bogunjoko’s story.

¹⁸ ‘Seize the Day’ Final Report, 8 January 2005, personal papers of Malcolm McGregor, 175-6.

¹⁹ Ian M Hay, ‘Rearranging Our Thinking’, 7.

unique in this may be debated, but the steady growth and commitment to the internationalisation of the organisation is clearly evident through this brief survey of its history. The growing diversity of SIM, which appears to have begun in the late 1960s, suggests that SIM may have been one of a small number of Protestant missions intentionally pursuing this goal at that time.

Trends and Developments in Evangelical Missions since the 1960s

The following sections will set SIM's story in context by considering some of the themes related to the internationalisation of mission, focusing particularly on discussions surrounding the issues as they were addressed in leading evangelical mission journals. In a chapter discussing 'The Changing Fortunes of the Mission Agency' and the growth and vitality of Christianity in the non-western world, Wilbert Shenk argues that 'institutions that fail to adapt to a changing world become obsolete'. The identity crisis such organisations can face when the context in and for which they were created begins to change can, he suggests, become a rite of passage to a new stage of service, and a period of both risk and hope in adjustment to the new situation.²⁰ Themes related to this changing world are evident in evangelical mission journals from the 1960s to the present, although there is relatively little discussion of trends in conservative evangelical missions over this time. By focusing on the discussion of culture and its importance in mission, the relationship between anthropology and mission, and the internationalisation of mission and 'emerging missions' from the non-western world, this chapter will show where increasing

²⁰ Shenk, *Changing Frontiers*, 177, 182.

attention has been given to these themes at a time when their impact was being felt and addressed within SIM. It will also look at the concept of unreached people groups, noting the relationship observed by some mission thinkers between this strategy to ‘finish the task’ of world evangelisation and the growth of the mission movement from the non-western world.

Understanding Culture

The concept of ‘culture’ was relatively new to Christian mission discourse in the post-war period. Stan Nussbaum and James Nelson have observed that as mission was separated from colonialism in the 1960s, missionaries began to take a ‘more appreciative look at local cultures’.²¹ Raymond Buker’s 1964 article on ‘Missionary Encounter with Culture’ is an early example of discussion of the concept in mission journals.²² The publication of Clifford Geertz’s *The Interpretation of Cultures* in 1973, Marvin K. Mayers’ *Christianity Confronts Culture* in 1974, and Charles Kraft’s *Christianity in Culture* in 1979,²³ demonstrated the increasing significance being given to the concept by the following decade, and as the following discussion will show, this trend continued to develop in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

²¹ Stan Nussbaum and James Nelson, ‘ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION: Missiographic: 50 Years of EMQ: A Decade by Decade Overview’, *EMQ*, (October 2014), <https://missionexus.org/anniversary-collection-missiographic-50-years-of-emq-a-decade-by-decade-overview/>.

²² Raymond B Buker, Sr, ‘Missionary Encounter with Culture’, *EMQ*, (October 1964), <https://missionexus.org/missionary-encounter-with-culture/>.

²³ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Marvin Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross Cultural Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1974); Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*.

The importance of understanding culture, not simply the culture of the country in which a missionary is serving, but also the culture they have come from and take with them into their new context, became a dominant theme in both the *EMQ* and *IJFM*. In Buker's article in the first issue of *EMQ* in October 1964, mentioned above, he discussed 'cultural overhang', a term introduced by the pioneering church growth theorist Donald McGavran to express the cultural habits and understandings missionaries take with them into the work they are doing, recognising that this carrying over of culture from the missionary's own background can confuse and hinder the reception of the Gospel.²⁴ In a 1973 article addressing issues of cultural communication, unintentional insensitivity and unintended messages given through 'informal American cues', Robert Gordon underlined the importance of 'understanding one's own (in this case, American) culture as the first step to understanding another's culture'.²⁵ A further article on the subject in July 1990, 'Know your Own Culture: A Neglected Tool for Cross Cultural Ministry', emphasised the importance of understanding North American culture and how it might be perceived from outside, which suggests that this message had not been universally applied.²⁶ These articles tend to consider cultures as they relate to entire continents, referring in general terms to 'African' or 'North American' culture. More general reference to western culture occurs occasionally, alongside an acknowledgement of different time or generational cultures in Buker's article. The

²⁴ Buker, 'Missionary Encounter', *EMQ*, (October 1964).

²⁵ Robert C Gordon, 'The Silent Language Every Missionary Must Learn', *EMQ*, (July 1973), <https://missionexus.org/the-silent-language-every-missionary-must-learn/>.

²⁶ Andrew Atkins, 'Know your Own Culture: A Neglected Tool for Cross Cultural Ministry', *EMQ*, (July 1990), <https://missionexus.org/know-your-own-culture-a-neglected-tool-for-cross-cultural-ministry/>.

need to understand more complex layers and nuances of culture will be discussed in chapter 6 of this thesis.

Andrew Walls has highlighted the significance and distinctiveness of specifically American culture and Christianity in his essay on ‘The American Dimension in the History of the Missionary Movement’, noting that in the phrase ‘American missions’, it is the word ‘American’ that bears the most weight. The entrepreneurial characteristic of American business, the attitude to financing, the commitment to separation between church and state, and the problem-solving approach to life in America, have all influenced the local form of Christianity found there. As Walls accurately observed, ‘we only ever meet Christianity in a local form, and that means a historically, culturally conditioned form.... There is nothing wrong with having local forms of Christianity – provided that we remember they *are* local.’²⁷ When those forms of Christianity are taken to another culture, Walls noted, the American missionary is likely to be perceived and judged as part of ‘the United States presence overseas’.

In 1987, volume 4 of the *IJFM* was devoted to looking at ‘doing theology in different cultures’, and demonstrated recognition of the importance of culture and mission in different contexts. Dominant in these journals in the discussion of culture and how it should be understood was the concept of worldview, with frequent references to the work of the influential evangelical missiologists David Hesselgrave and Paul

²⁷ Andrew F. Walls, ‘The American Dimension in the History of the Missionary Movement’ in Carpenter and Shenk. (eds.), *Earthen Vessels*, 12-13, 17, 19.

Hiebert.²⁸ In 1993, Edward Murphy quoted Hiebert's statement: 'a worldview provides people with their basic assumptions about reality. Religion provides them with the specific content of this reality'.²⁹ Murphy commented that western theology has been influenced by the western worldview more than most of us are aware. Discussions of worldview and culture in *IJFM* articles in 1999 also noted the issue of western cultural superiority or arrogance, and the need for western Christians to differentiate between the gospel and their culture.³⁰ Gene Daniels suggested in his 2009 *EMQ* article 'Decoupling Missionary Advance from Western Culture' that missions should 'only recruit people willing and able to shed the cultural package they grew up with'.³¹ There is an apparent assumption by these authors that there is a single 'western worldview'; however, the strong connection between worldview and religion, suggests a greater recognition of cultural plurality outside the western context.³²

The concept of worldview was a popular focus, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s.

The approach of evangelicals to the concept has been critiqued more recently,

²⁸ Paul Hiebert was Professor of Mission and Anthropology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and previously taught at Fuller Theological Seminary. He earlier served as a missionary in India. His books include *Cultural Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, MI. New York. Baker Book House / J.B. Lippencott, 1983 (1976)) and *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI. Baker Book House, 1985). David Hesselgrave served as a missionary in Japan for 12 years before his appointment as Professor of Missions at the School of World Mission and Evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He co-founded the Evangelical Missiological Society with Donald McGavran. His books include *Communicating Christ Cross-culturally* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan 1978).

²⁹ Edward F. Murphy, 'World View Clash: A Handbook for Spiritual Warfare', *IJFM*, 10.4 (1993).

³⁰ Irving Whitt, 'Evangelical Missions and the Decentering of Conviction', *IJFM*, 16:3 (1999), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/16_3_PDFs/02_Whitt.pdf.

³¹ Gene Daniels, 'Decoupling Missionary Advance from Western Culture', *EMQ*, (October 2009), <https://missionexus.org/decoupling-missionary-advance-from-western-culture/>.

³² Hans Weerstra, 'Editorial: Worldview, World Religion, and Missions', *IJFM* 14.1 (1997). http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/14_1_PDFs/00_Editorial.pdf; Strom, 'Cultural Practices – Barriers or Bridges'.

however, by James Davison Hunter, who offered a critical analysis of the attitude of modern American evangelicals to worldview, and their approach to culture and cultural change in his 2010 work *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*.³³ Worldview, he argues, is ‘so deeply embedded in our consciousness’ that we are almost unaware of the framework of meaning on which our perceptions and understanding are based.³⁴ Hunter’s analysis perhaps highlights the need for greater understanding of the complexities of culture and worldview than some discussions of the concept had acknowledged.

In addition to articles addressing the importance of taking the concept of culture seriously, numerous book reviews of titles related to the subject are found in both *EMQ* and *IBMR*, notably Jim Plueddemann’s *Leading Across Cultures*³⁵ and Sherwood Lingenfelter’s *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership*,³⁶ a further indication that the issue was being addressed more and more widely, and recognition perhaps of the practical implications for mission organisations and their leaders. There is a sense of a growing acknowledgement of the need to understand cultural differences, and in the later articles, perhaps an awareness of greater complexities in cross-cultural understanding and communication. Some scholars were beginning to highlight the

³³ James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³⁴ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 274.

³⁵ James E. Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

³⁶ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books 2008).

perspectives and insights to be gained from anthropology in the search for this greater understanding of cultural difference, a theme I will now consider in more detail.

The Relationship between Anthropology and Mission

Closely related to the attention given to culture is consideration of the somewhat ambivalent relationship between anthropology and mission, and what might be gained through anthropological insights. Mainline denominational missions began taking the new social science of anthropology seriously from the 1920s, but it was only after 1960 that conservative evangelicals began to pay closer attention to anthropological perspectives. In his essay 'A Broadening Vision: Forty Years of Evangelical Theology of Mission, 1946-1986', Charles van Engen noted that the publication of the journal *Practical Anthropology*, launched in 1953, called evangelical missionaries to take the relationship between the church and culture seriously.³⁷ As will be seen through the examples to follow, the value of anthropological insights was stressed by several contributors to the mission journals. An interesting case study on the role of anthropology in mission is that of Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), explored by Boone Aldridge Jr in his recently published book. Aldridge credits the linguists and anthropologists Kenneth Pike and Eugene Nida for their part in the success story of SIL, constituting an unlikely demonstration 'of mid-twentieth century evangelicals

³⁷ Charles E Van Engen, 'A Broadening Vision: Forty Years of Evangelical Theology of Mission 1946-1986', in Carpenter and Shenk. (eds.), *Earthen Vessels*, 215.

transcending their anti-intellectual habit of mind to enjoy fruitful engagement with academia'.³⁸

The topic was addressed by the notable Australian evangelical anthropologist, Alan Tippett, in October 1968 in his article 'Anthropology: Luxury or Necessity for Missions?' The beginning of courses in anthropology at the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, started in 1961, had prompted much interest.³⁹

Tippett identified the role of the missionary anthropologist as to bring together the seminary theologian and field missionary, and called for more trained anthropologists with missionary experience, which he acknowledged were few in number.⁴⁰ In a 1973 article, William Kornfield emphasised the importance of cultural sensitivity to avoid cultural superiority, ethnocentricity, and paternalism, observing that 'Most missionaries, including mission leaders, have received training heavily weighted in the direction of theology with little or no anthropology, resulting in a serious imbalance which should be corrected as soon as possible'.⁴¹ In 1997, Gail Van Rhee called for the disciplines of theology and anthropology to merge, intermingle and unify in a 'theologised anthropology' to produce a 'theology of

³⁸ Aldridge, *For the Gospel's Sake*, 80.

³⁹ The School of World Mission of Fuller Theological Seminary was started in 1961 by Donald McGavran. The first colleague he called was Alan Tippett. See Charles Russell Taber, *The World is Too Much with Us*, 131.

⁴⁰ Alan Tippett, 'Anthropology: Luxury or Necessity for Missions?', *EMQ*, (October 1968), <https://missionexus.org/anthropology-luxury-or-necessity-for-missions/>.

⁴¹ William Kornfield, 'Looking at Missions from an Anthropological Point of View', *EMQ*, (July 1973), <https://missionexus.org/looking-at-missions-from-an-anthropological-point-of-view/>. See also chapter 6, page 240.

culture that world missions desperately needs in order to evangelise the nations and finish the task'.⁴²

In a two-part article in the *IJFM* in 2004, discussing the importance of anthropology for mission in the past and in the twenty-first century, Darrell Whiteman quoted the opening line of Eugene Nida's *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*: 'Good missionaries have always been good "anthropologists"'. Whiteman observed that the impact of globalisation had led some to believe that insights from anthropology were no longer needed to help missionaries to understand and appreciate cultural differences. However, as he correctly countered, 'cultural diversity has heightened, not flattened', so the insights from anthropology are needed as much if not more than previously. Whiteman explored and demonstrated the value of anthropological insights to aid understanding and appreciation of cultural difference, without which missionaries too easily 'revert to ethnocentric modes of interpretation and behaviour', concluding that the majority of missionaries – western and non-western – are still largely uninformed by anthropological insights.⁴³ While there seems to be a growing acknowledgement of the importance of understanding culture and learning from anthropological insights, Whiteman clearly suggested that the application of this was far from widespread, perhaps an indication of the continuing uncertainty and at times suspicion in the relationship between anthropology and mission. Whether scholars such as Whiteman who advocated the

⁴² Gailyn Van Rheenen, 'A Theology of Culture: Desecularizing Anthropology', *IJFM*, 14.1, (January – March 1997), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/14_1_PDFs/05_Van_Rheenen.pdf, 33.

⁴³ Darrell Whiteman, 'Anthropology and Mission: The Incarnational Connection', *IJFM*, 21:1 (Spring 2004) and 21.2 (Summer 2004), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/21_1_PDFs/35_44_Whiteman2.pdf and http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/21_2_PDFs/79_Whiteman.pdf.

importance of learning from the discipline of anthropology were in any way influenced by the growing internationalisation of mission that will be discussed in the next section is perhaps doubtful. Rather, the new evangelical enthusiasm for anthropology was mainly directed at the understanding of the cultures receiving missionaries, not on the particular characteristics and distinctions of western missionary sending cultures.

The Internationalisation of Mission

The growing influence of churches and theologians from the non-western world was highlighted by Van Engen in 1990 in his consideration of the historical development of evangelical mission theology in the second half of the twentieth century. He identified the significant encounter between North American evangelicals and ‘hundreds of able evangelical leaders in Third World Churches’ at the Lausanne Congress of 1974, and traced the growing impact of theologians from the non-western world through their influence at major conferences such as the ‘Lausanne Consultation on World Evangelization’ in Pattaya, Thailand in 1980, and the ‘First Conference of Evangelical Mission Theologians for the Two Thirds World’ in Bangkok in 1982.⁴⁴ The growth of a non-western mission movement and the increasing internationalisation of mission is an increasingly dominant theme in the mission journals, particularly the *EMQ*. As early as January 1974, Clyde Taylor observed that ‘few features in world evangelism have stirred more interest than the

⁴⁴ Van Engen, ‘A Broadening Vision’ in Carpenter and Shenk. (eds.), *Earthen Vessels*, 218, 229.

recent development of missions in the “Third World”⁴⁵ David Dong-Jin Cho’s contribution to the *IBMR* ‘My Pilgrimage in Mission’ series in 2009 drew attention to the development of the Asian mission movement with the establishment of an International School of Mission in Seoul, expanded in 1973 to become the East-West Centre for Mission Research and Development. The ‘All Asia Mission Consultation’ held in Seoul in August 1973 led to the founding of the Asia Missions Association which grew quickly. Cho’s story continues with the launch of the Third World Missions Association in May 1989 as an intercontinental network of missions in Asia, Africa and Latin America coming out of a consultation held in Portland, Oregon in 1988.⁴⁶ Luis Bush, leader of the AD 2000 movement and inventor of the phrase ‘The 10/40 Window’, highlighted the development of the Latin American mission movement in an article on the COMIBAM (Co-operation in Missions in Ibero-America) events of 1990.⁴⁷

Several articles in the 1980s and 1990s reflecting on conferences and congresses traced the growing awareness of mission initiatives from the non-western world, demonstrated through increasingly international representation at such events and the issues discussed. Writing in April 1980, Ralph Winter, associate of, and heir to McGavran, recalled the emergence of a new awareness in the western evangelical churches of the strategic significance of key church leaders in the non-western world at the Berlin World Evangelism Congress in 1966. Winter observed that western

⁴⁵ Clyde W. Taylor, ‘Overseas Churches Starting to Send Missionaries’, *EMQ*, (January 1974), <https://missionexus.org/overseas-churches-starting-to-send-missionaries/>.

⁴⁶ David Dong-Jin Cho, ‘My Pilgrimage in Mission (Essay).’ *IBMR*, 33.4 (2009), 195, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2009-04/2009-04-195-cho.html>.

⁴⁷ Luis Bush, Costa Rican Evangelicals Poised for Mission Advance, *IJFM*, 7.1, (January 1990), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/07_1_PDFs/Bush.pdf.

agencies had not been diligent in recognising, encouraging or assisting the potential vision for mission and for new mission movements in these younger churches.⁴⁸ Ian Hay, formerly SIM's General Director, wrote in the *IJFM* in 1994 following his attendance at a consultation in England on emerging missions and their relationship to western mission agencies, emphasising the need for churches and societies in the West to adapt to this new situation.⁴⁹

Research surveys by Lawrence Keyes in 1972 and 1980, discussed in these journals, provided evidence which demonstrated that non-western mission agencies were growing even faster than their North American counterparts.⁵⁰ Winter suggested in 1991 that such work had made the 'Third World Missionary Movement a respectable subject of discussion' not thought about in mission circles a few years previously.⁵¹ The question of the response and attitude of the western agencies, particularly those in North America, was raised in a number of journal articles. In his editorial in the October 1982 *EMQ*, Jim Reapsome wrote of 'pride and superiority that have too often characterised western efforts in the past', and insisted that North American churches must 'learn to confess that a Third World missionary is not only our equal, but our superior in many situations'.⁵² In 1986, Keyes and Larry Pate described the western church and mission leaders 'searching for effective ways to relate to the

⁴⁸ Ralph Winter, '1980: Year of Three Mission Congresses', *EMQ*, (April 1980), <https://missionexus.org/1980-year-of-three-missions-congresses/>.

⁴⁹ Ian Hay, 'Vital Links in World Evangelization', *IJFM*, 11.4, (October-November 1994), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/11_4_PDFs/10%20Ian%20Hay.pdf.

⁵⁰ Lawrence E Keyes, 'Third World Missionaries: More and Better', *EMQ*, (October 1982), <https://missionexus.org/third-world-missionaries-more-and-better/>.

⁵¹ Ralph Winter, 'The Crucial Links in the Frontier Missions Chain', *IJFM*, 8.2 (April 1991) http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/08_2_PDFs/8_2Winter.pdf.

⁵² Jim Reapsome, 'Editor's Analysis: After the Cheers: Humility and Cooperation', *EMQ*, (October 1982), <https://missionexus.org/editors-analysis-after-the-cheers-humility-and-cooperation/>.

growing emerging missions movement, with “partnership” the watchword’.⁵³ The great potential of this new movement was acknowledged by contributors such as SIM missionary, Howard Brant, in his 1991 article: ‘Some of us are becoming increasingly aware that there is in fact a very awesome force which is being awakened in the world today which may be God’s tool to finish the task – that is the non-western missionary movement. We are naïve if we simply look at the resources of the West when it comes to world evangelism.’⁵⁴

Many of the articles which picked up the theme of the emerging mission movement discussed the challenges it brought. Attitudes and acceptance from established missions, issues of finance, and adequate training were the most pressing questions. Peruvian Samuel Escobar, who along with Rene Padilla played an important role in raising the concerns of the majority world at the Lausanne Congress of 1974, highlighted these challenges in a 1992 article, discussing attitudes and partnership between churches and missions from different backgrounds and financial situations, and observed that ‘acceptance of this is not easy for North Americans, especially conservative evangelicals’. He stressed the need for recognition of the gifts and contributions others in the body of Christ bring.⁵⁵ Ugandan David Zac Niringiye asked in a 1995 article, ‘Is it conceivable, is it possible to think of mission from sub-Saharan Africa to the rest of the world?’ In economic terms, he declared, the answer

⁵³ Larry Pate and Lawrence Keyes, ‘Emerging Missions in a Global Church’, *IBMR*, 10.4 (1986), 156, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/1986-04/1986-04-156-pate.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Howard Brant, ‘Towards the Ideal Deployment of Missionaries’, *IJFM*, 8.2, (April 1991), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/08_2_PDFs/8_2Brant.pdf. See chapter 2, pages 92-4 for more on Brant’s role in SIM.

⁵⁵ Samuel Escobar, ‘The Elements of Style in Crafting New International Mission Leaders’, *EMQ*, (January 1992), <https://missionexus.org/the-elements-of-style-in-crafting-new-international-mission-leaders/>.

was ‘no’, but he called for organisations and methods to be changed in order that the resources of the church worldwide could be mobilised for mission.⁵⁶

David Lundy observed in 1999 that international mission agencies had not adequately dealt with the implications of the new missionary workforce. He differentiated between internationalisation and globalisation of mission organisations, defining internationalisation as ‘an organisation working in various countries around the world which has its missionary force similarly made up of workers from many different countries. Globalisation additionally incorporates structural and attitudinal components into an understanding of it.’ Attitudes which allow for local diversity within a universal purpose, and that avoid ethnocentrism, are vital.⁵⁷

It is notable that challenges concerning how mission from the non-western world should be financed, and how non-western missions could be financially self-supporting, were already being discussed in 1976.⁵⁸ Harvie Conn referred to a presentation by Eldon Howard in 1976 at a joint meeting of the IFMA – EFMA⁵⁹ as

⁵⁶ David Zac Niringiye, ‘Africans in Missions: The Possible Dream’, *EMQ*, (January 1995), <https://missionexus.org/africans-in-missions-the-possible-dream/>. Niringiye completed his PhD at the University of Edinburgh. He was involved in work amongst students in West Africa for 20 years, served as Regional Director for the Church Mission Society in Africa, and as Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Kampala. He retired in 2012 to focus on working for peace and social-political justice in Uganda.

⁵⁷ J David Lundy, ‘Moving Beyond Internationalizing the Mission Force’, *IJFM* 16.3, (1999), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/16_3_PDFs/06%20Lundy.pdf.

⁵⁸ See chapter 5 for SIM’s handling of this issue.

⁵⁹ The IFMA (Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association) was founded in 1917 ‘with the mission of strengthening Christian mission agencies by upholding standards of operation, assuring integrity and cooperative resourcing to spread the gospel’; it was made up of non-denominational

a ‘helpful study’ on financing missions in the future.⁶⁰ Escobar observed in 1992 that financial matters are ‘a sore spot in international relations and usually the source of serious problems’.⁶¹ His own criticism that westerners sometimes ‘have lots of money, lots of technology and no theology’ aptly demonstrates what a source of tension this could be.⁶² Training for missionaries from the Third World that is relevant and can be done in their own context was highlighted in articles in 1991 and 1993,⁶³ again emphasising the importance of attitudes of partnership and not paternalism. The above examples demonstrate criticism of western mission, as well as suggesting a lack of vision for what the non-western church is capable of. To what extent this persists into the twenty-first century, and whether attitudes of paternalism and superiority to mission from the non-western world remain, is an intriguing question. Such perceptions and attitudes in the context of the growing internationalisation of mission are an important consideration in the potential success of a multicultural team, a theme which gained increasing prominence in these mission journals during the late twentieth century, and to which I will now turn.

mission agencies. The EFMA (Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies) grew out of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and was primarily denominationally orientated; its first convention was held in 1946. In 2007 EFMA changed its name to ‘The Mission Exchange’ and IFMA became CrossGlobal Link. The two organisations merged in 2012 to become ‘Missio Nexus’. See <https://missionexus.org/who-we-are/>. SIM was a member of IFMA.

⁶⁰ Harvie Conn, ‘The Money Barrier between Sending and Receiving Churches’, *EMQ*, October 1978, <https://missionexus.org/the-money-barrier-between-sending-and-receiving-churches/>.

⁶¹ Escobar, ‘Elements of Style’.

⁶² Samuel Escobar and Harvie Conn. ‘Responses to the Article by Pate and Keyes,’ *IBMR*, 10.4 (1986), 162, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/1986-04/1986-04-ibmr.pdf>.

⁶³ Jonathan Lewis, ‘Contextualizing Needs Assessment for Third World Missionary Training’, *IJFM*, 8.4, (October 1991), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/08_4_PDFs/8_4Lewis.pdf and William D Taylor, ‘How Shall We Equip the Cross-Cultural Force’, *EMQ*, (July 1993), <https://missionexus.org/how-shall-we-equip-the-cross-cultural-force/>.

Multicultural Teams

For western mission agencies that welcomed non-western missionaries into their workforce, the challenges and advantages of becoming a successful multicultural team became significant. SIM General Director Ian Hay's 1986 article, mentioned above, demonstrated his commitment as a leader to see the organisation address these challenges; how SIM handled this question is a key focus in my research.⁶⁴ It was around this time that the issue was first discussed in the mission journals. Marjory Foyle's *EMQ* article on 'Missionary Relationships: Powderkeg or Powerhouse?' in October 1985 is the earliest reference in these journals. She noted the potential for misunderstanding as a result of cultural differences, different meanings of the same language, and the perils of 'missionary subcultures'.⁶⁵ The title of Sandra Mackin's 1992 article, 'Multinational Teams: Smooth as Silk or Rough as Rawhide?' highlighted the challenges for teams, which, she observed, more often focus on adjusting to the culture of their place of ministry, rather than their own cultural conflicts. She stressed the importance of mutual knowledge of teammates' cultures as key to expressing love, pursuing unity and building healthy, biblical relations.⁶⁶ SIM missionary Brian Butler addressed the tensions in an international mission in a 1993 article. For SIM, he wrote, 'on the whole, despite the tensions it brings, internationalisation has been an enriching and strengthening factor in mission life.' The initial 'International Orientation Course' that SIM developed in the 1980s floundered due to logistical issues and 'old-timers who resented taking more

⁶⁴ See chapter 6 for SIM's response.

⁶⁵ Marjory Foyle, 'Missionary Relationships: Powderkeg or Powerhouse?', *EMQ*, (October 1985), <https://missionexus.org/missionary-relationships-powderkeg-or-powerhouse/>. Foyle was a former India and Nepal missionary who developed a role in Britain as a psychiatric consultant to mission organisations, specialising in missionary stress.

⁶⁶ Sandra Mackin, 'Multinational Teams: Smooth as Silk or Rough as Rawhide?', *EMQ*, (April 1992), <https://missionexus.org/multinational-teams-smooth-as-silk-or-rough-as-rawhide/>.

orientation'. The extent to which the attitudes of older, traditional missionaries may be a hindrance in the internationalisation of a mission agency may be significant in some organisations. SIM went on to develop an 'International Outlook Course' which was still running as Butler wrote in 1993 and which, he explained, was successful 'as a learning tool to bring to the surface prejudices, hurts and misunderstandings that have lain hidden or festered for a long time'. He acknowledged that such seminars could be seen as an 'unaffordable luxury' but SIM had traced missionary attrition to international and relational problems, and considered the seminars worthwhile.⁶⁷

The topic of multicultural teams received increasing attention in the journals from 1999 onwards, with several articles in the first decade of the twenty-first century focusing on the issue. Questions of cultural differences, including Hofstede's scales of individualism versus collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and different approaches to conflict resolution were noted by Lundy in 1999.⁶⁸ In her article 'Multicultural by Choice', published in *EMQ* in 2001, Linda Chamberlain reviewed the experience of the mission agency WEC (World Evangelisation for Christ, now WEC International) which, following ten years of discussion, decided on the full internationalisation of its workforce in 1961. Her article illustrates that some evangelical missions were becoming aware of and trying to respond to the potential

⁶⁷ Brian Butler, 'Tensions in an International Mission', *EMQ*, (October 1993),

<https://missionexus.org/tensions-in-an-international-mission/>. See also chapter 6, page 243-5.

⁶⁸ Lundy, 'Moving Beyond Internationalising the Mission Force.' In *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, Geert Hofstede highlighted power distance – the way a culture relates to authority; individual or collective approaches to decision-making; ways of dealing with uncertainty; and attitudes to confrontation and conflict, as issues to which different cultures would have different solutions.

of an increasingly international workforce, but also demonstrates that such aspirations were not achieved quickly. Discussing the benefits, she emphasised the ‘dynamic visual aid, the powerful demonstration of the biblical principle of unity in diversity’. The process for WEC was delicate and took time, however, and by 1975 only 1% of WEC's active members were from non-western countries, increasing to 6.6% by 1985. It was a process which required principles, policies, structures and practices to be adapted to achieve and protect equality and mutuality within multicultural teams. Writing in 2003, Ed Stetzer emphasised the positive potential of multicultural teams when he suggested that they are less likely to be viewed by indigenous peoples as cultural imperialists, and noted the value of different cultures bringing different experiences and interpretations to a task.⁶⁹

Gary Corwin’s 2008 article ‘Doing Diversity Well’ called for balance and unity in the pursuit of diversity. ‘Diversity and the related concepts – multiculturalism and pluralism – have risen to the level of ideals in most modern social and organisational contexts... but the importance of unity is hard to overstate’. In a rare reference in these journals to the wider social debate on multiculturalism, Corwin (Associate Editor of *EMQ* and a missiological advisor to the leadership of SIM) rightly suggested that when a ‘good concept rises to the level of a politically correct mantra it tends to overwhelm all semblance of balance in its wake. Such is the challenge facing the unity/diversity spectrum in evangelical missions’. He argued that diversity should be pursued as a means rather than a goal. ‘Celebrate diversity but cherish

⁶⁹ Ed Stetzer, ‘Multi-cultural Teams in Church Planting’, *EMQ*, (October 2003), <https://missionexus.org/multi-cultural-teams-in-church-planting/>.

unity'.⁷⁰ Corwin's assessment and the increasing number of articles on the subject of multicultural teams demonstrate growing attention to this aspect of the internationalisation of mission, and the recognition of the challenges inherent in it. SIM's approach to those challenges, and its experience as an organisation seeking to embrace diversity, is a key focus of this thesis.

Different cultural contexts can often shape a difference in emphasis and understanding. An emphasis on a strategic, more business-like approach to mission methodology, seen particularly in the focus on unreached peoples developed in the 1980s and 1990s, was a source of concern for some from contexts which tended to be less comfortable with a focus on strategic goals and numbers; the role of the non-western mission movement in meeting these goals was discussed and debated in these mission journals.

Unreached People Groups/Finishing the Task

Mission strategists such as Winter and McGavran introduced the concepts of unreached people groups and people movements as part of the goal of 'finishing the task of evangelism'. This was a prominent discussion at the Lausanne Congress in 1974, where the idea of completing the task by the year 2000 was addressed.⁷¹ In 1986 McGavran explained his conviction that 'world mission must be understood as

⁷⁰ Gary Corwin, 'Doing Diversity Well', *EMQ*, (October 2008), <https://missionexus.org/doing-diversity-well/>.

⁷¹ Ralph Winter, 'Momentum is Building!: Many Voices Discuss Completing the Task by 2000 AD', *IJFM*, 3.1-4 (1986), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/03_1-4_PDFs/3_1Winter.pdf.

activities that multiply churches, win the lost and disciple unreached peoples – namely church growth’.⁷² One or two articles in the *IJFM* considered the relationship between these mission strategies and the growth of the non-western church. Bill Waldrop observed in 1994 that some Christians have begun to think that western resources are no longer needed in ‘completing world evangelisation’, noting the ‘more vigorous’ involvement of the church in Latin America, Asia and Africa in the ‘AD 2000 and Beyond’ movement than that of the Church in North America.⁷³ Referring to the ‘Adopt a People’ campaign in an article published in 1995, Pate noted the importance of such strategies being contextualised if they were to involve the mission movement in the non-western world.⁷⁴

Reflecting on the *EMQ* 20th Anniversary edition in which Wade Coggins and Edwin Frizen had identified the most significant trends of the last twenty years as the so-called ‘emerging missions’ from the non-western world, and unreached peoples, Pate and Keyes suggested in 1986 that ‘it is highly possible that the emerging missions will prove to be the greatest single force for evangelising unreached people’.⁷⁵ In *EMQ* January 2011, Gary Corwin offered an interesting reflection on the unreached peoples focus as an antidote to ‘western missions hovering over growing young missions’ in the majority world, writing that the ‘antidote which has guided and united mission for over half a century now was the recognition that hidden peoples,

⁷² Donald McGavran. ‘My Pilgrimage in Mission’, *IBMR*, 10.2 (1986), 53,

<http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/1986-02/1986-02-053-mcgavran.pdf>.

⁷³ Bill Waldrop, ‘Trends Affecting Mobilization of the North American Church’, *IJFM*, 11.3, (July-August 1994), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/11_3_PDFs/01%20Waldrop.pdf.

⁷⁴ Larry D. Pate, ‘Adopt-A-People and the Two-Thirds World Mission Movement’, *IJFM*, 12.1, (January-February 1995), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/12_1_PDFs/32_Pate.pdf.

⁷⁵ Pate and Keyes, ‘Emerging Missions’, 158.

unreached or least reached peoples, constitute the primary and unfinished task of mission. ...paying proper attention to that half of the world with least access to the gospel was at the heart of mission'. This became a 'corrective for missions that would carry them forward for decades. The churches of the Global South meanwhile would find their own footing and strengths, and make their own strategic and missional impact in the world; which they have done'.⁷⁶

Conclusion

When considered in the context of wider developments in Protestant world mission, illustrated through the topics addressed in the evangelical mission journals, *EMQ*, *IJFM* and *IBMR*, the history of SIM and the signs of growing diversity within the organisation, suggest that SIM was at least in step with the growing internationalisation of mission, and the attention and significance increasingly given to the importance of understanding culture. However, the focus of the mission journals is more on the new mission agencies emerging from the Global South than on the possibility or aim of internationalising existing mission organisations based in the North. This research will assess to what extent SIM was a pioneer in its pursuit of that increased diversity and to what extent other evangelical missions were moving in a similar direction. In a paper given in 2014, Keith Walker, SIM's Director for Strategic Development, wrote: 'Diversity needs to be pressed through, for the needs of the unreached will demand the formation of multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-

⁷⁶ Gary Corwin, 'Reflections on "Becoming Globally Friendly"', *EMQ*, (January 2011), <https://missionexus.org/reflections-on-becoming-globally-friendly/>.

skilled teams'.⁷⁷ This statement reflects both the themes and concerns that were debated in the pages of evangelical mission journals during the latter half of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century as conservative evangelical missions responded to the wider historical context, and the focus and ethos of SIM. Having set SIM in a wider context, the next chapter will trace the origins of diversity and process of internationalisation of the mission.

⁷⁷ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 336-337.

Chapter 2: Origins of Diversity –

The Internationalisation of SIM

This chapter will examine the origins of the current cultural and national diversity within SIM, considering the internationalisation of the organisation and the events and decisions that contributed to SIM becoming a mission ‘from everywhere to everywhere’. It will argue that the ultimate origins of diversity lie in the intentions of, and decisions taken by, its founders, the legacy of which continued to impact the mission and to influence subsequent significant events throughout its history. By examining key events that demonstrated both an early commitment to diversity and attitudes in which the internationalisation of the organisation could develop, I will show that the road to becoming the culturally diverse organisation that SIM is today began in its early history. The influence of the vision and intentions of its founders and early leaders, although in subsequent years at times less evident, can be traced through to the specific period of this research, and notably to key events in Nigeria in the late 1970s when SIM turned over responsibility for its work in the country to ECWA (Evangelical Church of West Africa),¹ the association of churches which SIM planted. This process appears to have been significant, being influential not only

¹ The name and meaning of the acronym are helpfully discussed by Yusufu Turaki in *Theory and Practice of Christian Missions in Africa: A Century of SIM/ECWA History and Legacy in Nigeria, 1893-1993*, volume 1, at SIM Archives, from which this summary is compiled. The name ‘The Evangelical Church of West Africa was agreed and approved at an All-SIM Church Conference at Kagoro, 7-10th January, 1954. When the constitution was drawn up, an amendment was made to the name to ‘The Association of Evangelical Churches of West Africa’, reflecting that each church was an Evangelical Church of West Africa, which together formed the Association to be governed by the constitution. In 1989, the words association and churches were dropped from the name and the Emergency General Church Council of October 1989 adopted a new name for the church: ‘The Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA)’ reflecting that ECWA had remained as a single Church/denomination rather than an association of churches as originally intended by SIM. The meaning of the acronym was changed to ‘Evangelical Church Winning All’ in 2010 to reflect a wider vision.

in Nigeria, but also in SIM more widely. This chapter will also consider the significance of the role of particular individuals who held key leadership positions in SIM, as their own experience, and resulting vision and values, strongly influenced the direction of the mission, and its progress towards increasing diversity.

The Vision and Values of SIM's Founders

The origins of diversity in SIM can be traced back to its founders: Gowans, Kent and Bingham. These three young men represent two future 'core values' of the mission, values which are particularly significant to the subject of this research: international and interdenominational. Gowans and Bingham were Canadian citizens, with British backgrounds; Gowans was born in Scotland, Bingham was born in England and retained strong links with his country of birth;² Kent was American. Gary Corwin, SIM Missiologist, and Jim Plueddemann, former International Director of SIM, both highlighted the significance of founders of different nationalities and the beginnings of the organisation in Canada rather than in the United States, observing that many missions founded around the same period in the US were content to remain American mission agencies with branches in other countries, rather than seeking to become truly international.³ SIM's founding and strong roots in Canada, where Christianity was more closely linked to a British rather than American model, is important to note. In the Foreword to J. H. Hunter's biography of Bingham, Donald Fleming observed 'a special Canadian quality and sponsorship to Bingham's work',

² Ian S. Rennie, 'Fundamentalism and the Varieties of North Atlantic Evangelicalism' in Mark A. Noll, David Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*. Religion in America Series. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 343-344.

³ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017 and Gary Corwin, interview, 7 February 2017.

he arrived in Canada (from England) aged sixteen, and although he spent some years in the US and Africa, chose Canada as his home.⁴ Toronto was the location for the headquarters of SIM, where the organisation had strong links with the China Inland Mission (CIM); Bingham served on the CIM board, and Henry W Frost of CIM reciprocated on the SIM Board.⁵ These men worked closely, founding the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) with others in 1917.⁶

The three founders of SIM also represented different denominations⁷ which, combined with financial donations Bingham received from people of different denominations towards SIM's work, and the inability of Bingham, Kent and Gowans to find a denomination to back them in their vision and mission to reach sub-Saharan Africa with the gospel,⁸ contributed to Bingham's decision to set up an interdenominational mission. Bingham described his response to a gift he received towards SIM's work: 'I could not get over the fact that here was a Presbyterian lady giving me everything she possessed in this world to enable me to start a Baptist work in the Sudan and that though I might take her last dollar, if she herself applied she could not be accepted if it were to be a denominational mission'. Bingham continued, 'the conviction that minor differences of denominations afforded no basis for separation in our work grew so strong that I settled it definitely that I would operate

⁴ J. H. Hunter, *A Flame of Fire: The Life and Work of Dr Rowland V. Bingham*. (London: Sudan Interior Mission, 1961), 22.

⁵ Alwyn J. Austin, 'Blessed Adversity: Henry W Frost and the China Inland Mission' in Carpenter and Shenk, (eds.), *Earthen Vessels*, 57.

⁶ Austin in *Earthen Vessels*, 68.

⁷ See brief history of SIM, chapter 1, page 36.

⁸ Fuller, *Mission-church Dynamics*, 194.

upon a wider foundation'.⁹ In a series on SIM's history in its mission periodical *SIM NOW*, Bingham is quoted: 'He is blind who does not recognise that in other denominations are some of the best saints that God and grace have made.'¹⁰ In the book he wrote to mark SIM's jubilee in 1943, Bingham devoted a whole chapter to 'how SIM became interdenominational'; his reference to the 'whole church as one in Christ', the blessing of God when Christians are united in service, and the cost and hindrance of denominationalism at home and on the mission field demonstrate the strength of his conviction.¹¹ Bingham's strong interdenominational links were also demonstrated in his close involvement with the Keswick Convention; he was responsible for 'the vision, the plan, and the steady extension of the Canadian Keswick' which he founded in Ontario in 1924.¹² The Keswick motto 'All One in Christ Jesus' was of great significance to Bingham, and as a result, to the mission he founded. Ian Hay, SIM's fifth General Director, appointed in 1975, observed the significance of Bingham's decision to found an interdenominational mission, both in the difference it made to the nature of SIM's supporting constituency, and in the relationships it created with the churches founded by the mission.¹³

SIM's very early history also illustrates an openness to recruit people of African descent to its ranks: Bingham told SIM's Council in Canada in 1904 of a 'coloured couple', Mr and Mrs J. Ulysis Turner, who had applied to become members of the

⁹ Rowland V. Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years and a Jubilee: The Story of the Sudan Interior Mission*. (Toronto: Evangelical Publishers, 1943), 103-104.

¹⁰ 'All about SIM: A Series Highlights of How we Began', *SIM NOW*, May-June 1986, 13.

¹¹ Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years*, 106-107.

¹² G. Ritchie Rice, Foreword to Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years*, 9, and Joel A. Carpenter, 'Propagating the Faith Once Delivered' in Carpenter and Shenk, (eds.), *Earthen Vessels*, 119.

¹³ Ian M Hay, 'Partnering: A Case Study in Mission-to-Mission Relationship', A Paper presented to the Working Consultation on Partnership, Wheaton Illinois, May 1991, endnote 6, 15.

mission. This example, and the little known story of Joseph Baker, born in Jamaica who joined SUM months before its brief merger with SIM,¹⁴ indicate the keenness of Bingham to recruit African Americans. In the intervening years, this pursuit and commitment to diversity was not always evident; however, as Geysbeek rightly observed, ‘It is critical to SIM’s understanding of its own history and identity to know that its first leaders were willing to entrust Africans with considerable responsibility and include persons of African descent into its ranks.’¹⁵ In a recent paper, Geysbeek examined the role Tom Coffee, a Kru migrant from Liberia, played in SIM’s origins as he joined Gowans and Kent on their journey into Northern Nigeria in 1894. Gowans came to ‘appreciate, listen to and depend on’ Coffee; a letter he wrote to Bingham following Gowan’s death, and his act of preserving Gowan’s diary after his death, add ‘an African dimension’ to SIM’s early history.¹⁶ Through these very early examples, Geysbeek suggests, ‘history gives hope, inspiration and heroes’ for the organisation now seeking to be ‘strengthened through diversity’.¹⁷

The Process of Internationalisation in SIM

It is important that the attitudes and intentions of SIM’s founders are not forgotten in the consideration of the more rapid and dramatic internationalisation of the organisation which took place particularly from the 1970s onwards. That

¹⁴ The merger took place in August 1906, but lasted only a few months, see Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 44.

¹⁵ Tim Geysbeek, ‘Mr and Mrs J Ulysis Turner and the Origins of Racial Diversity in SIM’ in *Intercom* No. 210, November 2012-January 2013, 7.

¹⁶ Tim Geysbeek, ‘From Sasstown to Zaria: Tom Coffee and the Kru origins of the Soudan Interior Mission, 1893-1895’, *Studies in World Christianity* 24:1, 2018, 46-65.

¹⁷ Geysbeek, ‘Mr and Mrs J Ulysis Turner’.

internationalisation can be seen as a return to the original vision of SIM's founders, rather than as part of a continuous trend. The rapid expansion of the mission from less than forty missionaries in 1917 to 426 in 1943 owed much to the significant growth in the number of American missionaries.¹⁸ SIM did not begin recording the national offices through which missionaries were sent until the time of the First World War,¹⁹ records of missionary sailings in the period 1901-1910 indicate that at least fifteen of thirty-one missionaries are thought to have been Canadian; the nationalities of the remainder are not certain. The 1943 statistics show 230 missionaries from the US; this proportion did not drop to below 50% of the mission membership until 2014,²⁰ and was one of the challenges to be faced in the pursuit of the vision for a truly international mission. The internationalisation of SIM was preceded by a period during which attitudes of white superiority and racism were present. Corwin noted that the mission was forced by Africans to confront discrimination in the late 1940s, and began to change some of its policies in the 1950s. In 1952 SIM in North America had passed a resolution that 'coloured people should not be considered as candidates', citing a principle of the mission that churches established by SIM should be self-supporting and self-governing. It was felt that if the mission included 'coloured people from America, local African workers would naturally ask to also be supported with Mission funds'. The exclusion of coloured people from America, it was explained, was 'not with any thought of racial

¹⁸ Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years*, 62, and Personnel Statistics, 1933-1980, SIM Archives, MM3, Box 162.

¹⁹ Tim Geysbeek, SIM Historian, email correspondence, 24 January 2016.

²⁰ 2014 statistics taken from 'SIM in Numbers', supplied by the SIM International Personnel Department, December 2015.

prejudice, but to safeguard the principle of self-support of the native church in Africa'.²¹

Correspondence amongst members of the SIM General Council between October 1954 and February 1955 reveals discussion and differing opinions regarding the acceptance of 'Oriental' or 'Asiatic' candidates wishing to join the mission, apparently prompted by an application to join SIM received from an Arab couple before October 1954.²² R. B. Oliver expressed concern over 'Asiatic traits of character and possible incompatibility [which may] only show themselves on the field', that accepting one couple may open the doors to many more such applicants, and that accepting this couple 'would be taking too great a risk'.²³ Oliver's concerns reflected something of the prevailing political context in the US; from the early 1920s until the Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, Asiatics were effectively barred from immigration to the US.²⁴ The subject was recognised as a sensitive issue in the Council's correspondence; J. O. Percy described the consideration of nationals other than Americans or Europeans for service in Africa as a 'very ticklish point' requiring the exercise of 'extreme care'. He acknowledged that other mission societies, including the South Africa General Mission and the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, were accepting missionaries of

²¹ Minutes of the Conference of the SIM Home Secretarial Staff reaffirming a statement from Mr Beacham in 1949, January 14, 15, 16 & 17, 1952. Held in box MC-1 149 F2b, Toronto Home Sec., SIM Archives.

²² Letter from M. A. Darroch to Rev. G. W. Playfair, General Director, and R. Davis, G. Cain, R. B. Oliver, and J. O. Percy, 9 October 1954. 'Correspondence – International Council Meetings. Sept 1949-July 1957, MC-1', SIM Archives.

²³ R. B. Oliver to Darroch, Davis, Cain and Percy, 15 October 1954 in box 'Correspondence – International Council Meetings. Sept 1949-July 1957, MC-1', SIM Archives.

²⁴ Brian Stanley, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History* (Princeton History of Christianity. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 339.

different nationalities who had trained in the US, and, in what seems a rather reluctant tone, concluded that if these ‘folk meet our educational and spiritual qualifications, then we might have to give consideration to them, or run the grave risk of coming under severe criticism for racial or color discrimination’.²⁵ In his response to the discussion, Guy Playfair, a Canadian who was General Director of SIM at that time, was in favour of accepting the Arab couple whose application prompted this string of correspondence; noting that the couple had been trained in America, and in addition would be required to ‘take a special Bible course’; he stated that if they are ‘otherwise acceptable and taught of the Spirit, I believe we would be wrong in rejecting them’. He outlined two possible placements, and ‘strongly recommended’ their acceptance as a test case.²⁶ G. Ritchie Rice’s favourable response, on the understanding that ‘there is the usual Bible training and indications of the Lord’s call’, is notable for two reasons: Rice was British, and his attitude points to different levels of concern over the race question in Britain and America at the time. He also drew attention to the fact that SIM ‘is international’, and maintained that opening the door to ‘coloured folk’ should not be feared if they are called by the Lord.²⁷

There is a sense in this correspondence in which it was perhaps more difficult for some white Americans to accept the increasing internationalisation of the mission,

²⁵ Letter from J. O. Percy to G. W. Playfair, M. A. Darroch, R. J. Davis, G. H. Cain, R. B. Oliver, 26 October 1954. Correspondence – International Council Meetings, Sept 1949-July 1957, MC-1’, SIM Archives.

²⁶ Letter from G. W. Playfair to Members of the International Council, 8 November 1954, SIM Archives.

²⁷ Letter from G. Ritchie Rice to G. W. Playfair and members of the International Council, 26 November 1954, SIM Archives.

and welcome other nationalities and cultures into their midst, than for some British missionaries who, used to working alongside American colleagues, strongly considered the organisation to be an international rather than a North American one. Perceptions of developments in the mission's more recent history suggest a similar sentiment. As a staff member of the UK office in 2003 when Malcolm McGregor, UK Director at that time, was appointed as the first non-North American International Director, his nationality did not seem hugely significant to me or my British colleagues in the UK sending office. However, interviews with International Board Members at that time have highlighted that for the North American part of the mission, this was a huge and significant step.²⁸ This highlights the different dynamics and layers of culture within SIM, not simply western and non-western cultures, but also American and non-American differences are evident.

The Arab couple mentioned in this correspondence from the 1950s did not join the mission, but their application and the debate surrounding it were significant in the eventual acceptance of non-white missionaries. In 1957, the West Africa Field Council minutes recorded a discussion on 'Negro Missionaries': 'The Field Council sympathetically reviewed the unwritten regulation [of the West Africa Council] prohibiting the acceptance of Negroes into the Mission and favours its reconsideration by the General Council'. The Minutes of the SIM General Council meeting in July 1957 recorded that the subject was raised again as a result of a request that Mr. Howard O. Jones, an African American, join the staff at ELWA in Liberia. The motion that 'special consideration be given to special types of personnel

²⁸ David Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016, and Mary Evans, interview, 25 October 2016.

not for bush station work, but for centres and special jobs such as teaching, and doctors' was recorded, with particular note that these personnel 'do not marry outside of their own race', and that in parts of the US this was 'still a very stormy subject'.²⁹ It was agreed that the matter be reconsidered in September and the council pray about the issue until then.³⁰ The consideration of 'admitting American Negroes' as missionaries was recorded as 'most important... debated at great length' at the General Council meeting of October 1957. The minutes state that 'while in principle we are all one in Christ Jesus, in practice many problems might arise if this door were opened for missionary candidates'. It was finally proposed by Playfair and carried unanimously that 'as an experiment, on a one-term basis of four or five years according to the area selected, up to six non-white married couples qualified for specialized work, and otherwise suitable according to all existing safeguards for candidates, shall be eligible for admission to the mission'. However, by 1962 no 'non-Caucasian' candidates had as yet come forward.³¹

SIM's attitudes towards this issue perhaps reflected the prevailing divisions in society over questions of race, particularly in the United States, where racial segregation remained in force in some states until the late 1960s. Correspondence from the SIM London Council to their American colleagues observed that 'in connection with candidates and the racial question ... it was appreciated that the

²⁹ Interracial marriage was still illegal in some southern US states at this time. See Bárbara C. Cruz and Michael J. Berson, 'The American Melting Pot? Miscegenation Laws in the United States', *OAH Magazine of History* 15, no.4 (2001): 81.

³⁰ Minutes of Meeting of Sudan Interior Mission General Council, 17 July 1957. Held in MC-1 1496 – F5 at SIM Archives.

³¹ West Africa Field Council Minutes, May 21-28, 1957, and General Council Meeting Minutes, October, 9-11, 1957, quoted in 'Minutes with regard to the acceptance of non-white missionaries', compiled by Bob Arnold, SIM Archives, November 2004.

problem is possibly more acute in America'.³² In *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, Emerson and Smith observed that the focus of American evangelical Christians on the task of evangelism and discipleship resulted in a tendency to avoid confronting issues that would hinder those tasks, a reluctance to 'rock the boat', instead living within the 'confines of the larger culture'.³³ It is perhaps partly for this reason that SIM's membership policies appear to have reflected prevailing attitudes of the time in the USA, and changed slowly. Fiedler notes that several faith missions who had sent or considered sending black missionaries in the first quarter of the twentieth century had stopped doing so by the 1930s,³⁴ an ideological shift which Geysbeek suggested SIM may have followed.³⁵ In the 1940s, on the surface, race relations were 'not an issue' among white evangelicals, although notably in the American South, a strong awareness of the issue was not hard to find.³⁶ The voice of black Christians³⁷ became more vocal and organised in the next decade, particularly in the American South, in contrast to the quietness of white Christians in the 1950s and 1960s, with white evangelicals rarely taking part in Civil Rights marches. Significantly, the premillennial view that was dominant amongst American evangelicals contributed to a perception of social

³² Excerpts of letter from E. S. Horn to Dr. Helser, 24th February 1958 in Arnold, 2.

³³ Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

³⁴ Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 138-141.

³⁵ Tim Geysbeek, email, 18 November 2017.

³⁶ Research conducted by Swedish social scientist, Gunnar Myrdal, in Emerson and Smith, 44.

³⁷ Although the majority were evangelical, black Christians tended not to use that label due to the association it held for them with white racial superiority. Black preacher, Gardner Calvin Taylor's comments on being an evangelical in the European sense (a commitment to the gospel in its outreach toward human beings and the work of Jesus Christ), but not the 'rigid doctrinaire position' found in many American evangelicals, offer helpful insight in this context. Quoted in 'The Pulpit King' by Edward Gilbreath, *Christianity Today*, 11 December 1995, 28.

reform as futile, and an unwillingness among white evangelicals to be involved in activism against segregation.³⁸

Events in SIM were taking place in the context of the gradual awakening of evangelicals in North America to racial, as well as social justice issues. In the second half of the twentieth century, accusations that moves towards an evangelicalism concerned with social issues were ‘opening the door to liberal theology’ had to be faced, but by the early 1970s, a number of evangelical leaders were meeting to address social concerns. Significant change came when the International Congress on World Evangelisation took place in Lausanne in 1974, an event at which the multicultural, global nature of evangelicalism, with a ‘rapidly growing sector that was neither white nor affluent’ became apparent.³⁹ In SIM, when the General Council met in May 1962, it unanimously approved the removal of the statement agreed in 1957 regarding the acceptance as ‘an experiment of up to six non-white married couples for admission’.⁴⁰ The *Interim Edition 1966 Principles and Practice and Abridged Handbook of the Sudan Interior Mission* stated that ‘candidates are considered without regard to race or nationality’. It has not been possible to find a record of the General Council resolution which resulted in the inclusion of this statement as a membership policy in 1966; earlier manuals and the 1958 *Principles*

³⁸ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 45-47

³⁹ Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott. History of Evangelicalism*, v.5. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 151-155.

⁴⁰ General Council Meeting Minutes, May 1-3, 1962, quoted in ‘Minutes with regard to the acceptance of non-white missionaries’, compiled by Arnold, SIM Archives, November 2004.

and Practice do not mention membership of the mission,⁴¹ however, this policy remained in SIM Manuals from that point forwards.

Fifty years later, the Director of SIM USA, Steve Strauss, publicly acknowledged, apologised and requested forgiveness for the historic practice of SIM USA of excluding ‘African American brothers and sisters from a potential avenue of ministry’, expressing his conviction as he did so that the apology was another step in the process of SIM living out the core value ‘strengthened through diversity’.⁴² The change in language terminology used in these statements highlights a progression and indicates a difference in attitude: the terms ‘coloured people’ and ‘Negro missionaries’ of the documents from the early 1950s had changed, and ‘non-Caucasian candidates’ was used in 1962. The apology made by Strauss in 2008 was to ‘African American brothers and sisters’.

A decade after the issue of African Americans joining the mission first became a subject of debate in West Africa and in SIM sending councils, Asian candidates were beginning to approach SIM. Initial research inquiries appeared to indicate that the growth of diversity in the mission dated back only to 1975 when, as it was widely understood, the first Asian applied to join the mission. This was Dr Andrew Ng who was born in Malaysia and applied to join through the SIM office in Australia. He and his wife Belinda went to serve as medical missionaries in Niger in 1977. Writing

⁴¹ Tim Geysbeek explained that archival records for this period are ‘sketchy’ so the record of this decision may have been lost. Email correspondence, 22 December 2017.

⁴² Steve Strauss, ‘Together As One’, *SIM US News*, March-April 2008, 1. See also Tim Geysbeek, ‘Issues of Race and Diversity’ in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 226-7.

about his own story in 2005 in an article published on the SIM website at the time, Ng described the letter he wrote to SIM Australia as an 18 year-old, eleven years before his eventual departure for West Africa as a missionary. ‘Would SIM accept a missionary from Asia?’ he had asked. This was his first contact with SIM, an organisation which he noted at that time consisted entirely of missionaries from European-background countries. The Australia Director visited Ng in person to respond: ‘Yes, SIM would gladly welcome an Asian missionary’. When Ng told a friend about his inquiry, his friend asked, ‘Do you know what you’re doing? You’ve just handed SIM a “live grenade”’.⁴³

However, further research revealed that the first Asian missionary in SIM was in fact Michiko Aoba, a Japanese woman, who went to Nigeria in 1967. An article in the SIM periodical, *Africa Now* May-June 1968, entitled ‘Ambassador from Asia’ introduced Michiko Aoba, ‘a poised, bright-eyed young woman’ who had joined SwissAir as a ground hostess when they began flying into Tokyo airport in the 1950s. According to the article, she was gracious and alert, and spoke English and French as well as her native Japanese. She had heard the Gospel from American missionaries while at secondary school and became a Christian at eighteen. In 1957, her interest in European languages resulted in missionary friends making arrangements for her to study at the European Bible Institute near Paris. After three years, she went on to further studies at the universities of Tübingen and Zurich. During this time in Switzerland she heard reports from missionaries at church which

⁴³ From an article previously published on the SIM International website, www.sim.org. Ng’s story will be discussed further in chapter 7.

strengthened her own desire to serve as a missionary, and she described feeling a call to work in Africa during a prayer meeting she attended in 1966. The Bible House in Zurich put her in touch with the SIM Secretary for Europe in Lausanne. She was accepted by SIM in May 1967 and in October arrived in Nigeria where she began teaching at the SIM Girls Secondary School in Kwoi. Aoba reflected that the ‘girls never mention my racial or national background. They seem quite indifferent about it’. She explained that her most ‘noticeable adjustments’ were from a continental European pattern of life to the more predominantly American one of her fellow missionaries.⁴⁴ Aoba spent a year in Nigeria before moving to Maradi Leprosarium in Niger where she taught at the school for children with leprosy. The monthly and quarterly reports held in the SIM Archives describe how well she fitted in with the team there, listing many instances of the missionaries enjoying meals together in each other’s homes. The report for the first quarter of 1970 notes: ‘There is real harmony amongst the staff, both national and missionary on this station.’ Aoba became unwell later that year and returned home for medical reasons at the end of 1970. The West African Regional Council reported in November 1970 that it was understood that she would resign, since she herself felt she could not work in Africa.⁴⁵

The *Africa Now* article from 1968 demonstrates an early awareness in SIM of what it described as ‘the relatively new development, the “internationalization” of traditionally western-oriented mission societies’, noting that ‘mission boards are

⁴⁴ Kerry Lovering, ‘Ambassador from Asia’, *Africa NOW*, May-June 1968, 10.

⁴⁵ SIM quarterly reports of Maradi Leprosarium, 1st quarter of 1970, held in Box 25, Niger Collection, ‘Danja/Maradi Station Reports’, SIM Archives.

welcoming more and more workers... from an ever-widening spectrum of nationalities and races'.⁴⁶ The author of the article was perhaps aware of recent developments in OMF (formerly China Inland Mission), which, following increasing pressure from some Asian churches in the early 1960s to take Asians for cross-cultural missionary service on the same basis as its existing members, had agreed in 1964 to open membership to Asians. The decision was taken by the Overseas and Central Councils in 1964, soon after which Home Councils were set up in a number of Asian countries to mobilise their churches for cross-cultural mission.⁴⁷ The fact that Michiko Aoba was in Switzerland no doubt facilitated her application and acceptance to join SIM. It may not have been possible for her to apply to a similar mission agency if she were still in Japan. SIM may have had more difficulty handling an enquiry from a young Japanese woman in 1967, had she not already been in Europe. However, what is clear is that the reports of her service in Nigeria and Niger illustrate multicultural mission teams in SIM working effectively together, although Aoba's comments about the gap between the European and American patterns of life draw attention to the potential conflict amongst missionary teams. They also highlight the fact that building relationships with the people amongst whom the missionary is serving may sometimes have been less demanding than the task of building relationships with missionary colleagues from other cultures; this would perhaps have been felt particularly strongly during this period when missionaries

⁴⁶ *Africa NOW*, May-June 1968, 10.

⁴⁷ Details of these developments in OMF were provided by Rose Dowsett, email correspondence, 17 October 2017.

would have socialised primarily amongst themselves, and lived at a distance from indigenous church leaders.⁴⁸

Andrew Ng's story is much more prominent in the history and development of SIM, perhaps due to the fact that his SIM career was to be much longer than Aoba's, and that his determination to see the growth and development of mission sending in Asia ultimately led to him becoming the first Director of the East Asia sending office in 1990. In 2006 Ng was appointed the Deputy International Director for the Asia-Pacific region. These prominent leadership positions, his impact within SIM, and his own determined character have perhaps inevitably resulted in his story being more widely known.⁴⁹

One of the most significant, and perhaps culturally challenging, developments in the growing diversity within the mission was the increasing numbers of Asian missionaries joining SIM during the late 1980s and the development of SIM throughout East Asia, led by Ng from 1990. The SIM East Asia Council became autonomous from SIM Australia in 1992.⁵⁰ In 1997, a separate SIM council was established in Korea; the numbers of Korean missionaries serving with SIM increased rapidly from 40 in 1998 to 73 in 2003.⁵¹ While the statistics show a decline in mission members from New Zealand, Southern Europe, and the United Kingdom

⁴⁸ The challenges and benefits of multicultural teams will be discussed in chapter 6.

⁴⁹ Andrew Ng's story will be examined in chapter 7.

⁵⁰ There were 70 active members and associates from East Asia by 1997, this figure included some Korean missionaries sent through the East Asia office.

⁵¹ SIM International Statistics, Personnel Statistical Report, SIM International Council, 2003, SIM Archives.

during this period, the Asian influence in the mission was growing significantly, an important factor in the increasing diversity of SIM. South Korea was not an original mission sending nation in SIM, but as it sent high quality missionaries from when the Korea office was established, SIM realised it had a lot to learn from them.⁵² The implications and challenges of welcoming missionaries from increasingly diverse cultures and backgrounds into the mission will be examined in chapter 6.⁵³

The Story and Wider Influence of Events in Nigeria

Around the time that Ng was applying to join SIM in Asia, a historic event took place in Nigeria as SIM turned over responsibility for all its work in the country to ECWA on 19 November, 1976. At the turnover ceremony, Ian Hay, General Director of SIM at that time, explained that from the beginning of its presence in Nigeria, which is where the work of the mission began, SIM's vision was 'the establishment of an indigenous church'. The individual local congregations that had been planted by SIM since 1909⁵⁴ were brought together when ECWA was established in 1954; ECWA was recognised by the Nigerian government in 1956. By the 1976 turnover, the church had grown to over 1,300 churches.⁵⁵ Harold Fuller, SIM's Area Director in Nigeria, spoke with thanksgiving of the 1976 turnover as 'the continuation of a process' which began with the establishment of ECWA. He also noted SIM's continued interest in the work in Nigeria following the turnover of responsibility.⁵⁶

The role of the SIM Director in Nigeria became that of a consultant to the ECWA

⁵² David Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

⁵³ See chapter 6 on multicultural teams.

⁵⁴ The church is dated from the first baptism which took place at Ogga in October 1909.

⁵⁵ Ian M. Hay, 'The Vision of SIM', Appendix Q, in Fuller, *Mission-Church Dynamics*, 288-289.

⁵⁶ W. Harold Fuller, 'Transfer of Responsibility', Appendix R, in Fuller, 290.

executive, under the title International Liaison Officer; Fuller wrote that ECWA saw him as a vital link with the SIM international organisation, conferring about recruitment and project funds as mutually agreed.⁵⁷ In accepting the responsibility for SIM's work and personnel in Nigeria, ECWA President Rev. David Olusiyi declared:

We are grateful to God that the baby born by SIM through the gospel of Jesus Christ has today become matured. This will be a great joy to our parent, SIM, that her baby has grown to the state of manhood to take up her full responsibilities. We are sure that the mission will not stand aloof as we struggle to carry the old and newly added responsibilities. But both of us will, with the spirit of Christ, continue to labor together as one body.⁵⁸

Olusiyi's statement reflects the complex relationship between church and mission which would continue to be worked out between ECWA and SIM in the coming years; the topic of church-mission relationships will be discussed further in chapter 4. In its significance for the origins of diversity in SIM, the turnover underlines the mission's commitment to empower the national church, and to work alongside the Nigerians in partnership.

The background to the turnover was outlined in a report given to the SIM General Council in December 1976. A seminar on church-mission relationships had been initiated in March 1974, attended by equal numbers of Nigerians and expatriates, including Dr Byang Kato, at the time General Secretary-elect of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM), and Ian Hay, then Deputy General

⁵⁷ Fuller, *Mission-Church Dynamics*, 216.

⁵⁸ Rev. David M Olusiyi, ECWA President, 'Acceptance of Responsibility', Appendix S, in Fuller, *Mission-Church Dynamics*, 291.

Director of SIM. Kato was born in 1936 in the Nigerian town of Kwoi, Kaduna State to parents of Jaba traditional religion. He became a Christian aged twelve at an SIM primary school. After completing studies at Igbaja Bible College, he was awarded a Bachelor of Divinity degree at London Bible College in 1966. He became General Secretary of ECWA in 1967. Following the completion of postgraduate studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, he was appointed General Secretary of AEAM in 1973, the second to hold the position, and the first African. One of his primary concerns was the contextualisation of the Gospel for Africans, and in his writing, mostly published in Africa, to address African issues.⁵⁹ Ferdinando noted Kato's concern 'for the church and the fulfilment of its calling in the world' rather than any academic praise or appreciation, a concern which can be traced in his advice to SIM and ECWA. The 1976 report stated the 'partnership relationship of SIM and ECWA was working satisfactorily although some tensions were noted'. In February of the following year, Dr Kato explained to SIM and ECWA leaders that trends he noticed in Africa made it 'advisable for church and mission to have much closer ties, with the church ultimately taking full responsibility'. As this view was discussed by the General Council, guidelines circulated to the missionaries regarding the review of organisational structures in Nigeria emphasised the need to keep ahead of changes taking place in Nigeria, and Africa more widely, and the importance of the national church taking responsibility and leadership in this context. Kato stressed the need for the church to 'be more visible in leadership and the mission less visible' and that by planning ahead the mission and church could work out the relationship which would be best for the work, rather than circumstances dictating a solution which might not

⁵⁹ Keith Ferdinando, 'The Legacy of Byang Kato', 169.

work well for church and mission.⁶⁰ As Ferdinando observed, Kato saw the importance of a missionary vision in the African church for its future growth,⁶¹ a view reflected in his progressive attitude towards the devolution of authority from mission to church. Kato served as General Secretary of ECWA throughout the civil war in Nigeria, visiting the most affected states in the North during and after the war.⁶² Very conscious of the political situation in the country, and perhaps in Africa more widely as the moratorium campaign of the early 1970s⁶³ grew, Kato perhaps saw that white control of Christian life in Africa was coming to an end. Kato's biographer, De La Haye, noted the 'lively correspondence' he kept up with SIM leaders during the period of the handover of control from SIM to ECWA, although no longer as ECWA General Secretary. She observed that 'his wise counsel at this crucial period played a large part in the smoothness of the transfer of responsibility'.⁶⁴

There was an emphasis from SIM's leadership that the turnover had taken place with 'no traumatic, hostile demands being made by the church' as well as a recognition that for some of the missionaries in Nigeria, and some of the SIM constituency, the changes may be difficult to understand.⁶⁵ Surveys conducted in 1976 regarding attitudes of SIM missionaries concerning the turnover revealed a very small

⁶⁰ 'Report to General Council Concerning Turnover of SIM Work in Nigeria to ECWA', December 20, 1976. General Council Box 1975-1980 held at SIM Archives.

⁶¹ Ferdinando, 'Legacy of Byang Kato', 172.

⁶² Sophie De La Haye, *Byang Kato: Ambassador for Christ* (Harpenden, Great Britain: Nuprint Services for Africa Christian Press 1986), 53-56.

⁶³ See chapter 1, pages 35-6 and Robert Reese, 'John Gatu and the Moratorium on Missionaries.' *Missiology: An International Review* 42, no. 3 (2014): 245-56.

⁶⁴ De La Haye, *Byang Kato*, 78.

⁶⁵ Ian Hay in a memo to SIM Directors commenting on a report by Fuller, January 1977, General Council Box 1975-1980, SIM Archives.

percentage (around 4%) violently opposed to the turnover, citing concerns over what SIM would lose, and also distrust of ECWA. Around 25 or 30% were very much in favour of the turnover, and the remainder expressed a feeling that it was ‘about time for this to take place’, and willing for it to go ahead.⁶⁶ It seems likely that this vocal minority of 4% raised concerns of how the turnover would be received in SIM sending countries; certainly Hay requested prayer for those ‘educating the SIM constituency’ on the changes taking place in a letter to SIM Directors in January 1977.⁶⁷ Highlighted in the leadership discussions and guidelines which were written during the turnover process was the importance of the right attitudes in relationships. General Council guidelines urged SIM missionaries ‘to spend time prayerfully examining their attitudes to others, asking God to help them overcome any lack of love, feelings of superiority, resentfulness or general suspicion’. That leaders in ECWA also recognised the need for attitudes to be right was acknowledged gratefully, and prayer, discussion and reflection was urged to promote understanding between the church and mission, and ‘refute bi-cultural tensions’.⁶⁸

These reports indicate understanding amongst the mission leadership that the turnover of responsibility to ECWA was a significant change which could be a source of tension between the expatriates and Nigerians, at the same time showing their commitment to move forward positively through a period of transition into a new relationship with as little tension as was possible. An Area Conference on

⁶⁶ Details of the survey given by Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁶⁷ Hay memo to SIM Directors, January 1977.

⁶⁸ Report to General Council 1976, Appendix E, from GN Area Council Guidelines for the development of Church-Mission relations, Jos, November 1975, General Council Box 1975-1980, SIM Archives.

‘Working Bi-culturally’ was planned for 1977.⁶⁹ The General Church Council of ECWA accepted SIM’s steps with gratitude for ‘bestowing such a great honour on and expressing confidence in ECWA’ by handing over the responsibility for the work.⁷⁰ The SIM leadership’s decisions to take this action demonstrate not only a willingness to work in partnership with the Nigerian church, but an acceptance of and desire for diversity in ministry as they embraced a new relationship with ECWA. Nigeria had gained independence as a nation in 1960. Writing on the transfer of responsibility in the mission periodical, *Africa Now*, Fuller also acknowledged that the timing of the turnover was significant as the Nigerian government had grown more sensitive about foreign control, stressing the importance of ECWA’s ability to show its genuine responsibility for the work, and knowledge of, and responsibility for, activities of SIM personnel. As an indigenous body, ECWA ‘would be able to resist pressures’ that SIM could not. The legal transfer to ECWA helped to refute any accusation that ‘Christianity is a foreign import’, safeguarded property against potential confiscation, and was expected to help in the application of visas for SIM missionaries; ECWA would make the application on behalf of personnel they wanted to support their own development, rather than a foreign organisation seen to be seeking to bring in more personnel. In the same article, Fuller also highlighted the uniqueness of the relationship between SIM and ECWA, explaining that he had been asked which mission textbook SIM were following in setting up the relationship. ‘I had to reply that we seem to be writing our own book.... As I have reviewed mission/church relationships in various countries I have been convinced that God has

⁶⁹ Memo from Harold Fuller, Area Director, to SIM Personnel in Nigeria, Jos, November 19, 1976. General Council Box 1975-1980, SIM Archives.

⁷⁰ Motion on SIM-ECWA Relationship from General Church Council of ECWA in Jos, November 19, 1976. General Council Box 1975-1980, SIM Archives.

given SIM and ECWA a very precious and unusual relationship.⁷¹ It appears that SIM may have been ahead of other evangelical missions as this comment suggests. AIM (Africa Inland Mission) was working out its relationship with the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Kenya during this period, a relationship that had, according to Lionel Young, been ‘unresolved’ since the AIC was established in the 1940s. Young observed a number of phases of devolution with AIM: the mission devolved most of its power and authority in 1971, but held on to some property and power in a settled agreement. More property was turned over in 1978/79, and the AIM office closed to be replaced by a ‘Kenya Desk’ to deal with missionaries’ financial support and assist with other problems.⁷²

The turnover events in Nigeria and the future outworking of this new and somewhat unusual relationship between SIM and ECWA were noted and observed around the SIM world family. A paper written in 1988 considering mission and church relationships in Pakistan acknowledged that while the aim there was also partnership, the relatively young and small church there was not yet ready to handle leadership over the mission; the depth and maturity of leadership that was required did not exist.⁷³ Colvin’s article illustrates the wide impact of the Nigeria turnover across SIM, suggesting that while the relationship between ECWA and SIM may have been unique, the action taken by the SIM leaders in West Africa may also have challenged those in Pakistan regarding their own context. His observations recognised and

⁷¹ W. Harold Fuller, ‘Look who’s in the driver’s seat’, *Africa NOW*, March-April 1977.

⁷² Young, ‘The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, 1939-1975’, and email correspondence, 12 October 2017. See also chapter 4, pages 173.

⁷³ Gary Colvin, ‘Study on Mission and Church Relationships’, Pakistan Christian Fellowship 1988, SIM Archives.

underlined the different stages of the maturity of the church in different countries in which SIM was working.

The Significant Role of Key Individuals in SIM's Increasing Diversity

At the time of the turnover, Jim Plueddemann, who was to be appointed as SIM's International Director in 1993, was a missionary in Nigeria, together with his wife Carol. Plueddemann was serving as the Secretary of Theological Education for ECWA, reporting to the ECWA General Secretary. In 1979, he and two SIM colleagues, also involved in theological education, prepared a 'think paper' concerning SIM's new role in Nigeria. In the face of an increasingly assertive church in ECWA, they questioned what SIM's role should be in order to help ECWA as it matured, recognising a dilemma: 'we must let go, but to have no strategy would be irresponsible' and could unintentionally hinder the development of the church.⁷⁴ The question of the mission's ongoing role in Nigeria and the relationship between church and mission following the turnover took years to be resolved; in fact it was still being worked out when Plueddemann visited Nigeria as newly appointed International Director in the early 1990s. Plueddemann attributed his experience of working closely with Nigerian colleagues in the 1970s as the 'dominant force' behind his recognition, when he took office as International Director, that the mission needed to change in order to fully embrace cultural diversity and become truly international. As he described working with the EMS, (the Evangelical Mission

⁷⁴ Jim Plueddemann, Larry Fehl, Paul Bowers, 'Beyond Independence: Toward a Strategy for the SIM in Nigeria', August 1979. Held in General Council Folder, Council Minutes - Some Correspondence, Box 1496, SIM Archives.

Society of ECWA, formed in 1948)⁷⁵ and seeing them send more missionaries than SIM ever sent to Nigeria, helping those missionaries with some of their cross-cultural training to go to Benin, Niger, Northern Nigeria, and later in 1989 to London and in 1995 to Chicago,⁷⁶ he reflected ‘this was my background – Nigerians make really good missionaries’.⁷⁷

Plueddemann’s experience in Nigeria did much to shape his thinking when he took on the leadership of SIM. This is one of several situations in the history of SIM in which the background and experience key individuals brought with them into significant leadership roles in the mission had a strong influence on the commitment to diversity within the organisation, and its increasing internationalisation. Ian Hay, Plueddemann’s predecessor, grew up in Nigeria where his Scottish parents served as pioneer missionaries with SIM. He attended a boarding school in Canada for missionaries’ children, before moving to America when his parents were no longer able to return to Nigeria for health reasons. By the time he was 17 he had lived in Nigeria, Canada and five different US states. Hay believes that this background prepared him for life, observing ‘I had to be diverse in my thinking because that’s the way life was. I was brought up that way’.⁷⁸ In 1952 he followed in his parents’ footsteps and went to serve as an SIM missionary in Nigeria. In an interview with

⁷⁵ See discussion on page 90.

⁷⁶ Panya Baba, *A vision received, a vision passed on: The history of the EMS of ECWA, 1948-1998: The birth and growth of the Evangelical Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church of West Africa*. (Jos, Nigeria: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2009). EMS had over 1,200 African missionaries working in cross-cultural evangelism and church planting in West Africa and overseas when the book was published in 2009.

⁷⁷ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁷⁸ Conversation between Ian Hay and Malcolm McGregor, Sebring, Florida. Recorded by McGregor on 16 November 2017.

David Dryer, who served on the SIM Board of Governors from its establishment in 1984, Dryer emphasised the importance of Nigeria in the thinking of SIM leaders in the 1970s and 80s as by far the largest field in the mission, and the one with the most mature African leaders. ‘It was the one that everybody focused on’.⁷⁹ Nigeria was also significant as the largest country in Africa in population terms, and the richest. Again, events and decisions surrounding the turnover in Nigeria perhaps took on even greater significance across the mission because of the prominence of the work in Nigeria, and its influential role in SIM. That both Hay and Plueddemann were close to those events, events attributed by Dryer as ‘an important origin of SIM being more favourable to diversity’, is important to understand when considering the origins of diversity in the mission.

Dryer also highlighted Hay’s forward-thinking leadership, citing a conference Hay called in 1980 to discuss how SIM should be using computers for the benefit of the mission. That outlook is also seen in an article published in the mission periodical in 1986, under the title ‘Rearranging Our Thinking’ in which Hay addressed the recent and dynamic growth of the church in the majority world, highlighting a realisation ‘that God is doing some startling things – things that are distinct from traditional patterns’, and the developing role of non-western churches in world mission.

Anticipating over 100,000 non-western missionaries by the year 2000, Hay announced the need for missionary societies ‘to rearrange their thinking and adapt to what is happening’, emphasising SIM’s desire to integrate different nationalities into a common workforce. While acknowledging that tensions can occur as a result of

⁷⁹ David Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

difference or attitudes of superiority, Hay stressed the importance of the whole church, western and non-western, being used by God in the task of mission.⁸⁰ Reflecting on Hay's leadership of the mission, Corwin described an energy and will to pursue diversity, but which was held back by financial questions and issues,⁸¹ and importantly a concern not to be pulling the leadership away from the national church for the benefit of the mission. Hay described witnessing first-hand the churches in Nigeria beginning to flourish and grow as ECWA was established in 1954, recalling his many thoughts concerned for the church, its growth, how SIM as an interdenominational mission related to the church, as well as asking what mistakes they were making that would impact the development of the church. He also witnessed the early years of the African Mission Society, formed by SIM missionaries and Nigerian pastors in 1948, later renamed the Evangelical Mission Society (EMS),⁸² which was significant in helping the church in Nigeria to develop its own very substantial missionary outreach.⁸³ This commitment not to damage the young and maturing church, particularly by attracting gifted church leaders to service with SIM (rather than EMS) in another culture, was born out of close involvement with that church in such key stages of its development; it may paradoxically have held SIM back from becoming diverse more quickly.⁸⁴

Jim Plueddemann took over from Hay as SIM's International Director in 1993. He described his thoughts when, as an observer, he attended a meeting in the months

⁸⁰ Ian M Hay, 'Rearranging Our Thinking', 7.

⁸¹ This will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 5.

⁸² See also page 87-8.

⁸³ Conversation between Hay and McGregor, 16 November 2017.

⁸⁴ Gary Corwin, interview, 7 February 2017. See also chapter 7, page 320.

before he took over, held by the outgoing International Director, Hay, to discuss the financial support system SIM was using. As leaders from different SIM sending offices raised concerns over the unfairness of a financial support pooling system in which, in basic terms, missionaries put in the earning power of the country they came from, and received the cost of living in the country where they served,⁸⁵ Plueddemann observed that the system would only work when more wealthy countries were sending missionaries to poorer countries. He asked himself:

How are we going to have Nigerians on the mission? We can't. And so it really struck me that the problem was our governance, our support system. We couldn't be truly international. We could only be international going from wealthy countries to poor countries. ... We've got a system that goes from the white world to the dark coloured world. And I said to myself this isn't the way missions is going.⁸⁶

As Plueddemann took over leadership of SIM, he was already looking forward to how the mission could become more international, based on his awareness of what was happening in the world of mission at the time, and on his experience of working alongside gifted Nigerian colleagues earlier in his career. As he observed what was taking place in the discussions surrounding the financial support system, he was identifying areas in which the mission would need to change if it was to become truly international, which was his vision: the governance and administrative structures on which it was based, and the core values⁸⁷ and attitudes that underpinned the organisation. In a short article for the mission's periodical *SIM NOW* in 1996, Plueddemann addressed the question of where the 'cutting edge' in mission was to be

⁸⁵ The SIM financial support system for its missionaries will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁸⁶ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁸⁷ The core values developed by Jim and Carol Plueddemann soon after he took office will be discussed in chapter 3, page 103-4.

found, relating the internationalisation of modern missions as ‘one of the most exciting movements’ of the time, and suggesting that the cutting edge of mission strategy lay in long-term missionaries working in partnership with national churches, encouraging them in their own mission initiatives. He concluded ‘sent ones from every culture working together in loving fellowship worldwide form the most powerful strategy in missions’.⁸⁸ According to his wife, Carol, this quotation expressed ‘the longing of Jim and Carol Plueddemann’s hearts’ from the start of Jim’s term as International Director.⁸⁹

In an article written in 1998, outlining an agenda for what he termed ‘a gracious revolution’ to reposition missions in the 21st century, Plueddemann included a case study of a recent project initiated by Dr Howard Brant, who served as one of Plueddemann’s Deputy International Directors from 1993 to 2006.⁹⁰ Brant was born in Canada but spent his early years in Ethiopia with his missionary parents, returning to Canada to attend high school and Bible School before returning to Ethiopia, with his wife Jo-Ann, as a missionary himself. He returned to North America where he studied for a doctorate in missions at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.⁹¹ Brant had a vision to stimulate the mission vision of the SIM-related church in Ethiopia, encouraging them to send a team of missionaries to India. SIM worked in partnership with the Kale Heywet Church in Ethiopia and the SIM-related church in India to

⁸⁸ Jim Plueddemann, ‘What is the Cutting Edge in Missions?’, *SIM NOW* #77, 1996, 2.

⁸⁹ Carol Plueddemann, email, 22 September 2017.

⁹⁰ Brant stepped down as Deputy International Director in 2006 during Malcolm McGregor’s leadership when Andrew Ng was appointed as the Deputy International Director for Asia.

⁹¹ See ‘Trinity Evangelical Divinity School 2010 Alumnus of the Year, Howard Brant (D.Miss ’85)’ https://issuu.com/tiu_publications/docs/trinmagfall2010.

support ten Ethiopian missionaries to serve in India for six months in 1998.⁹²

Working in partnership with national church mission organisations served as a model of what might be possible for SIM as it embraced the concept of mission ‘from everywhere to everywhere’.⁹³ This concept, and the idea of SIM as a ‘Highway for all Nations’, was being discussed by Plueddemann and his leadership team in weekly brain-storming meetings in his office at SIM International in Fort Mill in the late 1990s. They had a clear sense that mission was becoming increasingly international, and that the patterns of mission were changing; as a leadership team they were wrestling with issues of how SIM could make these new patterns work.⁹⁴ In the early 1990s Brant had addressed these developments, observing that ‘some of us are becoming increasingly aware that there is in fact a very awesome force which is being awakened in the world today which may be God’s tool to finish the task [of evangelism] – and that is the non-western missionary movement’.⁹⁵ A vision to see SIM working in partnership with non-western missionaries was a strong motivator for Brant, and he wrote several papers exploring and promoting the role SIM could play in this new era of mission, initially advocating strategic partnership, and anticipating the possibility of merging workforces in the future.⁹⁶

⁹² Jim Plueddemann, ‘Agenda for a Gracious Revolution: Repositioning Missions in the 21st Century, A Case Study in SIM’, 1998, held in ‘Missions Strategy’ folder, SIM Archives.

⁹³ Michael Nazir-Ali, *From Everywhere to Everywhere*. Plueddemann recalled Samuel Escobar as the first person he heard using the term. Escobar quoted Nazir-Ali in his book *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 18.

⁹⁴ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁹⁵ Howard Brant, ‘Towards the Ideal Deployment of Missionaries’, *IJFM* 8.2 (April 1991): 61-64. http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/08_2_PDFs/8_2Brant.pdf.

⁹⁶ Howard Brant, ‘Partnering with Developing Missions – Some Guidelines for SIM’, June 1999, held in ‘Church – Developing Countries’, SIM Archives.

In April 2002, Brant, with Plueddemann, presented an SIM concept paper for discussion; it was entitled ‘A Highway for All Nations’, a phrase which was to be hotly debated within the mission in the years that followed.⁹⁷ Although it provoked disagreement and questions surrounding both the use of the term ‘highway’, which was felt to be at risk of ‘SIM arrogance’, and an inappropriate use of the Isaiah passage it echoed and the implications of SIM’s role in what was being proposed,⁹⁸ as well as concern about the financial implications of the model for SIM’s financial support system,⁹⁹ the discussion surrounding this paper and the concept it promoted, raised the profile of the issue. It put the subject of how SIM ‘could intentionally and enthusiastically make it possible for missionaries from anywhere in the world to join the SIM highway’, in other words the internationalisation of the mission, firmly on the agenda. The paper originated when, in June 2001, the SIM Board of Governors commissioned a study on ways the mission could better fulfil its purpose statement to ‘partner with and equip churches to fulfil Christ’s Commission’. Plueddemann asked Brant to produce a discussion paper, the initial draft of which was entitled ‘From Anywhere to Anywhere’. In Plueddemann’s introduction to the paper, he emphasised that a highway for all nations was not a new concept, noting that SIM missionaries at that time came from 35 countries through nine sending offices. His vision and prayer was for missionaries from over a hundred countries, in order that SIM would become a more effective mission, and one that reflected the universal body of Christ more closely. Brant stressed the need for SIM to understand the reality of the changing times in which this discussion was taking place, acknowledging that SIM was an ‘old

⁹⁷ Howard Brant with Jim Plueddemann, ‘A Highway for All Nations – An SIM Concept Paper’, April 2002, Brant’s personal papers. See chapter 4, page 146.

⁹⁸ Keith Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

⁹⁹ See discussion in chapter 5, page 211.

mission' which he and many colleagues longed to see taking steps in order to be effective in present and future generations. The concept paper concluded with a vision diagram, summarising the situation within SIM and the changing context in world mission, and seeking evaluation of the potential benefits and pitfalls of the vision 'for SIM to glorify God by becoming like a highway which could serve peoples from all nations – without regard to race, denomination or standard of living'.¹⁰⁰

Brant's passion for this vision was a continuing influence on the mission during Plueddemann's leadership and continued under his successor, Malcolm McGregor, who took over in 2004. Dryer described Brant as leading the charge for the internationalisation of SIM during these years.¹⁰¹ He was attending and speaking at wider world mission conferences, including the 2004 Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization at which he gave a paper for the issue group on the two-thirds world church, 'Redefining Missions for the 21st Century'.¹⁰² Brant introduced his paper borrowing Andrew Walls' analogy¹⁰³ of what an alien visiting earth from outer space would see in order to show the changes that had taken place in the 'landscape of Christianity' from the first century AD, through the start of the twentieth century, up to 2004, the year in which the paper was presented, emphasising the emergence of

¹⁰⁰ Brant with Plueddemann, *A Highway for All Nations*, 3, 20, 23.

¹⁰¹ Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

¹⁰² Howard Brant, 'Redefining Missions in the 21st Century', part of *The Two Thirds World Church, Lausanne Occasional Paper 44*, edited by David D. Ruiz, with J. Ismael Ramírez P., Mayra Urizar de Ramírez, Norberto Saracco, 2004, available online at https://www.lausanne.org/docs/2004forum/LOP44_IG15.pdf.

¹⁰³ Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*.

Christianity as a worldwide phenomenon identified by Philip Jenkins.¹⁰⁴ Using a phrase very familiar within the Lausanne Movement, the solution he explained was ‘to get back to taking the whole gospel, from the whole church, to the whole world’. Brant emphasised that western mission agencies needed non-western missionaries to remind them of the faith and sacrifice required in mission, citing Escobar’s term ‘mission from below’ as the goal,¹⁰⁵ and, citing what he described as a ‘provocative article’ by Hanciles, because they came without the ‘arrogance and triumphalism associated with western Christianity’.¹⁰⁶ He outlined his vision for missions as a ‘Highway for the Nations’ and explored the practical implications of this concept and the changes it demanded of traditional missions. In his conclusion, Brant urged that attention be paid to the present times, noting and repeating McGregor’s emphasis within SIM, quoting 1 Chronicles 12:32, on the need for the mission to be ‘like the men of Issachar who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.’ The sentiment of this Bible verse was influential in McGregor’s decision to launch a strategic review of SIM, which he named ‘Seize the Day’, in 2004 as he began his leadership term.¹⁰⁷ One of the outcomes of the review was a new role for Brant as ‘Champion for Emerging Missions’, a role through which he continued to encourage and challenge SIM to embrace internationalisation and work through the challenges of becoming a mission from ‘everywhere to everywhere’. The years of McGregor’s leadership were critical in this process, and once again his past experience was crucial to the vision and values he brought to the role of International Director.

¹⁰⁴ Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*.

¹⁰⁵ Brant explained that Samuel Escobar used this term in a paper delivered at a World Evangelical Alliance consultation at Iguassu in 1999.

¹⁰⁶ Jehu J. Hanciles, ‘Migration and Mission: Some Implications for the Twenty-first-century Church.’ *IBMR* 27, no. 4 (2003): 146-153, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2003-04/2003-04-146-hanciles.pdf>.

¹⁰⁷ The ‘Seize the Day’ review will be discussed further in chapters 3 and 4.

Malcolm and Liz McGregor, from Scotland, had worked professionally in Nigeria for several years from 1975-1982 and had become affiliates of SIM during that time. They went on to join SIM as missionaries to serve in Ethiopia from 1984 to 1996, again using their professional skills in architecture and music teaching respectively, and investing their time and efforts in discipling young Ethiopians in their Christian faith and encouraging them in their own careers. McGregor acknowledged the impact that working closely with Nigerians and Ethiopians in different ministry and business contexts had on him and his wife as they recognised their gifts and potential. He also described the spiritual energy and vitality he had witnessed during 18 years living in Africa, and the sense he felt that God was at work in new ways. The energy he had experienced was something he wanted to draw into SIM to avoid the organisation 'remaining static and stuck in a western mindset'.¹⁰⁸ While serving as SIM's UK Director, the McGregors took a four-month sabbatical in India from December 2000 to April 2001, studying at SAIACS (South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies) and travelling within India with a small team of Ethiopians they invited to join them. McGregor described 'a new realisation of the calibre of emerging leaders in Asia' through those they met and studied alongside at SAIACS, and cites the time spent in India as 'a major milestone in forming our view that God was at work all over the world and that this spiritual vitality needed to influence SIM'.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Malcolm McGregor, interview, 26 September, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ The McGregors chose SAIACS on the advice of Chris Wright to enhance their understanding of an Asian context. Observations made directly by Malcolm McGregor, email, 16 January 2018.

McGregor took this determination to prioritise cultural diversity within SIM into the role of International Director, referring to it in his inauguration address, as he stated the need for SIM to ‘become a highway for all nations – a two-way street for mission’, acknowledging that this had been discussed and debated for some time, emphasising that it was already happening within the mission, and underlining his intent to ‘purposely encourage this development’.¹¹⁰ McGregor’s personal experience of living and working in Africa, alongside his awareness through reading the works of authors including Andrew Walls and Samuel Escobar¹¹¹ on the growth of Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America, contributed to his determination that SIM should be ready to listen and learn from people from outside its normal ‘western’ framework. Part of that commitment to diversity led McGregor to reshape the International Leadership Team, including his deputy directors and those with whom he worked most closely, to reflect the increasing diversity of SIM. He appointed Andrew Ng, ethnic Chinese from Singapore, as Deputy International Director with responsibility for SIM in Asia and the Pacific region, and Nigerian Joshua Bogunjoko as Deputy International Director with responsibility for SIM in Europe and West Africa. Dave Bremner from South Africa, Jeff Hahn from the United States, Dorothy Haile from England, Liz McGregor from Scotland, Rene Palacio, an ethnic Cuban, and Eldon Porter from the United States, completed the team.

¹¹⁰ Malcolm McGregor, Inaugural Speech as International Director of SIM, 13 June 2004, from his personal papers.

¹¹¹ He cited Andrew Walls, ‘Culture and Coherence in Christian History’, in Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everywhere* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), in the inauguration speech.

McGregor explained the reasons for the composition of his team in an article for one of the mission periodicals: ‘SIM leadership mirrors the new reality of the global church. The composition of this new team reflects the mission’s commitment to inclusion, affirmation and mutual learning among people from diverse ethnicities and cultures in this new age of mission’.¹¹² McGregor was the first non-North American to lead SIM, and the decisions he made in the shaping of his leadership team, ensured that the voices heard and the cultures represented at the top leadership level of the organisation were no longer majority American. This culturally diverse leadership team experienced in their own team the challenges of listening and understanding those from different backgrounds in a similar way to the increasingly diverse missionary workforce of SIM was experiencing the challenges and benefits of multicultural teams.¹¹³

Conclusion

In a reflective article written in 2010 in which McGregor looked ahead to the challenges he anticipated for SIM in the coming decade, he listed cultural diversity as the second of twelve challenges. He acknowledged that the implications of SIM’s increasing diversity would continually need to be worked out in new situations. ‘Our increasing diversity is a work in progress’ demanding flexibility as new issues are resolved, and as the mission’s existing systems and structures struggle to cope with the changes taking place.¹¹⁴ This statement anticipated the significant governance

¹¹² Malcolm McGregor, ‘Our diverse leadership team’, in *Mission Together*, Autumn 2006, 15.

¹¹³ The challenges and benefits of multicultural teams in SIM will be examined in chapter 6.

¹¹⁴ Malcolm McGregor, ‘Thoughts for SIM in a New Decade’, *Intercom*, No. 198, December 2009-February 2010.

and structural changes to come in SIM in the following few years,¹¹⁵ changes which would underline and reinforce the process of internationalisation which had taken place, a development which could perhaps not have been anticipated by SIM's founders, but one which may well have met with their approval. Whether consciously or not, SIM's emphasis on strength in diversity was a return to the ideals of its founders. In the early years, the mission developed on a Canadian-British axis; a period of American dominance followed, during which the mission's racial policies reflected something of American segregationism of the period.¹¹⁶ SIM's development in more recent years, driven now by a truly international vision, no longer centred on the North but acknowledged and recognised the growth of Christianity in the majority world, and recaptured something of the mission's original vision. The growth of missionary vision in the majority world was clearly evident, and observed by leaders in SIM, in the large number of ECWA missionaries serving with EMS;¹¹⁷ in numerical terms, this overshadowed SIM's vision to facilitate the integration of non-western candidates into its own missionary workforce. The way in which the diversity which was evident in SIM by 2015 has been defined and understood will be examined in the following chapter.

¹¹⁵ These governance and structural changes will be examined in chapter 5.

¹¹⁶ See pages 68-73.

¹¹⁷ See pages 87-8, and footnote 76.

Chapter 3: Defining Diversity in SIM –

Different Understandings and Limitations of Diversity

The previous chapter demonstrated the vision of SIM's founders for an international and interdenominational mission, and showed that the origins of diversity lay in that original vision. This chapter will consider various ways in which diversity was defined and understood in SIM in the period 1975-2015, on which my research has focused. It will discuss the introduction of written 'core values' in SIM by Jim Plueddemann during his tenure as International Director, and the changes made to those values by his successor, Malcolm McGregor, who introduced the value 'strengthened through diversity'. Through analysis of interviews and questionnaires conducted at both leadership level and with serving missionaries, it will consider the different understandings of what was meant by diversity within SIM during this period, and why the particular emphasis on cultural diversity was significant when the 'strengthened through diversity' core value was introduced by McGregor in 2004. The chapter will also examine other aspects of diversity highlighted by those interviewed, notably the issue of gender. It will also discuss perceived and acknowledged limitations of diversity within SIM, and the context in which these are expressed.

SIM – An Intentionally International Mission Agency

It is notable that in the discussion in 1954 surrounding the possible admission to membership of 'Oriental' and 'Asiatic' candidates wishing to join the mission,

G. Ritchie Rice reminded his fellow correspondents that SIM ‘is international’,¹ demonstrating that for him at least, this was an important characteristic of the organisation which should not be forgotten. This emphasis was continued by Hay in his leadership of SIM from 1975-1993. His own background and upbringing had given him an openness to diversity,² and his recognition of the growth of the church in the majority world led to a commitment to welcoming different nationalities into SIM’s missionary workforce.³ The SIM office in Switzerland had begun to develop under the leadership of a French Director when Hay took over as International Director. Hay recalled enlisting the help of a British friend who worked in the United Nations in New York, where he was living at the time, who spoke excellent French and could act as his translator. Hay had decided that all his communications circulated within SIM would be sent out in English and French, even though he did not speak French himself. He observed that ‘it paid off, because it made the French speakers feel like we cared, and that they weren’t poor cousins. That they were a part of us’. He acknowledged that this approach did not have the same outcome when Koreans began to join the mission, and he had his communications translated into Korean. He later found out that ‘my Korean friends were insulted that I thought so poorly of their English that I had to put it into Korean... what was a blessing with the French was the wrong thing with the Koreans’.

Hay reflected on the increasing diversity of SIM in terms of the nationalities joining the mission, ‘bringing non-European, non-French, non-English people, native

¹ G. Ritchie Rice, letter of 26 November 1954. See chapter 2, page 68.

² See chapter 2, page 88.

³ See chapter 2, page 89. Hay, ‘*Re-arranging our Thinking*’.

Koreans into the SIM, was tough because there were cultural differences [and] language differences'.⁴ The challenges of different attitudes between cultures will be explored in chapter 6. Under Hay's leadership the number of nationalities making up the membership of SIM increased, notably when the first Koreans joined the mission in 1981.⁵ In a report on recruitment statistics produced for the SIM International Council in 1990, members recruited through the East Asia Council are recorded separately, although they were officially sent through the SIM Australia office until 1992; the figures rose from 10 active members in 1983, to 20 in 1986, and 42 in 1989.⁶

This growing internationalisation of the mission formed a significant backdrop to the beginning of Jim Plueddemann's leadership tenure as International Director in 1993, and his decision to develop a set of core values owned by the mission. As Plueddemann observed debates and attitudes within the mission, particularly discussions between various SIM sending offices relating to the financial support system,⁷ and as he anticipated the change to the mission systems and structures that would be needed if the organisation were to become truly international, he was aware of how volatile such change could be. His decision to work on a set of core values for the mission grew out of a conviction that something was needed to 'give people a sense of stability in a mission that is going to change rapidly'. Working from the

⁴ Ian Hay interview, recorded by McGregor, 16 November 2017.

⁵ Rev Sam and Sarah Kang from Korea, and Rev. Hsueh Yu and Lily Kwong from Malaysia went to serve in Nigeria. Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 169. The impact of welcoming Korean missionaries into SIM will be discussed further in chapter 6.

⁶ SIM International Council April 17-30 1990, National Office Personnel Recruitment Goals, March 21, 1990. IC 1988-1990, 1990 Personnel, held at SIM Archives.

⁷ See discussion in chapter 2, page 91, and further discussion of governance and structures in chapter 5.

existing SIM Manual, in consultation with his four deputy directors, Plueddemann produced a draft set of core values for SIM which were published in the internal mission newsletter with a request for feedback. He recalled that this important process of discussion and consultation lasted around two years before the ten core values were agreed, a necessary process in order that the mission ‘owned’ the values.⁸ They were published in a promotional leaflet which defined the core values as ‘describing what is important to us at SIM’ and ‘defining who we are’, and were later included in the 2000 SIM Manual.⁹ The ninth and tenth core values addressed diversity within SIM and were expressed as follows:

International – We are intentionally international because we believe that this best expresses the nature of the body of Christ in the world. We believe we will be more effective as we incorporate the richness of cultural diversity in our membership.

Interdenominational – We desire to reflect the biblical unity of the body of Christ. We value the fact that we are made up of Bible-believing people from many denominations seeking to work together in unity.¹⁰

By explicitly underlining in agreed core values that SIM was intentionally international as a reflection of the worldwide body of Christ, and stating the belief that cultural diversity brought richness and increased effectiveness in the mission, Plueddemann was guiding the future direction of the mission towards ever greater diversity by emphasising the international nature of the mission as an intentional and lasting value. He was also underlining that SIM was intentionally

⁸ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁹ Corwin notes the first inclusion of the Core Values as a front piece in the 2000 SIM Manual, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 177. The promotional leaflet was in circulation before that, circa 1997.

¹⁰ SIM’s 10 Core Values, promotional leaflet, published approximately 1997, from author’s personal papers.

interdenominational. When McGregor took over as International Director, he developed this emphasis on intentional diversity further, reworking the ninth and tenth core values following a strategic review of the mission, named ‘Seize the Day’, which he initiated in 2004. The core values ‘international’ and ‘interdenominational’ were combined into one value, ‘strengthened through diversity’ and a new core value added, ‘responsive to our times’:

Strengthened Through Diversity – We are intentionally interdenominational, international, and multi-ethnic. We believe this expresses the unity of the body of Christ in the world. We believe we will be more effective in ministry as we incorporate the richness of cultural diversity in SIM and celebrate our oneness in Christ.

Responsive to Our Times – We will respond with creativity and courage to evolving needs and opportunities under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To be effective and relevant, our ministries, priorities, and structures are subject to ongoing evaluation and adaptation.

The addition of a value underlining the need for flexibility and change, in order to continue to be effective as an organisation, echoes Ian Hay’s article of 1986 on the need for SIM to ‘Re-arrange our Thinking’¹¹ in response to new circumstances, as well as anticipating the changes ahead in governance, and the organisation’s financial and personnel structures and processes.¹² The deliberate and specific references to multi-ethnic and cultural diversity in the reworking of the ninth value were a result of McGregor’s feeling as he took office that SIM was an international organisation, yet ‘still embedded in the West’. He believed that strong western roots that were so deeply embedded in SIM’s history needed to be addressed in order that

¹¹ See chapter 2, page 89.

¹² See chapter 5.

SIM could become a truly ‘global organisation rather than an international one with a strong western perspective’.¹³ His desire that SIM would be influenced, no longer just by a western voice, but by the voices, insights and spiritual energy of Christians from the majority world was reflected in the wording of the core value, ‘strengthened through diversity’.

Personnel statistics for December 2003 as McGregor took over as International Director recorded active members by sending office: Australia – 100, Canada – 169, East Asia – 41, Korea – 75, New Zealand – 50, Southern Africa – 46, Southern Europe – 32, UK/Northern Europe – 152, USA – 686. Included but not obvious from these statistics listed by sending office were missionaries from Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Japan, Philippines and Taiwan who came under the East Asia Office, and missionaries from Southern and Central America included in the numbers for the US. These statistics suggest that the new wording of the core value emphasised the already increasing ethnic diversity within the missionary workforce which was apparent particularly in the growing numbers of missionaries from the East Asia and Korea offices, yet it also indicated an intention to pursue greater diversity within the mission.

As he reflected on the start of his tenure as International Director, McGregor described a sense that SIM was at a ‘tipping point, looking over the horizon’. He had a sense of what could be ahead if the organisation were to build on the work that had

¹³ Malcolm McGregor, interview, 26 September 2016.

already been done towards increasing cultural diversity, but also recognised that if he did not push towards further change, the vision for diversity could fade and melt away, and ultimately be lost. His determination that SIM should embrace a strong ethos of cultural diversity, and would be strengthened as an organisation as it did so, guided his leadership.¹⁴ Joshua Bogunjoko, who was appointed as a Deputy International Director at the time of the reworking of the core values, and was involved in the discussions of the new wording, reflected on the use of the term ‘multi-ethnic’: he observed that ‘it was very specific to say that we come from diverse ethnicities globally... we wanted to recognise that there are no second class missionaries in SIM, irrespective of what your ethnicity might be – whether you are from a city in the USA, or a village in Ecuador, or from a mega-city in China, you all belong equally. So we are multi-ethnic’.¹⁵ Alistair Hornal, who served on the International Board of Governors and the UK Board of Trustees, also reflected on the significance of the term ‘multi-ethnic’ as a way to highlight that the diversity being pursued was not just national, that SIM wished to acknowledge even the ethnic diversity which exists within nations.¹⁶ Mary Evans, who served as Chair of the SIM UK Council and as a member of the International Board of Governors from 1997-2007, observed that the choice of words relating to diversity in the new core value was ‘deliberate, intentional and significant’, coming at a time when there was a need to understand more explicitly the implications of being ‘international and interdenominational’.¹⁷ Both Helen Heron, SIM’s International Personnel Director and part of the International Leadership team, and Gillian Phillips, a member of the

¹⁴ McGregor, interview, 20 June 2018.

¹⁵ Joshua Bogunjoko, now International Director of SIM, interview, 7 February 2017.

¹⁶ Alistair Hornal, interview, 4 October 2016.

¹⁷ Mary Evans, interview, 25 October 2016.

SIM Board of Governors, reflected that diversity in SIM refers to diversity of cultures, emphasising that this comes with a broad understanding extending to diversity of languages, economic backgrounds, and standards of living.¹⁸ The inclusion of economic diversity as part of the definition of diversity in SIM is significant in its implications for the governance, financial support and personnel processes in the organisation.¹⁹ Heron reflected that a purely American mission organisation which talked about becoming diverse may have meant including members from the UK, Australia and Canada; that more limited sort of diversity would not have required the change in governance structure or financial support systems which SIM faced if it were to become truly international.

Reflecting on the emphasis on cultural diversity and multi-ethnicity in the new core value, Gary Corwin noted the biblical reference to Revelation 5:9, ‘with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation’, and Revelation 7:9 which describes ‘a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language’ before the throne of God.²⁰ Revelation 5:9 was also depicted in a painting by a former missionary, Charles Guth, produced for SIM’s centennial in 1993 which Corwin described as ‘perhaps the most recognised piece of art associated with SIM in recent years’.²¹

¹⁸ Helen Heron, interview, 8 September 2016, and Gillian Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

¹⁹ See chapter 5.

²⁰ Corwin, interview, 7 February 2017. Bible reference: NIV Bible translation, Revelation 5:9 and 7:9.

²¹ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 307.



Figure 2: Charles Guth's painting to mark SIM's Centennial

While the painting depicts the multitude representing every tribe, tongue, people and nation as the fruit rather than specifically the agents of mission, the image and these verses from Revelation 5 and 7, frequently quoted within the organisation in discussions of the value of cultural diversity and its biblical importance, were of particular significance to SIM as a conservative evangelical mission organisation. Within SIM, there does not appear to have been any appeal to Revelation 21:24 which was found in Anglo-Catholic mission theory about cultural diversity in the early twentieth century, and referenced by Mark Noll in his conclusion to *The New Shape of World Christianity*, 'The kings – or, we might expand, the cultures of the world – with their glory will enter the heavenly city'.²² Corwin observed a progression in the way diversity was defined by SIM, noting first the emphasis of founder, Bingham, on its interdenominational nature,²³ a decision to be international in the way the mission operated, intentionally welcoming missionaries of different

²² Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 200. See also Brian Stanley, 'From "the Poor Heathen" to "the Glory and Honour of All Nations": Vocabularies of Race and Custom in Protestant Missions, 1844-1928', *IBMR* 34.1 (2010): 7, 9.

²³ See chapter 2, page 65.

nationalities, and most recently, a multi-ethnic emphasis which intentionally addressed some of the racial issues discussed in the previous chapter.²⁴

Interviews conducted amongst those who have held senior leadership positions in SIM commonly revealed the view that SIM had ‘always been intentionally international, and also intentionally interdenominational’, respondents often referring back to the early history of the mission in this context. The wording of the new core value, ‘strengthened through diversity’ reflected a specific and intentional emphasis on multi-ethnicity which acknowledged the diverse ethnicities globally increasingly joining the missionary workforce.²⁵ This was a significant extension of the international diversity which was found in SIM’s earlier history, which was predominantly made up of white missionaries from the northern hemisphere. A comparison of personnel statistics from 1975, 2003 and 2010 demonstrates the change that had begun to take place within SIM’s missionary workforce in the years before McGregor reworked the core values, and the increasing pace of growing ethnic diversity in the years which followed.

²⁴ See chapter 2, page 72-4.

²⁵ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

Sending Office	1975	2003	2010	2014
Australia	89	100	89	119
Canada	270	169	148	162
New Zealand	42	51	41	45
South Africa	3	44	50	58
UK	97	156	134	138
USA	637	689	662	723
Switzerland	39	33	32	40
Japan (later listed under East Asia)	1			
East Asia		41	70	102
Korea		73	86	91
France (initially included under Switzerland as the Southern Europe office)			23	23
OCLA (Office Connection for Latin America)			6	14
West Africa Office			2	14
East Africa Office			0	18

Figure 3: Personnel Statistics – SIM members by sending office

Five new sending offices were established between 1992 and 2012: East Asia, Korea, SIM Latino in Guatemala, and West Africa and East Africa offices.²⁶ In 2010, SIM members represented 53 nationalities; this had risen to 66 nationalities by 2014.

²⁶ See chapter 5, page 192 and Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 174-181.

Amongst the twenty-one missionaries interviewed during this research, two retired and nineteen still serving with SIM, representing eleven different nationalities, there were varied understandings of the core value, ‘strengthened through diversity’.²⁷ For two respondents from different African countries, it was an acknowledgement that world mission has changed, and that SIM has changed; it is no longer an organisation for westerners alone. One Asian respondent considered it as an attempt by SIM to move away from its ‘old reputation as a western mission’ to an international one. Respondents from the UK and North America focused on the aspect of strength, observing that working alongside colleagues from other cultures gave them greater understanding of diverse cultures, including the culture in which they are working, and ‘challenged their own ethnocentric thinking’. Respondents also emphasised the importance of unity amongst a diverse team as an expression of the gospel, and therefore as an important Christian testimony in the countries in which they were working.²⁸

The responses of the majority of those interviewed indicated that the predominant understanding of diversity in SIM is that of cultural and ethnic diversity; the emphasis of the mission on developing the effectiveness of ‘multicultural teams’, to be discussed further in chapter 6, indicates the importance placed on personnel from diverse backgrounds learning through their differences and the potential for strength in ministry through such diversity. Missionaries from western contexts also referred to the significance of different personalities, characters and educational backgrounds

²⁷ Interviews conducted by email and Skype between November 2017 and January 2018.

²⁸ See chapter 6, page 278.

in their understanding of the value ‘strengthened through diversity’, and some of the challenges of working in the context of such difference.²⁹ The statistics in the table above show the significant increase in SIM members from the newer sending offices in recent years; the presence of more and more mission personnel from diverse ethnicities and nationalities would have been a development about which the majority of respondents would have been very conscious, and as such in itself may have influenced their comments and reflections.

Understanding ‘Interdenominational’ in SIM

While the emphasis within SIM was strongly on cultural, and in recent years increasingly ethnic, diversity, as the previous chapter illustrated the organisation has been strongly interdenominational since it was founded. SIM’s statement of faith is that of a conservative evangelical organisation which all mission members must accept in order to join.³⁰ This statement in many ways defines the limitations of diversity within SIM. Observations made by those interviewed suggest that attitudes to different denominations have changed over time, with acceptance of wider difference in expressions of worship and practice. One respondent described ‘a diversity of denominational flavours’ within the mission.³¹ Another spoke of ‘a sea change’ when two people in the UK joined SIM from a New Frontiers Church, around the time of the end of my research period, a notable change from earlier

²⁹ The challenges and benefits of multicultural teams will be discussed further in chapter 6.

³⁰ The statement of faith is available to all online at <https://www.sim.org/statement-of-faith>. Accessed 26 March 2018.

³¹ Anonymous email, 5 January 2017.

years.³² David Bebbington's survey of British and American evangelicalism since 1940 highlighted the diversity of the evangelical movement itself. While there was much common ground and interaction between the two evangelical communities, he identified evangelicalism in the US to be more prone to ecclesiastical separatism than in Britain where Anglican Evangelicals were more used to 'coexisting with other traditions within their communion'. Fundamentalism was much stronger and extensive in the US than in the UK, and an emphasis on dispensationalist teaching and biblical inerrancy much greater. Bebbington observed the influence of the different social, economic and political factors on the evangelical movements, and concluded that British and American evangelicalism differed as a result of the way the gospel interacted 'with its whole cultural environment' in the two settings.³³

These differences can be observed in the different attitudes found in the SIM offices in the two nations. Plueddemann recalled his own experience when first joining SIM in 1966, explaining the importance placed on his views on eschatology by those in SIM USA conducting his doctrinal examination. Plueddemann described how he was beginning to rethink premillennialism, the rapture, the tribulation and the millennium, and had come across George Eldon Ladd's book, *The Blessed Hope*, in which he read Ladd's description of SIM's founder, Rowland Bingham, finding he was unable to answer his wife's question, 'where do you get the "Secret Rapture" idea in the Bible?' Forced to rethink 'cherished teaching of years', Bingham wrote: 'I simply in the whole prophetic sphere plead for that liberty of interpretation which I

³² Ann Christian, email, 12 June 2018.

³³ David Bebbington, 'Evangelicalism in its Settings: The British and American Movements since 1940' in Noll, Bebbington, and Rawlyk. *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies*, 365-88.

gladly accord to others'.³⁴ Plueddemann told the examination Board that he agreed with Bingham. He said he was accepted into the mission in spite of these views, but observed that at the time the US office of SIM was very strongly influenced by the dispensational model of the Dallas Theological Seminary, a narrower view than the mission's statement of faith expressed, and different from the views held by the UK SIM office.³⁵ Plueddemann also recalled significant debate on the SIM General Council in the early 1970s regarding whether speaking in tongues was permissible within the organisation. The conclusion that it was, providing it was not promoted as necessary for all believers, was agreed, although not unanimously.³⁶ David Dryer recalled 'extreme reservation about aspects of the charismatic movement' in the UK SIM office in the 1970s and 1980s, with one occasion of refusal to process applications from applicants from charismatic churches in the UK. Dryer noted that a discussion he had on the issue with a former Director of SIM Ethiopia, John Cumbers, revealed the point of resistance to be when missionaries who practiced charismatic gifts began to advocate this as the norm; use of the gifts on a personal basis was accepted.³⁷

There is a sense in which strict historical attitudes gradually relaxed to a more flexible, yet still strongly a conservative evangelical, position. A British missionary accepted into SIM in the 1980s recalled being questioned at interview over how they would respond to Christians in their country of service who held different views to

³⁴ George Eldon Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956), 54.

³⁵ See introduction to John D. Hannah, *An Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2009).

³⁶ Jim Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

³⁷ David Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

them on issues such as eschatology and spiritual warfare.³⁸ There was perhaps more openness to different positions on these issues in the UK office of SIM than in the US office, where premillennialism was so dominant amongst evangelicals, and the office tended to be more conservative. There is a sense too that in more recent years there has been an increasing number of applicants from a wider number of denominations, notably in the UK from newer and more charismatic churches, including the first missionary from a New Frontiers church mentioned above. Statistics of missionaries by denomination are somewhat incomplete, although records from 1966 show a clear majority across seven sending countries to have come from Baptist churches. The report also noted that 30% of Canadian missionaries, 15% of British missionaries, 12% of Australian missionaries, 7% of New Zealand missionaries, and 31% of US missionaries, had indicated a change of church membership since joining SIM; of the US missionaries 43% changed from ‘old-line denominations to younger evangelical groups’, 57% changed ‘within the latter’, a statistic which perhaps suggests SIM personnel were more committed to their evangelical faith than to a particular denomination. Statistics from 1983 represent only 51% of missionaries, the document notes ‘information not available for all’, and are less detailed. Those from Baptist churches made up 307 out of 658 for whom the information was recorded, including 36 Conservative Baptist, 32 Independent Baptist, 19 Baptist Fellowship, 18 General Association Regular Baptist, 18 General Conference Baptist, 11 Southern Baptist, and 15 Baptist Union [of Great Britain]. Statistics for 2011 for active mission members and associates list 315 out of a total of 1165 from Baptist churches and 256 as ‘non-denominational’; the list also

³⁸ Ann Christian, interview, 7 September 2016.

includes 33 interdenominational ones. The 2011 figures are totals, not detailed by sending office as in the previous documents. The 1983 statistics list figures for missionaries from a total of 44 different denominations; in 2011 this had increased to 59. Throughout the reports, missionaries from US mainline denominations are in the minority, with the United Presbyterian (74 of 1120 missionaries in 1975 and 22 of 658 missionaries in 1983), and Presbyterian Church of America (38 of 1165) having the greatest representation.³⁹

Personal experience during my own years in the SIM UK office would concur with the recollection of a growing flexibility in the personnel selection process to consider candidates from newer churches and from a broader denominational background; completing a doctrinal questionnaire for approval and confirming agreement with SIM's statement of faith were more significant criteria than denominational background. Two missionary respondents referred to theological diversity within SIM in their reflections on the understanding of the mission's core value of diversity, one suggesting that 'strengthened through diversity' should mean 'even a certain theological breadth' but noted that this was not primarily the case. For another, extremes of certain theological positions (the respondent cited extreme Pentecostalism and extreme Arminianism) extended 'diversity beyond legitimate bounds' and expressed concern that 'more zeal than theology' could result if boundaries were loosened. Once serving overseas, it appears that denominations

³⁹ Denominational statistics for December 1966 listed in the Report to the General Council, Sudan Interior Mission, Part 1; SIM Denominational Analysis by Home Country December 31, 1983 in General Council, 1984, File 10; and for 2011 a report of 'All Assigned Countries; Active Members and Associates as of 1 February 2011', SIM Archives.

were seldom discussed, although as one respondent remarked, it is possible this would differ in a mission team focused specifically on church planting.⁴⁰ McGregor reflected on the lack of a denominational mindset in the organisation which he attributed to the interdenominational core value of the mission, a value which ‘was very clear and embraced’; along with an acceptance of SIM’s statement of faith, any denominational issues outside that were viewed as ‘secondary issues’ and not emphasised.⁴¹ A staff member from the SIM USA office observed that SIM’s ability to ‘celebrate its interdenominationality’ was something particularly appreciated by younger generations now joining the organisation.⁴²

In the questionnaires completed as part of the ‘Seize the Day’ strategic review carried out by McGregor in 2004, directors and missionaries were asked to rate the relative importance for SIM of twelve different topics over the coming ten years. One of the topics was ‘Charismatic Influence’ expressed in the questionnaire as follows:

With the growth of the church, particularly in Africa and Latin America, it appears that an increasing proportion of churches are embracing a charismatic theology and/or style of worship. At the same time, in traditionally sending countries charismatic tendencies significantly influence Christianity... As this trend continues, it may cause increasing challenges for SIM, as these churches may not be comfortable with SIM's policy statement on divisive

⁴⁰ Christian, email, 12 June, 2018.

⁴¹ McGregor, interview, 20 June 2018.

⁴² Bob Hay, email, 7 December 2018.

issues, especially speaking in tongues, healing and demon possession of believers.⁴³

The policy statement on divisive issues referred to in the questionnaire, and included below, does not explicitly mention these issues, but the inclusion of a reference to the statement here perhaps suggests anticipation of a situation in which a potential overemphasis on charismatic theology or styles of worship may be interpreted as divisive within the mission.

Responses and reactions to the issue from missionaries who completed the 'Seize the Day' review questionnaires reveal a varied attitude to charismatic influence and styles of worship. Perhaps the most negative response listed was from a respondent in Ghana who stated that they 'did not join a charismatic mission, and don't wish to belong to one'. Respondents from other countries, including Tanzania, called for the adoption of a policy on charismatic issues, while several other responses from missionaries serving in Benin, Angola, India, and Chile, urged a more relaxed and inclusive attitude to charismatic styles of worship. Respondents from Australia highlighted the growth of charismatic churches, and the need for SIM to be willing to recruit from these growing churches, rather than focusing only on more traditional churches from which it had recruited missionaries in the past. One respondent stated that 'SIM can enhance its unity by being truly inter-denominational and embracing our charismatic brothers and sisters'.⁴⁴ This snapshot of opinions and attitudes from 2004 shows a diversity of views within SIM's membership on charismatic influence

⁴³ 'Seize the Day' questionnaire, Missionary survey, August 2004, McGregor personal papers.

⁴⁴ Responses to 'Seize the Day' questionnaires listed in sample responses to the questions 'What SIM should do' and 'What SIM should understand' in 'OpenDo360 sample' and 'OpenUnderstand360 sample', McGregor personal papers.

in the mission. Alongside the statement of faith of the mission to which all members must agree, there appears to have been a breadth of perspective and opinion on the way that faith should be expressed, perhaps in itself a comment on the diversity of the mission. The statement on divisive issues referred to here was included in the personnel section of the SIM Manual under ‘Divisive Practices and Doctrines’, stating:

The unity of the Mission can be threatened by those missionaries who would overemphasise teachings or practices over which there is difference of opinion within the doctrinal framework of the Mission. ... a missionary who holds to such practices or teachings must discuss this with his or her Director, and may remain in service only so long as he or she refrains from propagating or practicing them in any manner which, in the opinion of SIM leadership, is incompatible with the character of the Mission or detrimental to its harmonious operation. ‘Propagation’ means any effort interpreted by SIM leadership as intended to win others to share convictions or experience.⁴⁵

While SIM’s diversity as an interdenominational mission is apparent, and perhaps became even more evident as the different denominations that make up its membership increased, it is not, nor would it wish to be, theologically diverse. This statement on divisive issues underlines the importance within the organisation of SIM’s doctrinal position laid down in its statement of faith, while recognising that this allows for differences of opinion within the limits of that framework. SIM’s roots as a conservative evangelical faith mission, and its statement of faith based on that foundation, form the boundaries of theological diversity within the mission.

⁴⁵ Statement on Divisive Practices and Doctrines, SIM Manual Personnel Section 6.8.2, 2005, McGregor personal papers.

The Role of Women in SIM

In addition to questions of cultural and theological diversity, a number of those interviewed during my research addressed the subject of gender diversity within SIM. There is a clear sense of progression with regards to the role of women within the organisation, and particularly the appointment of women to positions of leadership. The fact that the mission has always welcomed both men and women as members of its missionary workforce is perhaps behind the observation from Joshua Bogunjoko, the current International Director, that ‘there has been diversity of gender in terms of men and women participating in ministry together’.⁴⁶ However for one mission member looking back on twenty-five years of service within SIM, her experience during the early 1990s was one of frustration that although women made up over two-thirds of the mission’s membership, they were struggling to get their voice heard.⁴⁷ Reflecting on how that had changed, she welcomed the presence of women on the International Leadership Team, and women field directors, something which she noted in 2016 ‘would have been unheard of twenty-five years ago’. Even at that time, it appears that there was a commitment to try to include women in the leadership of the organisation; Dryer recollected the attitude of Clifford Edwards, first chair of the International Board of Governors which was established in 1984, who ‘was absolutely firm on the gender balance... he passionately believed in women’s leadership and sought to make this something that the Board always had in front of itself’.⁴⁸ In 1986, the International Council unanimously passed a resolution stating:

⁴⁶ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

⁴⁷ Anonymous interview, 7 September 2016.

⁴⁸ Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

Recognising that two-thirds of our Mission force are women, and responding to Harold Fuller's paper on the Role of Women, this council requests the General Director to issue a suitably modified version of that paper to each member of the mission. Attention should be drawn to the sections headed 'Implications to SIM' and 'Third World Contradictions' so that all members will be careful to accord proper consideration to the role of women in SIM.

A minute from the International Council in 1990 requested that the General Director commission a study on how to include women on the International Council. It is not clear if this was done, although by 1992 the Council included two women.⁴⁹ During his tenure as International Director, Plueddemann continued this commitment, noting in an article of the mission periodical, *SIMNOW*, in 1995 that 'Today women comprise two-thirds of the SIM missionary workforce. The mission encourages the participation of women in the Board of Governors, in area councils, and in other leadership roles'.⁵⁰ Plueddemann appointed three women to senior leadership positions during the mid-1990s. The first was Becky Welling, appointed as leader in SIM Sudan, because of the vision she had for the work in Sudan and Plueddemann's appreciation of her leadership gifts. He recalled resistance from a senior male leader in SIM when he made the appointment. He saw similar vision in Dr Aletta Bell whom he appointed as Country Director in India, and over the following years witnessed significant growth of SIM's team in India under her leadership. He also appointed Marjorie Barham as Chief Financial Officer of the mission.⁵¹ A female missionary serving as a field treasurer in Asia at the time of Barham's appointment recalled some surprise from fellow missionaries that a woman should be appointed to

⁴⁹ 'Women in Leadership in SIM', notes, background information and discussion compiled from research done by Larry Dick, Bob Arnold, Dr Ian Hay, Dr Harold Fuller and others, June 2003, McGregor personal papers.

⁵⁰ Jim Plueddemann, 'Wanted: More Good Women', *SIMNOW* 71, Summer 1995.

⁵¹ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

this senior financial role.⁵² As Chief Financial Officer, Barham was part of Plueddemann's executive team, the 'inner circle' as he described it. When JoAnn Brant became Director of Communications, she also became part of that group.

While there continued to be those in the mission who were resistant to women taking on these roles, such appointments were perhaps behind McGregor's observation, when he took over as International Director in 2004, that the organisation had faced up to the 'gender issue'.⁵³ Mary Evans, at that time Chair of the UK Council of SIM, and a Member of the International Board of Governors, was a lecturer in Old Testament at London School of Theology (formerly London Bible College) and had already written a number of papers on the role of women. She recalled being able to support SIM leaders in decisions to appoint women in leadership by showing them biblical arguments in favour of women in leadership roles. 'The fact that they had somebody who could actually argue for it theologically was significant', she explained. Evans argued that to encourage and include a female point of view, or an African or Asian point of view, will illuminate Scripture in a way that a white, male, classically educated, middle-class point of view could not do. Without it, she observed, 'we will not hear what God is saying'.⁵⁴ The distinction between a church and a mission organisation, and how SIM was perceived, was also significant in this context. This was discussed by the Board of Governors in 1992, and addressed by Hay during his leadership tenure, noting 'we have argued in the past that SIM is not a

⁵² Described by Evans, interview, 25 October 2016.

⁵³ McGregor, interview, 26 September 2016.

⁵⁴ Evans, interview, 25 October 2016.

church, rather a mission society or organisation. Therefore the structure of SIM should not be a model which the churches must follow'.⁵⁵

The documents made available to me regarding the discussion surrounding the question of women in leadership in SIM show that the focus was very much on the internal attitudes and practice, administration and organisation of the mission itself, and its ministries. There is no suggestion that the attitudes and policies of the mission were used to try and influence the policies of churches which were planted by SIM, and had since matured to independence. McGregor observed that from his experience, SIM had remained at a distance and allowed these churches to govern themselves with no formal intervention or direction from SIM on such issues. He noted diversity in attitudes towards the role of women in churches with which SIM worked in partnership, observing more openness in Singapore and some of the Presbyterian denominations in Korea, in contrast to some in South Africa and North America who would have been more resistant. He also described a developing openness to women taking on more senior roles in the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, something he had not seen in ECWA, Nigeria.⁵⁶

Acknowledging that in some countries in which SIM works, it may not be appropriate for women to take on certain roles because of cultural sensitivities,⁵⁷ leaders such as Plueddemann and McGregor stood by their commitment to women in

⁵⁵ 'Women in Leadership in SIM', research by Dick, Arnold, Hay, Fuller.

⁵⁶ McGregor, interview, 20 June 2018.

⁵⁷ Noted under 'Practices of directors regarding selection of leadership in SIM' in 'Women in Leadership' compilation of research.

these roles in the face of resistance and tension. McGregor recalled a disagreement regarding the role of a female missionary involved in church planting in South America; the debate surrounding some of the theological issues related to her role eventually led to the resignation of an SIM USA Board Member. An email discussion amongst senior women in SIM concerning the role of women in the organisation, and what was being done to support and encourage them in their ministries, was initiated by Liz McGregor, Special Assistant to the International Director, in 2006. It is clear that the subject had been on the agenda of the Board of Governors and International Leadership team for several years prior to this. It had been recognised as a subject on which mission members may hold different opinions, but as with any other ‘divisive issue’, such views were anticipated and accepted within the mission if they were not overemphasised or expressed in a way that threatened the harmony of the mission. In the paper compiled on the issue in June 2003 referenced above, it was stated that ‘the encouragement to accept qualified women in leadership roles has not been a divisive issue in SIM’; only a ‘very few’ had felt unable to ‘continue in the fellowship of the Mission’ as a result of the appointment of a woman to a particular role. If this were to grow, the matter would perhaps be considered as divisive, and would be reviewed at the ‘highest levels’.⁵⁸ Responses received during the Seize the Day review included the opinion that there should be more encouragement for women to hold roles of leadership in the mission.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Women in Leadership in SIM’, research by Dick, Arnold, Hay, Fuller, 26.

⁵⁹ Responses to ‘Seize the Day’ questionnaires, McGregor personal papers.

A paper written in July 2003 entitled ‘The Mystery of the Missing Leaders’ highlighted ‘cultural blinders’ in the organisation which it suggested may include overlooking the gifts of a woman for a director role because of her gender. A ‘Justice Task Force’ which was commissioned in 2009 reported to the SIM Board of Governors in 2010 and included a chapter on gender equality. Its stated focus was on the value of women and on gender issues which could demean them, rather than specifically engaging in the debate surrounding the role of women in church leadership. Within this aim, the report raised questions regarding attitudes and assumptions that may have been held towards women, and the positions they held or might be considered for, within SIM, alongside its consideration of SIM ministries amongst women in need due to discrimination or abuse. It concluded:

In order to be a better reflection of God’s global church, SIM is actively seeking to hear the voice of people of different cultural backgrounds. To this same end, we must also intentionally seek a greater inclusion of the voice of women in the mission and in our ministries. If the contributions of women are absent in our churches and ministries, we are missing half the story.

The report also noted the growing representation of women on the International Council, recording the statistics of the first two women to join the council in 1992, by virtue of their position on the SIM International staff. In 1994 there were three women. In 2006 it was recorded that eight of the 53 International Council participants were female; however, at least three of these were present for administrative support and were not voting members, and at least one was an observer. At the 2009 International Council, of the 48 people present, there were five female members (four by virtue of elected positions), two female observers, and two

females in administrative support.⁶⁰ The first female Deputy International Director, Diane Marshall, was appointed by McGregor, taking over from Andrew Ng with responsibility for SIM's work in Asia in January 2012. She believes her appointment to be 'a reflection of SIM's commitment to diversity more generally, including women in senior leadership positions'.⁶¹ In a paper written in 2014, 'Charting Change in SIM, Ten Years On', Keith Walker, International Strategic Development Director, noted the significant addition of non-western men and women to the senior leadership of the mission from 2004-2014, and the growing numbers of female and non-western leaders as country leaders during the same time: of 36 country directors in 2004, only two were women and two were non-western, both Directors in Asian sending offices. This had increased to nine women and 21 non-western out of 54 country leaders in 2014.⁶² Of the missionaries who completed research questionnaires for this project, only two respondents referred to the issue of gender diversity; both of them were women, one from Latin America who observed a 'good level of acceptance of women in leadership, and both male and female leaders interacting in the organization' in a way which she felt set a good example to other organisations where the leadership was male-dominated.⁶³ The other respondent came from a western background and expressed concern at the predominance of men in positions of leadership which she had observed when attending a recent SIM Global Assembly. She went on to ask: 'Is this Biblical or cultural? Because of the

⁶⁰ 'Gender Equality', Justice Task Force, Report to Board of Governors, June 2010, McGregor personal papers.

⁶¹ Diane Marshall, email interview, 5 January 2017.

⁶² Keith Walker, 'Charting Change in SIM, Ten Years On', February 2014, Walker personal papers.

⁶³ Anonymous email, 24 November 2017.

positions of women in some cultures, is SIM holding back in placing women in positions of leadership?’⁶⁴

This brief survey of attitudes and observations regarding the issue of gender diversity within SIM demonstrates an intention at leadership level to encourage and include women at every level of leadership. Little archival data and information on the issue was made available for my research; observations have been drawn primarily from interviews and reports or papers provided through personal contact and correspondence. This anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that for some, while there is a sense of progression and increase in female representation in positions of responsibility within SIM, there is frustration that male leadership is still the predominant situation and there is further progress to be made in the area of gender diversity. For others, their focus was strongly on cultural diversity, and this issue did not form part of their thinking regarding how diversity is defined in the mission. Attitudes and perceptions that were shared on the issue were varied, and perhaps inevitably reflect the gender, beliefs and opinions of those who felt strongly enough about the issue of gender diversity within SIM to raise it as a topic.

Limitations of Diversity within SIM

Interviews conducted for this study also questioned respondents, primarily at leadership level, regarding the limits to diversity within SIM. McGregor, Corwin and Dave Bremner, Deputy International Director for East and Southern Africa,

⁶⁴ Anonymous email, 23 December 2017.

remarked on the way that within secular society the meaning and understanding of the term diversity has changed significantly in recent years. McGregor noted that when the core value ‘strengthened through diversity’ was developed in SIM in 2004, the immediate understanding of diversity to include gender identity was not there.⁶⁵ In the same context, Bremner stressed that the wording did not reflect ‘the nuances or meanings that the word “diversity” has accumulated in the last decades related to gender identity and the LGBT movements’.⁶⁶ A number of respondents addressed the question of SIM’s response to homosexuality and gender identity, recognising the changing attitudes in modern society and anticipating that this may become a more pressing issue in the years ahead. As noted above, this issue will demand the attention of SIM’s leaders in future, if it is not already doing so. Its significance within societal discussions surrounding diversity has risen rapidly in very recent years, but during the years on which this thesis is focused, it was not the focus of SIM’s commitment to diversity which was to ethnic and cultural diversity.⁶⁷

As already highlighted in this chapter, the limits of theological diversity are clearly defined by SIM’s statement of faith; completion of a doctrinal questionnaire forms part of the selection process for all mission members and that theological boundary was emphasised by almost all of those who responded to the question of where the limits to acceptable diversity in SIM lay. For Plueddemann, that statement of faith and foundation of Scripture defined those limits.⁶⁸ The statement of faith declares

⁶⁵ McGregor, interview, 26 September 2016.

⁶⁶ Dave Bremner, email, 5 January 2017.

⁶⁷ See introduction, page 14.

⁶⁸ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

that the Bible ‘is the final authority in all matters relating to belief and behaviour’.⁶⁹ Walker expressed his response in this way: ‘the limits are those that are defined by the gospel, so that means that we can take people from all sorts of backgrounds so long as they are wanting their lives to be governed by the gospel’. His concern was that considerations that are marginal to the gospel as defined by the New Testament scriptures should not be those that define the limitations of diversity within the mission.⁷⁰ Bogunjoko was particularly clear in his response to this question: ‘Our biggest limit is theological: our Biblical theological position on historic, evangelical theology. That is the limit of our diversity, because the Bible says two cannot work together unless they agree. We agree on that and that is not ethnic, it’s a theological position’.⁷¹ International Personnel Director, Helen Heron, recognised potential practical limits of diversity, including difficulty in getting a visa for some nationalities in particular countries; the issue of language limitations to ensure that a missionary is able to communicate with their team members in a common language for orientation, pastoral and practical needs, an issue also highlighted by Diane Marshall; and possible economic limitations for some where the costs of serving in a country are prohibitive for someone from a poorer sending country who may be struggling to raise financial support.⁷² The overwhelming response to this question, however, re-emphasised SIM’s conservative evangelical position and anticipated little openness to any flexibility within those boundaries.

⁶⁹ SIM’s statement of faith, www.sim.org/mission-purpose-and-vision. Accessed 29 August 2019.

⁷⁰ Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

⁷¹ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

⁷² Heron, interview, 8 September 2016. The financial support structure in SIM will be discussed in chapter 5, page 209; team language will be discussed further in chapter 6, page 260.

Conclusion

Defining diversity in SIM is a somewhat slippery subject. The perceptions and understandings expressed on these questions inevitably reflect something of the person being asked, as well as their experience and ministry setting, and their use of language related to ethnic and cultural diversity. The introduction of ‘Multicultural Teams Training Workshops’ in the mission in 2005, which will be discussed in chapter 6, demonstrates a broad use of the term ‘multicultural’ found widely within SIM, to refer to teams made up of different nationalities, cultures and ethnicities. This lack of precision in the use of language related to aspects of diversity within SIM is reflected in the variety of terms used to express the nature of that diversity. The international and interdenominational vision and values of the mission from its early years are most clearly seen in this period from 1975-2015 in a specific, stated, and intentional commitment in SIM’s leaders to pursue cultural and ethnic diversity and to value the richness it brings to the organisation. Plueddemann commented that SIM ‘needs the kind of diversity that promotes the purpose of the mission’; diversity is the means, not an end in itself.⁷³ The following chapters will explore some of the key issues of increased diversity in SIM, beginning with how increasing cultural diversity in the mission has affected church-mission relationships.

⁷³ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

Chapter 4: Key Issues of Increased Diversity –

The Changing Shape of Mission-Church Relations in SIM

This and the following chapters will discuss some of the key issues of increased diversity that have arisen in SIM. This chapter will focus on the changing shape of mission-church relations in SIM as the cultural diversity in the organisation has increased, and consider the development of ideas regarding the relationship between church and mission alongside this growth of diversity.

The Wider Context of SIM's Story

The developments taking place within SIM should be understood in the wider context of events and attitudes seen in the changing relationship between church and mission during the period of my research. At the centre of this relationship is the growth and maturing of the young churches in the majority world, seeking increasing independence and autonomy from the western missions which planted them. The emergence of nations from colonial rule during the period immediately prior to the start of my research, and the complex issues surrounding independence, dependency, and the potential of successful partnership relationships between church and mission, were prominent during the 1980s and 1990s and were discussed and debated in articles in the *EMQ* throughout these decades.¹ This chapter will include a sample of

¹ *EMQ* archives available at <https://missionexus.org/emq/emq-archives>. See for example Charles H. Troutman, 'Ten Commandments for Missionaries from the Standpoint of National Church Leaders', (January 1982) and 'Ten Commandments for Nationals from the Standpoint of Missionaries' (April 1982), Panya Baba, 'We Need to Work Together to Develop Good Relationships', (April 1990) and Glenn J. Schwartz, 'Cutting the Apron Strings' (January 1994).

EMQ articles addressing these issues, many written by non-SIM authors, in order to set SIM's debates and understanding in a broader context.

The German Lutheran missiologist Peter Beyerhaus – whose doctoral studies at Uppsala under Bengt Sundkler had been on this very theme² – described the challenge and uncertainty newly autonomous churches faced. He observed an 'element of the "have your cake and eat it" principle', describing territories emerging from colonial to self-rule assuming that the former colonial power, 'refraining from any continued domination, will be ready at all times and for old times' sake to come to the aid of the new nation if asked to do so'.³ Such tensions were evident in the changing dynamics of the relationship between church and mission. The outworking of these tensions was the overarching tone throughout much of the period, and, as will be discussed below, is clearly seen within SIM's experience, particularly in its relationship with ECWA in Nigeria.⁴

Underlying much of the discussion surrounding relations between young churches and the missions which planted them were the 'three-self' indigenisation principles, attributed to Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, that the church should become self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. The value of this approach was debated in a number of articles published in the *EMQ* including the discussion of the

² See Peter Beyerhaus, 'My Pilgrimage in Mission.' *IBMR* 24:4 (2000): 172-174, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2000-04/2000-04-172-beyerhaus.pdf>.

³ Peter Beyerhaus and Henry Lefever. *The Responsible Church and the Foreign Mission* (London: World Dominion Press, 1964), 15.

⁴ See also chapter 2, page 80-87.

concept of partnership by the American conservative Baptist missiologist, Frampton Fox. He observed that ‘much of the mission work that exists today was begun and shaped under the old paradigm known as three-self indigenous church methodology’, questioning whether this approach with its emphasis on self-governing hindered the development of partnership between church and mission. He concluded that the two were in fact complementary.⁵ Daniel Rickett, author of *Building Strategic Relationships* and *Making your Partnership Work*, emphasised the value of indigenous church-planting principles to pioneer church planting, but noted that they are not fitting to all church and mission relationships, and urged that the principles of indigenous church planting be combined with the principles of mutual dependency in order that resources could be shared effectively for the work of the gospel.⁶

In his book *The Master Plan*, Ian Hay, SIM’s International Director from 1975 to 1993, noted the impact of indigenous church principles on SIM’s pioneers, particularly in Nigeria, but cautioned that an overemphasis on the principles could result in misunderstanding between missionaries and the local church and cause isolation, division and disillusion.⁷ Geysbeek observed that well into the 1930s, SIM’s focus on evangelism and baptism meant that ‘most missionaries only observed self-support and self-propagation’. He recorded that SIM’s founder, Bingham started

⁵ Frampton Fox, ‘Partnership – More than a Buzzword’, *EMQ* (July 2001), <https://missionexus.org/partnership-more-than-a-buzzword/>. See also his article in *IBMR*, July 2006: 137-42.

⁶ Daniel Rickett, ‘Sharing Resources in Contexts of Poverty’, *EMQ* (January 2015), <https://missionexus.org/sharing-resources-in-contexts-of-poverty/>. See also *Building Strategic Relationships: A practical guide to partnering with non-Western missions*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: STEM Press, 2008) and *Making Your Partnership Work* (Enumclaw, WA: WinePress Publishing, 2002).

⁷ Ian M. Hay, *The Master Plan* (SIM USA, 2000), 61-62.

to question his own, and the mission's, lack of vision for self-governing churches in 1938; the 1939 manual 'looked forward to the time' when local churches would 'bear the full responsibility for their own work'.⁸ Nigerian Yusufu Turaki, co-founder of the Jos ECWA Theological Seminary, and General Secretary of ECWA from 1987-1993, studied the history of SIM in Nigeria and argued that before World War II, SIM was reluctant to encourage the development of African leaders, essential for self-governing churches. He attributed some of this hesitancy to a lack of missionary understanding of African culture, values and personality.⁹ In her study of evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel, Barbara Cooper described evidence of the tensions: although in principle the church was free to decide how to spend money, in reality records suggested the missionaries held the church treasury for the church and did all the bookkeeping. Cooper described the struggles evident in the late 1940s: 'the mission hoped to shape the church while maintaining a kind of paternalistic illusion of church autonomy, church members struggled to make the church genuinely autonomous while at the same time trying to retain access to the critical resources of the mission'.¹⁰ However, by 1975, the period of my research, attitudes had changed in SIM, evidenced by the establishment of ECWA in 1954 and the turnover of responsibility for SIM's ministries in Nigeria to ECWA in 1976.¹¹

⁸ Tim Geysbeek, 'The Emergence of Denominations and Related Endeavours', chapter 15 in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 188-190.

⁹ Yusufu Turaki, *Theory and Practice of Christian Missions in Africa: A Century of SIM/ECWA History and Legacy in Nigeria, 1893-1993* (Nairobi, Kenya: International Bible Society Africa, 1999), 490, 514, quoted in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 394, n.19.

¹⁰ Cooper, *Evangelical Christians*, 187.

¹¹ See chapter 2, pages 80-87.

The church was at the centre of SIM's vision for mission. In the preface to *The Master Plan*, Hay wrote 'the church is God's strategic design for reaching the world; it is His Master Plan. He desires to restore the nations of the world to Himself through the biblical concept of missions, and He wills to do this through His Church'.¹² Such church-centric mission was criticised by the Dutch missiologist J. C. Hoekendijk in *The Church Inside Out* published in 1967. He argued that church-centrism 'has such a grasp on us that we don't even notice anymore how our thinking has become completely "ecclesiasticized"'.¹³ David Bosch, in his discussion of 'Elements of an Emerging Ecumenical Missionary Paradigm' observed the influence of Hoekendijk's views, supported, for example, by delegates at the WCC conferences in Uppsala 1968 and Bangkok 1973, 'expressing their frustrations with the bourgeois nature of the church, and their conviction that a new understanding and praxis of mission would lead to the renewal of the church itself'. He noted that by the time of the Melbourne meeting of the CWME in 1980, the church 'appeared to have been rehabilitated in WCC circles as an instrument of mission'.¹⁴ Bosch also noted the significance of the integration of the IMC with the WCC in 1961 as a point of 'rediscovery of the essentially missionary nature of the church'. After this integration, he recorded, many conservative evangelical agencies withdrew from the wider ecumenical movement, focusing their attentions instead on evangelical conferences such as Wheaton 1966,¹⁵ and the Lausanne Movement which grew out

¹² Hay, *The Master Plan*, 7.

¹³ J. C. Hoekendijk, L. A. Hoedemaker, and Pieter Tijmes, *The Church Inside Out* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 38.

¹⁴ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011), 393, 398.

¹⁵ A Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission was held at Wheaton College, Illinois, 9-16 April 1966, planned and sponsored by the IFMA, the missions branch of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the EFMA. It brought together representatives of over 11,000 missionaries and 100 missions, which the IFMA and EFMA associations represented to discuss common problems

of the Lausanne Conference in 1974. Tensions particularly existed between evangelical agencies and the WCC amidst concern over the WCC's attempts to recruit leaders from the denominations the agencies had planted. Hay describes SIM's response to this situation in Corwin's *By Prayer to the Nations*:

We did our best to warn the leaders [in ECWA] that their young men going to liberal seminaries would do the church damage. Then along came the International Council of Churches¹⁶ with their extreme separatist emphasis, offering the same things to the African churches. We warned about that too, and were faced with the charge that we didn't want them to get help from anybody.¹⁷

For SIM, the influence of the Lausanne Movement and its agenda was of greater importance. SIM personnel attended each of the three main Lausanne gatherings (Lausanne 1974, Manila 1989 and Cape Town 2010) in addition to Brant's involvement in the 2004 Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization mentioned in chapter 2.¹⁸ McGregor reflected on the encouragement he received on seeing the similarities between the agenda of the Cape Town conference and the priorities identified in SIM following the strategic review of 2004, observing 'What we are hearing from God inside SIM, others are talking about in the wider church'.¹⁹

The 1970s and 1980s also witnessed the height of the Church Growth movement initiated by Donald McGavran, expounded in his work *Understanding Church*

and issue a statement applying their evangelical faith to the contemporary world. See <https://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/guides/021.htm>. Accessed 29 August 2019.

¹⁶ See Stanley, *Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism*, 56, 135.

¹⁷ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 171. Hay explained that he went on to write *Unity and Purity: Keeping the Balance*, (Cedar Grove, N.J.: SIM International, 1983) to give 'the biblically based perspective to our policy'.

¹⁸ See chapter 2, page 95.

¹⁹ McGregor in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 300.

Growth, published in 1970.²⁰ McGavran's emphasis was on the numerical growth of churches and congregations, that healthy congregations were growing congregations, and that the potential for growth was greatest in 'homogeneous units' where the least number of cultural or economic barriers were to be crossed for those who might become believers.²¹ The church growth movement was discussed and debated through regular articles in the *EMQ*. In 1976, James Engel, consultant and trainer in leadership development, wrote 'it cannot be denied that the principles of church growth theory have yielded tangible benefits', yet the 'model cannot be applied indiscriminately'. An emphasis simply on numerical growth was felt to be at the expense of discipleship of new believers to maturity in faith.²² This response was echoed in an article by SIM's Jim Plueddemann, published in January 1987, in which he emphasised the realisation that the 'size of the church and rate of growth were not indicators of spiritual maturity'; 'growth in size is often unrelated to growth in spiritual depth', without which, he argued, the re-evangelisation of the world would be needed in every generation.²³ Plueddemann challenged the emphasis on measurable objectives in place of vision and faith goals in a subsequent article,²⁴ and commented in a later paper that this *EMQ* article had prompted the largest number of negative letters received by the journal's editor in response to an article. This

²⁰ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Mich. William B. Eerdmans, 1970).

²¹ Summarised by Wrogemann in Henning Wrogemann and Karl Edwin Böhmer, *Intercultural Theology, Volume Two, Theologies of Mission*, English ed. Missiological Engagements (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2018).

²² James F Engel, 'Church Growth Strategies Plus...', *EMQ* (April 1976), <https://missionexus.org/church-growth-strategies-plus/>. See also James F. Engel, & William A. Dyrness. *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* (Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity Press, 2000).

²³ James E. Plueddemann, 'Needed: An Enlarged View of Church Growth', *EMQ* (January 1987), <https://missionexus.org/needed-an-enlarged-view-of-church-growth/>.

²⁴ James E. Plueddemann, 'Measurable Objectives, No! Vision, Yes!' *EMQ* (April 1995), <https://missionexus.org/measurable-objectives-no-vision-yes/>.

suggests Plueddemann's views may have differed from a number of *EMQ*'s readership who favoured acceptance of McGavran's church growth theory. In his later paper, Plueddemann suggested that the writings of the early twentieth-century High Anglican, China missionary Roland Allen²⁵ offered a more biblical perspective on mission principles rather than the precise goals and planned measurable objectives of the Church Growth movement. Plueddemann described his experience of participating in a Church Growth seminar in Jos, Nigeria in the 1970s during which the ECWA, Hausa-speaking, church leaders were given graph paper on which to plot the growth of their church in the previous ten years, and logarithmic paper to calculate rates of growth. Most of them were 'puzzled by mathematical projections' and although 'some of them pastored some of the fastest growing churches in the world, none of them had dreamed of setting membership goals on graph paper'. Of particular relevance to this research, Plueddemann also highlighted the significance of cultural values in the debate surrounding measurable objectives, suggesting that a tolerance for ambiguity may influence attitudes towards the approach of the church growth movement.²⁶ For a culture uncomfortable with ambiguity, the precise measurable goals and objectives of the church growth movement perhaps added to its appeal.

²⁵ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours* (London: Robert Scott, 1912). Also cited by Fuller in *Mission-Church Dynamics*, 32. Lamin Sanneh has more recently discussed Allen's approach in *Disciples of All Nations Pillars of World Christianity*, Oxford Studies in World Christianity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), observing that he was 'unusual for his time and among his missionary colleagues (and) unflinching in his criticism of what he saw as wrong with mission and with the western cultural captivity of the gospel', 231 (viewed online).

²⁶ James E. Plueddemann, *Measurable Objectives, St. Paul's or Ours: Roland Allen & The Church Growth Movement*, Evangelical Missiological Society – Midwest Regional Meeting, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, April 21, 2012. Revised January 2014. <http://missionaryimpossible.blogspot.com/>.

Addressing the focus of faith missions, author of *Issues in Missiology: An Introduction*, Edward Pentecost called for a change in the approach of faith mission boards away from the sole purpose of planting local churches towards an attitude in which the missionary saw himself as part of a team, the other members of which were in different cultural contexts and social structures, but all ‘reaching out to the lost to bring them to the person of Jesus Christ’, considering the church as ‘God’s instrument in the world to accomplish his purpose’.²⁷ He highlighted the particular challenge faced by interdenominational missions: by definition they were not planting churches which were already affiliated to a denomination. Within SIM, Hay addressed this issue in his book *The Master Plan*, in which he argued ‘one of the distinct advantages an interdenominational mission has is that it is under no obligation to reproduce a church structure and polity exactly like structures elsewhere in the world’; as a result, he explained, SIM ‘has been learning and growing along with the church’ in a relationship which consisted of ‘changing patterns, growth and maturity which demand flexibility’.²⁸ These complex dynamics between mission and church were another layer of sensitivity on top of any desire of the mission to offer guidance to churches growing in maturity and becoming autonomous, guidance which might, as Herbert Kane, a former missionary in China, described it in a 1965 article, ‘be construed as neo-colonialism in religious garb’.²⁹ In an ‘Editor’s Analysis’ article published in *EMQ* in 1986, Jim Reapsome reflected on how church-mission relationships had progressed since the conference at Green

²⁷ Edward C. Pentecost, ‘Time for Faith Boards to Change Goals and Strategies?’, *EMQ* (October 1976), <https://missionexus.org/time-for-faith-boards-to-change-goals-and-strategies/>. See also Edward C. Pentecost, *Issues in Missiology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1982).

²⁸ Hay, *The Master Plan*, 60.

²⁹ J. Herbert Kane, ‘A Survey of Co-operation among National Churches Overseas’, *EMQ* (July 1965), <https://missionexus.org/a-survey-of-cooperation-among-national-churches-overseas/>.

Lake, Wisconsin in 1971 at which leaders of evangelical mission agencies had confessed their failures and called for new patterns of church-mission relationships. He quoted SIM's Ian Hay who identified the 1971 conference as 'a stimulus that affected SIM's relationship with ECWA in Nigeria in 1975 and 1976'; since then he had seen 'dramatic developments, with failures and successes'.³⁰ Reapsome acknowledged that the intolerable attitudes of paternalism, authoritarianism and lack of trust still persisted in some areas, while recognising that 'the younger generation of missionaries has brought a diminishing of the old attitudes, because most of them now realize that they must take direction from national church leaders'.

SIM as a Mission-planting Mission

In his foreword to Corwin's recent work, *By Prayer to the Nations*, McGregor highlighted the central role of the church as one of the convictions maintained by SIM throughout its history: 'the establishment of local, viable, biblically centred, growing churches that are equipped for mission', he explained, 'has always been at the heart' of the organisation's vision.³¹ SIM's commitment to achieving the growth and strength of the indigenous church, in order that it might be equipped to fulfil a missionary vision, can be found in the early history of the organisation and traced through its history to recent years in which the mission has sought to facilitate the sending of missionaries from all the nations in which it works. Thus SIM's founder Bingham recounted the visit he made to the Tangale people in Nigeria, a people he

³⁰ Jim Reapsome, 'Editor's Analysis: Green Lake '71 Revisited: Progress, Yes; but Problems Remain', *EMQ* (October 1986), <https://missionexus.org/editors-analysis-green-lake-71-revisited-progress-yes-but-problems-remain/>.

³¹ Malcolm McGregor, 'Foreword' to Corwin's *By Prayer to the Nations*, 1.

first visited in 1915, following which he appealed for two men prepared to go as missionaries to the Tangale. His request was answered by a Scot, John S. Hall, and an American, C. Gordon Beacham. Hall documented detailed observations of the Tangale's traditional religion and their practices; his manuscript was published after his death.³² By the time Bingham visited the Tangale again, twelve young men had become believers. On a subsequent visit, encouraged by the missionary working amongst the tribe, Bingham gave them 'a missionary meeting' which concluded with an offering of sixty five dollars which he sent for the work in Egyptian Sudan.

Bingham declared:

Much more important than the amount of the offering is the fact that they took a step forward in missionary work that night. Within three months, four of their own best men were sent up into the Moslem provinces to the north as the first foreign missionaries supported by them. Since then some seventy other native workers have been sent out in full-time service.³³

As Corwin observed, the ethos of inspiring indigenous initiatives in mission was there at the start of SIM's history.³⁴ This observation is underlined further by noting the establishment of the EMS,³⁵ formed by a committee of Nigerian pastors and SIM missionaries in December 1948, approved by the SIM Council in 1949, 'to send national missionaries across ethnic and cultural boundaries'.³⁶ ECWA, the association of churches which SIM planted in Nigeria, was not formed until five years later in 1954,³⁷ underlining the priority and importance SIM ascribed to the

³² John S. Hall, *Religion, Myth and Magic in Tangale*. Westafrikanische-Studien, Frankfurter Beitrage zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte 5 (Cologne: Koppe, 1994).

³³ Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years*, 52-61.

³⁴ Corwin, interview, 7 February 2017.

³⁵ See chapter 2, page 90.

³⁶ Fuller, *Mission-church Dynamics*, 236.

³⁷ See chapter 2, page 63, footnote 1.

missionary role of the church. Former International Directors Hay and Plueddemann remarked on the formation of EMS preceding that of ECWA as an indication of the mission-planting vision of SIM, as well as noting the importance of the growth of EMS in their own experience and priorities when they were in leadership in SIM.³⁸ Harold Fuller, SIM's Area Director in Nigeria at the time of the turnover to ECWA, related ECWA General Secretary Simon Ibrahim's observation that 'If the mission has done its work properly, and has prepared the church to be missionary-minded, the church should continue with the same goals of evangelism' when the mission handed over responsibility to the national church. His words suggest that the value of a mission vision was shared by ECWA's leaders.³⁹

There is a sense in which the commitment to encourage and facilitate mission workers from countries which traditionally received rather than sent missionaries was something of a return to the vision and values of the mission's earlier history. While this is recognised by several of those in present and past leadership in SIM,⁴⁰ for many members of the mission it may not be known, and the involvement of SIM in the growth of mission in countries which traditionally received rather than sent missionaries appears to have been considered as a new development. Current International Director, Joshua Bogunjoko, drew attention to events marking the centennial of SIM in 1993 in which the term 'mission-planting mission' was used to describe the organisation. He believed this may have reflected a recognition that a

³⁸ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017, and Hay in conversation with McGregor, 16 November 2017. See also chapter 2, 87-90.

³⁹ Fuller, *Mission-church Dynamics*, 121.

⁴⁰ Noted during interviews with Keith Walker (8 September 2016), Joshua Bogunjoko (7 February 2016), Gary Corwin (7 February 2017), Jim Plueddemann (18 February 2017), Ian Hay (16 November 2017).

number of people seeking to join the organisation, such as Joshua and Joanna Bogunjoko themselves,⁴¹ had approached SIM from different locations, from the churches SIM had planted, causing the leadership in the organisation to say: ‘We went out there to plant churches; now those churches are becoming mission-sending churches, we didn’t just plant churches, we planted missions’. A presentation slide Bogunjoko became aware of in 2016, shown during the centennial celebrations in 1993, demonstrated an anticipation that missionaries would be sent in many directions from all the countries in which SIM had planted churches:

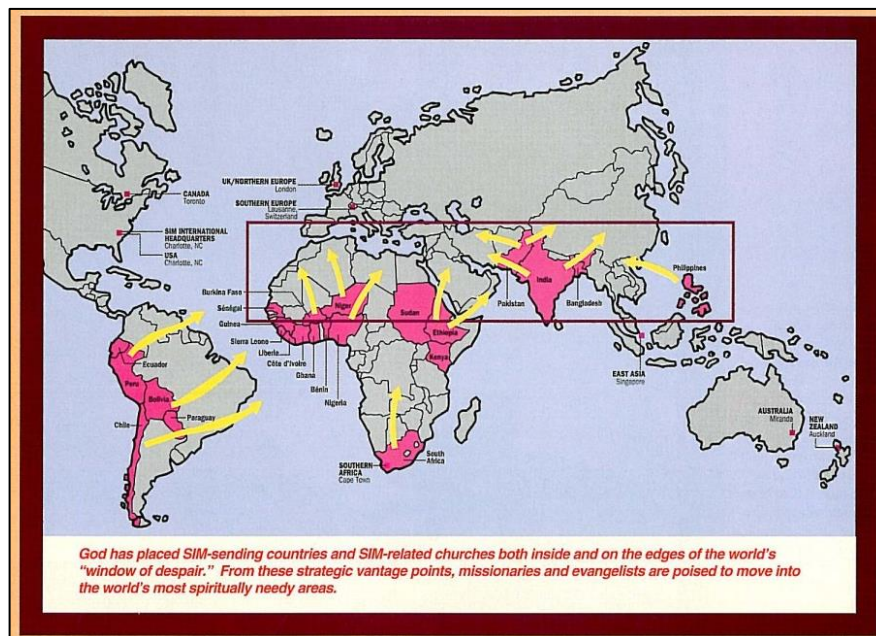


Figure 4: SIM Anticipation of Missionary Sending 1992-1993⁴²

Bogunjoko reflected that this vision became reality in what SIM became in the period that followed: ‘We are not just a church planting mission, we are a mission planting mission... because we are working with the churches they planted to also be mission-minded churches sending workers into the harvest’.

⁴¹ The Bogunjokos’ story will be discussed in chapter 7.

⁴² Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017. Presentation slide from Bogunjoko’s personal papers.

It was not long after SIM's centennial that Brant led his small team of Ethiopian missionaries from the Kale Heywet Church to India in 1998,⁴³ a significant event which precipitated a change in attitude in SIM to sending missionaries 'from everywhere to everywhere', perhaps further opening the door for churches planted by SIM to send missionaries themselves as the success of this venture was observed. In a 'Challenge 2000' document, Plueddemann called for the mission to 'intentionally seek for ways to partner with national missionaries from SIM-related churches' referencing a phrase from the SIM purpose statement 'partnering with churches around the world'. He noted Brant's work with the leadership of Evangel Fellowship on 'models of responsible partnership', and urged boldness in the face of any problems as partnerships in mission were pursued.⁴⁴

Debate and Discussion on New Models of Mission

The strategic review, 'Seize the Day' initiated by McGregor in 2004, was significant in the growth of diversity in SIM; it highlighted the change which had begun to take place, and addressed SIM's concept of mission through the questionnaires circulated to serving missionaries and through significant discussion amongst leaders in SIM surrounding Brant's 'Highway to all Nations' concept paper written in 2002, and reactions to it.⁴⁵ Questionnaires circulated within the mission included a list of topics

⁴³ See chapter 2, page 93.

⁴⁴ Jim Plueddemann, 'Challenge 2000', see Action Steps for International Administration, 29 March 2000, 16, SIM Archives. See page 160 below for more on the Evangel Fellowship.

⁴⁵ Keith Walker, 'A Highway for the Nations: A response', 15 October 2004; Howard Brant, 'A Highway for the Nations – A response to Keith Walker from Howard Brant', 16 October 2004; Jim Pfeiffer, 'Some thoughts along the (High)way', 18 November 2004, from the 'Seize the Day' papers, McGregor personal papers.

to be scored for their importance to the organisation in the following ten years. The first topic listed was ‘Missionaries from the Emerging Church’:

The churches of Asia, Latin America, and Africa are growing rapidly. With that growth, they are expressing an increasing desire to send out their own cross-cultural missionaries to foreign lands. The following questions are meant to probe the nature of this desire and SIM’s preparedness for responding to it in appropriate ways.⁴⁶

Missionaries were asked how they would feel living and working alongside a missionary from Asia, Latin America or Africa, and how SIM should help SIM-related churches in sending out their own missionaries. In a paper summarizing responses to the topic which was circulated to SIM’s International Leadership Team,⁴⁷ it was noted that replies to the ‘Seize the Day’ survey ‘confirm considerable current momentum’ in this area. Ten Area Directors, nine of them in Africa, indicated that the SIM-related church was already sending out its own missionaries or ‘had a burning desire’ to do so; in another six areas, three in Africa, other national churches were already sending out missionaries or very keen to do so, emphasising the growing vision for mission in majority world churches. It was recorded that of the SIM long-term missionaries who responded to the survey, 395 had experience of working with a missionary from majority world churches.⁴⁸ The report noted that the majority of comments made on this experience were positive, particularly

⁴⁶ ‘Seize the Day’ Missionary Questionnaire, 14, McGregor personal papers. An explanatory note clarified that ‘in the questionnaire, Asia refers to the younger Asian Churches that are just entering cross cultural missions. It does not include well-established sending countries such as Korea or Singapore’.

⁴⁷ ‘Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches’, Seize the Day, 16 December 2004, McGregor personal papers.

⁴⁸ Missionary questionnaires were sent to 1,342 individuals via Area Offices of SIM; 770 responses were received. It was suggested that some married couples may have sent in one joint questionnaire, rather than responding as individuals. Figures recorded in the ‘Seize the Day final report’, 8 January 2005, McGregor personal papers.

highlighting how much the commitment and spirituality of these missionaries was a blessing. One respondent from the US responded to the open question ‘What does SIM need to understand?’ stating ‘that the next generation of missionaries to complete the task of world evangelism probably will come not from western missionaries but from our Christian brothers in Latin America, Africa and even Asia’. Negative comments were recorded as having been a minority, and referred to missionaries from new sending countries having been culturally unprepared, as well referring to financial tensions. A respondent serving in Benin expressed concern that the ‘SIM-related church’ did not understand the function of a mission organisation, or how a missionary was supported in prayer and finances by their sending church, questioning how the church would ‘view and meet the need to support’ any of their own members who might be called to serve as missionaries in the future.⁴⁹

The opinions and thoughts of national church leaders were sought as part of the ‘Seize the Day’ review.⁵⁰ Leaders were asked how SIM might help them to send out their own missionaries. Their responses showed a ‘strong requirement for help in training, advice on establishing their own sending agency, facilitating missionaries serving alongside SIM missionaries, and locating financial resources’ with the majority of responses requesting ‘much help’ in these areas. On the much-debated question of whether or not their missionaries should become full members of SIM, the response was more ambiguous with equal numbers of responses indicating ‘no

⁴⁹ ‘What SIM should understand – sample 360’, Seize the Day Papers, October 2004, McGregor personal papers.

⁵⁰ Church leaders from twenty countries, the majority African, responded through interview, focus groups or questionnaires, National Church Leaders Questionnaires, ‘Seize the Day’ papers, McGregor personal papers.

help' and 'much help' should be given to enable church members to become full SIM members.⁵¹ Missionary comments also revealed strong and varied opinions on the way forward in encouraging missionaries from the emerging church. A response from a missionary in Burkina Faso stated:

SIM needs to understand that we are not God's only answer to world missions. Let us remain a good vehicle for western missionaries to get from their home countries to some of the neediest places on earth. Let the Latin Americans, Asians and Africans build their own sending agencies and support their own missionaries. And let them bypass SIM and do it directly if that is what they want to do. Please do not go down the 'highways road' [a reference to Brant's 'Highway to all Nations' vision].

This deep concern that SIM should not see itself as the only solution to enabling missionaries from what were traditionally 'receiving' rather than 'sending' countries was expressed by several respondents to the 'Seize the Day' survey. A missionary in Kenya urged SIM to understand 'that there are alternative and creative ways' for national missionaries to join international teams without being full members, and without putting 'the burden of their financial support on the mission members'; while a respondent serving in Nigeria argued that SIM 'should remember their foundational purpose to establish national churches and equip them to send out their own missionaries. It is unnecessary (and perhaps defeating our own purposes) to think we are the mission channel through which all people may go anywhere in the world'.

These sample comments and observations represent a number of responses illustrating the depth of feeling and expressing concern that SIM was considering

⁵¹ 'Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches', 3.

itself to be the organisation through which missionaries from new sending countries should be sent. The Kenyan respondent highlights an issue raised by a number of missionaries centred on the financial implications of facilitating the sending of missionaries from poorer nations. There seemed to be a significant concern regarding how this could be implemented within SIM's financial structures without putting a burden on already serving missionaries.⁵² One response from Ecuador expressed it in this way: 'SIM needs to develop sending and financial structures to allow all nationalities, coming from all classes, to be able to be SIM missionaries. This involves developing structures... [and having] financial expectations that make sense... not just [in] the western reality.'⁵³ The effects of SIM's increasing cultural diversity on its governance, personnel and financial structures and processes will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. These comments showed that significant change would be required if a new model of mission was to be embraced. Within the context of the 2004 review, it was apparent that a minority of respondents held strong opinions against welcoming missionaries from new countries into the SIM financial system, perhaps driven by personal motives and concern on how the amount of financial support they would have to raise might be affected.

It is somewhat dangerous to generalise, but reluctance to see SIM becoming the organisation through which these new missionaries would be sent appears to have been strongest in some of the historic SIM fields in West Africa, with more openness to welcoming new nationalities into the mission coming from some Asian and Latin

⁵² See chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

⁵³ Missionary comments recorded in 'OpenUnderstand 360 sample', Seize the Day papers, McGregor personal papers.

American SIM fields, and from the sending offices such as New Zealand. It was perhaps easier for younger missionaries and those in less well-established mission contexts to embrace the prospect of change. The fact that the churches planted by SIM in these historic fields were more well-established and in some instances, such as ECWA mentioned above, already had their own mission agency, was probably behind some of the reluctance expressed. Certainly, a number of responses from Ethiopia focused on relationships with the church and the importance of enabling the church to grow. Several missionaries expressed concerns that SIM should not take over from the church, or act in a way that would weaken the national churches in any way. This was acknowledged in the summary report on the topic which noted ‘the real possibility of the potentially negative impact on church-related missions of SIM seeking to recruit their prospective missionaries, thereby stifling their own initiatives as senders.’⁵⁴ SIM, an interdenominational mission agency, had planted churches which, in some contexts such as Nigeria, had grown and become established as denominations with their own mission agency; the question of whether or not missionaries should therefore be sent through SIM or by national mission agencies was a subject of debate. In a paper written as part of the review entitled ‘SIM in a World of Change – Assets and Liabilities for Ministry in the Context of New or Shifting Realities’, Corwin commented that SIM had ‘historically seen its role as being a mission-planting mission and not just a church-planting one’, putting it ‘ahead of the curve in recognizing, helping to develop, and partnering mission movements from the emerging church’. SIM’s sending and ministry offices which already existed in Africa, Asia and Latin America contributed to this position,

⁵⁴ ‘Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches’, 6. The complex relationships between church and mission will be discussed in the second half of this chapter.

however, expansion of structures would be necessary in order to send SIM members from these regions, or to partner with other mission agencies based in the majority world.⁵⁵

The debate surrounding the ‘Highway to the Nations’ concept was referenced by a handful of missionaries in their response to the open questions included in the ‘Seize the Day’ questionnaire which asked what three things SIM needed to understand, and what three things SIM should do; those expressing opposition to the ‘Highway’ concept did so very strongly.⁵⁶ Brant’s Highway concept paper was first written in 2002, and the idea had already been shared around the mission before the ‘Seize the Day’ review was initiated.⁵⁷ However, the review created specific opportunity for the concept to be discussed and for those around the mission to express their opinions more formally. For some, their concern was for SIM to work out its future role – was that to be an organisation sending western missionaries, or to become a ‘Highway for all nations’? For others, it was to emphasise the importance of careful planning in order that this new concept could be facilitated. A respondent from Paraguay called for ‘intense study and research concerning the ramifications of sending missionaries from Asia, Africa and Latin America’ continuing, ‘this can be a very positive move, but it should be done with excellence and thorough preparation and most importantly God’s leading.’⁵⁸ An observation from New Zealand stressed the implications and challenges that could lie ahead: ‘The true mission “from everywhere to everywhere”

⁵⁵ Corwin, ‘SIM in a World of Change – Assets and Liabilities for Ministry in the Context of New or Shifting Realities’ in ‘Seize the Day final report’, 42-47.

⁵⁶ See Burkina Faso respondent above on page 149.

⁵⁷ See chapter 2, page 93.

⁵⁸ Missionary comment in ‘OpenDo 360 sample’, Seize the Day papers, McGregor personal papers.

concept will mean sacrifice for the traditional missionary. It would totally revolutionize SIM as we see it today. Are we ready for that? I believe we have to be'.⁵⁹

Alongside these survey responses, there was discussion of the concept in papers written to respond to Brant's paper in the context of the review and SIM's efforts to discern its way forward as an organisation. Keith Walker, who took over from McGregor as Director of SIM in the UK, responded to Brant's paper posing two questions: firstly, 'if mission should be conceived of as a highway, what part of the highway is SIM called to build?' Walker identified 'power in the highway metaphor if it is understood to refer to the mission of the church in the world', and if it was agreed that SIM itself was not the highway. Secondly, he questioned the adequacy of the highway metaphor itself, urging recognition that Christian communities seeking to send missionaries should be helped to 'develop transport means suitable to them and the places they want to get to', rather than simply be offered 'on-ramps and off-ramps to our high-dollar toll-road', advising that SIM should have the humility to know how to encourage and facilitate new missionaries, but not to get in their way.⁶⁰

In his response, Brant explained that while writing 'directly to SIM', his audience was much wider; he hoped 'all established mission agencies' would catch the vision for a strategy to enable missionaries to be sent from the majority world. He argued, however, that SIM was uniquely placed for this role due to its connection with close

⁵⁹ 'Open questions Second Sample Batch – Do', Seize the Day papers, McGregor personal papers.

⁶⁰ Walker, 'A highway for the Nations: a response', 15 October 2004, McGregor personal papers.

to 20,000 related church congregations around the world, and ‘a structural highway that already links 46 nations of the world’ through its existing offices and networks. This view was endorsed by a survey response from SIM in East Asia which stated that ‘SIM’s history put it in a position to contribute to the growth of the church and mission in Asia’. At the time of writing, Brant highlighted that there were 78 Korean missionaries already serving with SIM, and structures for sending missionaries were rapidly developing in Latin America. However, particularly in Africa, the structures for sending missionaries cross-culturally were lacking, and his proposal was that SIM should ‘become the kind of mission that offers them a sufficiently flexible way (noting that SIM is an expensive mission) of getting from where they are to the countries in the world where we work’. Addressing the concept of a two-way highway, Walker had also raised the question of the ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ functions of SIM offices, highlighting the significance of the ‘from – to’ distinction which he argued was fundamental to cross-cultural ministry. Both Walker and Brant highlighted the need for a distinct sending council where missionaries were to be sent from countries which traditionally only received missionaries in order that this distinction was maintained.⁶¹ A further paper written as part of the ‘Seize the Day’ review called for recognition that ‘maximum internationalness is a divine work’ which will not be fulfilled until eternity, and while acknowledging the worth of a core value of being international, described the reality and inevitable limitations of SIM’s capacity to be fully international. SIM’s organisational limits were also highlighted, proposing the development of an ‘arm’ of the organisation to ‘advise,

⁶¹ Brant, ‘A Highway for the Nations – A response to Keith Walker from Howard Brant’, 16 October 2004, ‘Seize the Day’ Papers, McGregor personal papers.

assist and facilitate new movements of missionaries' rather than incorporating them into SIM.⁶²

As the project team reviewed these papers and the feedback in surveys and questionnaires, their conclusions outlined in the topic summary paper on 'Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches' acknowledged the need for further clarification and definition of the way SIM could continue to facilitate and incorporate missionaries from the majority world into its workforce, including structural, membership and financial issues, and an awareness that the goal of achieving sending and receiving functions in all SIM locations could only be achieved by proceeding at different paces in different locations. The clearly stated desire 'to assist majority world churches to be increasingly involved in world mission, by whatever means', and the explanation that SIM was 'not driven by a desire to increase recruitment' was made strongly. Recommendations were also made that the implications and responsibilities for the organisation as a whole, and individual missionaries, who could soon be working in an increasingly multicultural environment, must be addressed seriously.⁶³ The 'Seize the Day' Final Report stated that SIM's involvement in the 'Emerging Missions Movement' would take two forms. The first was 'encouraging and facilitating people from majority world churches to become involved in missions in situations where SIM will not be their sending agency', and secondly, 'recruiting and deploying missionaries from the

⁶² Jim Pfeiffer, 'Some Thoughts Along the (High)way', 18 November 2004, Harare. Seize the Day papers, McGregor personal papers. Pfeiffer was a member of AEF, becoming part of SIM with the 1998 merger when he became an Area Director in Southern Africa.

⁶³ 'Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches', 8-9.

majority church who will serve with SIM'. This two-pronged approach appears to support missionaries from new sending countries sent by their own denomination, and also welcome those who preferred to join an interdenominational mission and serve with SIM. In an interesting note, explaining that the term 'Highway for the Nations' had become associated with 'different and differing aspects' of the emerging missions movement, the report suggested that for the sake of clarity the term be given less prominence in future.⁶⁴ In a paper he wrote in November 2004, reflecting on the process and outcomes of the 'Seize the Day' review, McGregor referred to SIM becoming a 'mission enabling movement', and of ending 'the sending/receiving paradigm of mission that was founded in Christendom – the new paradigm is mission enabling'.⁶⁵

In the interviews conducted for this research, there was a clear sense of the significance of the 'Seize the Day' review in the process of development of cultural diversity in the organisation, the debate surrounding it, and the implications of further embracing diversity within the mission. Genuine debate, disagreement, and real communication was taking place regarding SIM's role and relationship to national churches in the changing dynamic in world mission. The review provided a forum in which views could be shared by missionaries and leaders in SIM, but significantly, as shown above, it also invited comment from leaders in churches with which SIM was related. The practice of inviting church leaders and partners to be part of a review process was continued during a series of 'SIM Country Reviews'

⁶⁴ 'Seize the Day final report', 8 January 2005, 148, McGregor personal papers.

⁶⁵ Malcolm McGregor, 'Seize the Day International Director's Paper', November 2004, 9, 12, McGregor personal papers.

which were carried out in the years after ‘Seize the Day’.⁶⁶ As the responses to ‘Seize the Day’ were analysed, different attitudes and perceptions were clearly evident. Some respondents expressed concern regarding ‘the potential loss of SIM’s corporate identity and culture’.⁶⁷ Gillian Phillips⁶⁸ suggested this response may have come from some of the countries in which the team was majority North American,⁶⁹ and as David Dryer⁷⁰ observed, echoing Reapsome’s thoughts referenced above regarding generational change in attitudes,⁷¹ perhaps an older generation for whom the identity and culture of SIM was very much North American. There is a sense in which there was a fear of change and disharmony if SIM was to leave behind the old model of sending and receiving nations, and embrace the concept that every nation could be a sending nation.⁷²

Phillips highlighted another significant issue as she reflected on the issues raised by the review, asking ‘who has the voice?’ As the Asian influence had begun to grow, and Latin American countries were beginning to send missionaries, perhaps some in the traditional western sending nations, and those missionaries serving in long-established SIM fields in Africa, which would in the past have had the strongest influence, were feeling threatened by the implications of the way the organisation was moving, and unsure about the growth of other influences and voices within it.⁷³

Their long-held identity as western missionaries seemed to be at risk. Corwin

⁶⁶ Gillian Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016, and Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

⁶⁷ ‘Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches’, 6.

⁶⁸ See chapter 3, page 107-8.

⁶⁹ Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

⁷⁰ See chapter 2, page 89.

⁷¹ Reapsome, ‘Editor’s Analysis: Green Lake ’71 Revisited’, see page 142 above.

⁷² Marshall, email interview, 9 January 2017.

⁷³ Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

observed that the increasing number of cultures in the mission resulted in ‘a more balanced approach’ to ministry as it brought different perspectives together, and saw the ‘Seize the Day’ review as marking something of a turning point as it recognised the increasing cultural diversity that had already taken place within the organisation and began a ‘more aggressive approach’ to the outworking of that change.⁷⁴

The growth of the missionary force from the majority world was discussed in a series of articles in the *EMQ* throughout the 1990s and 2000s.⁷⁵ Within SIM, following the ‘Seize the Day’ review, Dave Bremner, one of McGregor’s leadership team, described ‘a deep transition from the concept that only wealthy, western nations were the source of missionaries and mission movements’, to the concept of ‘every nation could be a mission sending nation’ becoming the norm in SIM’s concept of mission. He observed that some experienced SIM missionaries found it difficult to adjust to the idea that missionaries from the countries in which they had been serving could become mission colleagues,⁷⁶ perhaps feeling their role as helper or teacher was threatened. For churches which had historically always received missionaries to help them, there was also a need to re-think their relationship with SIM as it became an organisation which could help them send their own missionaries.⁷⁷ McGregor described a sense that in the past SIM had put up barriers that were too high for church partners who wanted to become a part of SIM as missionaries; while their own mission endeavours, such as those of EMS in Nigeria, were encouraged and

⁷⁴ Corwin, interview, 7 February 2017.

⁷⁵ *EMQ* archives, <https://missionexus.org/emq/emq-archives>. See for example Brad Walz, ‘The Hard Road to Mission Vision in National Churches’ (October 1994) and Stan Guthrie, ‘Looking under the Hood of the Non-Western Missions Movement’ (January 1995).

⁷⁶ Dave Bremner, email, 5 January 2017.

⁷⁷ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

supported. For people such as the Bogunjokos seeking to join an international mission like SIM, it was a difficult process.⁷⁸ Building on the outcomes of the ‘Seize the Day’ review, alongside his own vision for SIM, McGregor prioritised the pursuit of an ethos of diversity within the mission, which increasingly ‘opened the door’ for people from many nations to be part of SIM.⁷⁹ Ann Christian has served as an SIM missionary for over 25 years in Bolivia, in Niger, in the UK, and most recently in leadership of one of the organisation’s growing teams in Asia. In a 2016 interview she reflected on some of the changes she had witnessed, and observed how the arrival of missionaries from different cultures, languages and ethnicities into a team working in a developed Asian context had encouraged a changing attitude from a traditional paternalistic ‘we are here to help you’ from the old mission model, to a strong focus on evangelism.⁸⁰ A difference in attitudes and approach between older well-established teams and those in newer SIM contexts is perhaps once again evident in her observations.

Driven by the vision to enable mission from everywhere to everywhere, the years of McGregor’s leadership following on from the ‘Seize the Day’ review would bring significant change in SIM’s governance and administrative processes.⁸¹ In 2015 Bogunjoko described SIM as ‘not just planting churches, we’re helping mission sending agencies develop from within the church, also within the country and enabling them to send workers to participate in God’s mission globally’.⁸² Dryer

⁷⁸ The Bogunjokos’ story will be discussed in detail in chapter 7.

⁷⁹ Ruby Mikulencak, email, 29 November 2016.

⁸⁰ Ann Christian, interview, 7 September 2016.

⁸¹ See chapter 5.

⁸² Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

commented on the more difficult question of whether attitudes had fundamentally changed in relation to SIM's concept and vision of mission, sensing that for some in the mission, there remained an 'undercurrent of we, the West, are the ones to do this'.⁸³ The vision of SIM's leadership was to encourage and enable missionaries to serve cross-culturally, whether from traditional or new sending nations. The 'Seize the Day' review had revealed some resistance and concerns about the impact of that vision, including the influence it may have on the Church.⁸⁴ The impact of SIM's increasing cultural diversity on the complex relationship between church and mission is the subject to which I will now turn.

The Changing Relationship between Mission and Maturing Church

In an article entitled 'Getting Along Together' published in 1987 in the mission periodical *SIMNow*, Ian Hay described a recent visit he had made to Nigeria as a guest of ECWA. 'Two messages came through loud and clear: The church is strong, and the relationship between SIM and the church is excellent'.⁸⁵ As the discussion in chapter 2 demonstrated, SIM's turnover of responsibility for its work in Nigeria to ECWA in 1976 was a significant event in the organisation, both in Nigeria itself and more widely in SIM as a result of the influential role events in Nigeria had throughout the mission. Paul Bowers described a 'steady purposeful effort' by SIM's leadership to achieve the transition to ECWA as part of its goal and intentions in

⁸³ Dryer, personal interview, 5 October 2016. The significance of individual attitudes in the context of increasing cultural diversity, and in the functioning of multicultural teams will be discussed further in chapter 6, page 281.

⁸⁴ Including Mary Evans, personal reflections, interview, 25 October 2016.

⁸⁵ Ian M Hay, 'Getting Along Together' in *SIM NOW* 33, 1987, 9.

mission-church relationships.⁸⁶ The outworking of the new relationship between mission and church following the turnover brought many challenges. In the early years following the turnover, the theological seminary of ECWA in Igbaja, Nigeria, invited Harold Fuller, SIM's Area Director, to give a series of lectures which formed the basis for his book *Mission-Church Dynamics*, published by the William Carey Library in 1980. Fuller identified four stages of development in mission-church relations which he expressed in the diagram below:

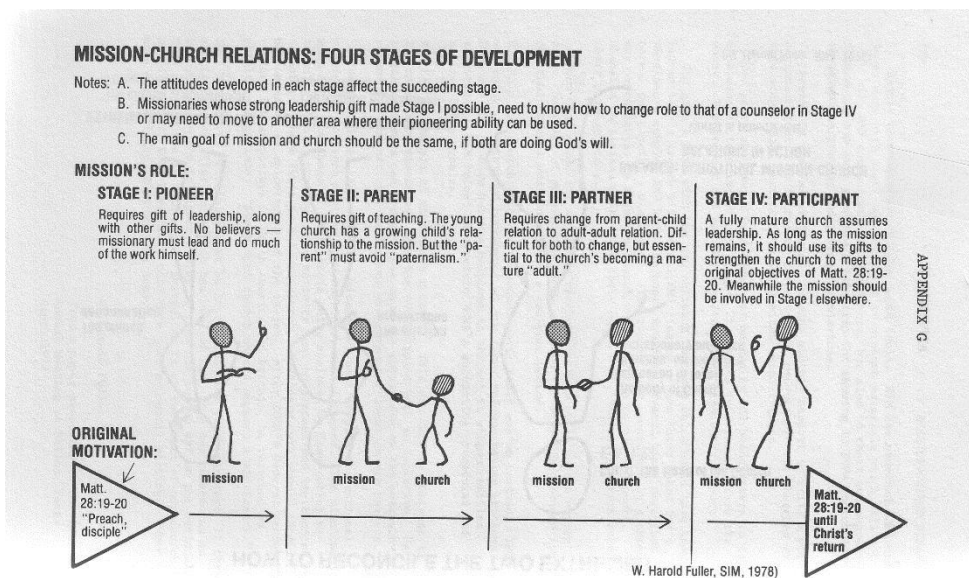


Figure 5: Mission Church Relations: Four Stages of Development⁸⁷

Stage III highlighted the difficult transition from 'parent-child' to 'adult-adult' relationship, as the church and mission worked towards a partnership relationship. Stage IV described a 'fully mature church assuming leadership', as the mission participates in the ministry. These latter stages describe what was happening between SIM and ECWA around the time of the turnover. Fuller's model of the development of church-mission relations was included in a survey article on modern mission by

⁸⁶ Paul Bowers, email, 6 January 2018.

⁸⁷ Fuller, *Mission-church Dynamics*, Appendix G, 272.

Ralph Winter in his 'Perspectives on the World Christian Movement' course, demonstrating that the concept was valued in wider discussions of the topic, and suggesting that Fuller's book was an early treatment of the subject.⁸⁸ Hay spoke in his article of the problem 'in trying to relate the nature of the mission to that of maturing churches'.⁸⁹ Fuller used the turnover as a case study in his book, and identified a 'transfer of tensions' at the turnover of responsibility. He highlighted a lack of awareness between missionaries and nationals regarding tensions they felt, particularly as they each worked under leadership styles from a different culture, and described some frank discussions between mission and church leaders as they worked through problems in the new relationship.⁹⁰ In a Nigeria Area Report from November 1981, church-mission relationships at the start of the year were said to have been 'dangerously dim, if not dark', and there were fears that 'a true partnership was not going to work'. However, by the end of the year prospects of a good working relationship looked much better; this was attributed to prayer and 'the Lord's intervention' alongside increased awareness of the perceived attitudes behind the actions of some in leadership in ECWA which were seen as 'extreme nationalism', and a greater understanding of the value of the church and mission working in genuine partnership.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Ralph D. Winter, 'Four Men, Three Eras, Two Transitions: Modern Missions' in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1992), B-37.

⁸⁹ Hay, 'Getting Along Together'.

⁹⁰ Fuller, *Mission-church Dynamics*, 228, 231.

⁹¹ 'Nigeria Area Report November 1981', 'Crucial Issues facing SIM from International Director's Consultation 1982'. Held in Consultations Box, Row E, SIM Archives.

Writing ten years after the turnover, Hay observed that SIM and ECWA had ‘realised the need for constant review’ of their relationship. Plueddemann recalled visits to Nigeria, in the early years of his tenure as International Director, which involved tensions and difficult meetings surrounding the relationship between the church and mission. Improvements came with growing understanding of the sacrifice of SIM’s early missionaries in Nigeria prompted by research done by Yusufu Turaki, and with changes in leadership, including the appointment of Rick Calenberg, a gifted SIM leader with a ‘servant attitude’.⁹² In an article published in *EMQ* in 2005, Calenberg reflected on the challenges of explaining SIM’s new role to nationals and missionaries; he observed that ‘few, if any, precedents existed where an interdenominational, international mission had fathered a daughter church in Africa and ended up as a “partner” to that church’.⁹³ Nigeria’s hierarchical culture made it even more difficult for ECWA, the daughter church, to view itself as an equal with SIM, the parent’.⁹⁴ Reverend Panya Baba, President of ECWA, was welcomed to the SIM Annual General Meeting of the Board of Governors in 1991 held in North Carolina, where he spoke on the need for partnership between church and mission. He described the help offered to ECWA to develop EMS by the secondment of an SIM missionary to ECWA as a practical demonstration of partnership. On the future relationship between SIM and ECWA, he argued that ‘there is no provision in the Word of God’ for a ‘now you can go it alone’ attitude from the West, stating that SIM, EMS and ECWA can only fulfil the task they are called to do together, not

⁹² Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁹³ The parallel story of AIM’s relationship with the church it planted in Kenya, the AIC, is discussed by Young in his PhD thesis, ‘The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya’, see chapter 2, page 86.

⁹⁴ Calenberg, ‘Mission and Church Partnership Dynamics’, *EMQ* (July 2005).

separately.⁹⁵ Calenberg described the administrative structure of the mission and the church, and missionaries' roles in it, as a 'persistent issue of concern', and observed 'No-one could have imagined that striking a balance would take twenty-two years of trial and error'.⁹⁶ The signing of a series of formal documents, with adjustments needed every five years, led to a memorandum of understanding, agreed in 1998, which stated clearly that SIM was a mission partner. This helped to resolve some continuing tensions; while SIM continued to be under ECWA for legal reasons, it was functionally an equal.⁹⁷ The memorandum 'spelled out the independent identity and complementary functions of the church and mission in an interdependent partnership for the common purpose of glorifying God by building the Body of Christ'.⁹⁸

The relationship between ECWA and SIM highlights the challenges faced as the context and dynamics of the relationship between church and mission changed; the church growing in maturity required flexibility in the approach from the mission, a situation to which less forward-thinking missionaries found it hard to adjust. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of intentions and of the strengths the other brought to the relationship, alongside the issue of who had the authority or control, seem to have been at the root of some of the tensions in Nigeria. For some in ECWA, the fact that SIM was an interdenominational mission agency, and not a denominational church, was hard to grasp. Plueddemann highlighted the challenge of

⁹⁵ Panya Baba, Address to Board of Governors AGM, in 'Minutes of the Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Board of Governors, Charlotte, NC, 29 April-1 May 1991, SIM Archives.

⁹⁶ Calenberg, 'Mission and Church Partnership Dynamics'.

⁹⁷ Anonymous email, 16 January 2018.

⁹⁸ Calenberg, 'Mission and Church Partnership Dynamics'.

different cultural understanding regarding the concept of partnership, noting that in high power distance cultures where a strong hierarchical order is accepted,⁹⁹ equal partnership is an ‘absurd concept’, since the question becomes ‘who is the senior partner?’¹⁰⁰ Plueddemann explored cultural differences such as this in his book *Leading Across Cultures*¹⁰¹ and was invited to Ghana, and later Niger, to lead seminars on the subject in the context of mission-church relationships. Steve Schmidt, SIM’s Director in Niger when the first seminar took place in Ghana in 2011, described the impact of Plueddemann’s teaching as SIM in Niger and its partner churches saw how they had ‘unintentionally been hurting one another’ through lack of understanding of the reality they each faced. Conflict had divided the SIM-related church in 1989, and relationships between SIM and the three groups had been tense. The Niger country review in 2009 had recommended that the mission make its relationship with these churches a priority; new understanding of cultural differences opened the way to forgiveness of old wounds and reconciliation.¹⁰² As SIM’s Multicultural Teams Training Workshops were developed in the years following the ‘Seize the Day’ review, an invitation was extended to local church leaders to attend some of the regional conferences with a similarly positive impact in improved cultural understanding.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Geert Hofstede defined power distance as ‘the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally’ in Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, 28.

¹⁰⁰ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017. Cultural differences and attitudes will be discussed further in chapter 6.

¹⁰¹ Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures*.

¹⁰² Jon Banke, with Steve Schmidt and Steve Brown, ‘Choosing to Reconcile’, Plueddemann personal papers.

¹⁰³ Dorothy Haile, interview, 9 September 2016. The Multicultural Teams Training Workshops will be discussed in chapter 6, page 248.

The SIM-related churches in Nigeria and Niger were part of the Evangel Fellowship, a fellowship of churches related to SIM; it grew out of a meeting between leaders from churches planted by SIM and mission leaders. In his book *The Master Plan*, published in 2000, Hay recounted its origins, describing discussions surrounding the fact of an interdenominational mission like SIM planting a church ‘without pressure from a home denomination to form a church in its likeness’, and as a result, the church groups differed from each other. What they did share was a desire for fellowship and a forum for discussion. Evangel Fellowship began on 19 June, 1981 to ‘provide SIM-related churches in Africa¹⁰⁴ with a channel for mutual communication, communion, sharing of resources, and edification to the glory of God and the fulfilment of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ’.¹⁰⁵ Any national church organisation which was ‘SIM-related’ and adhered to the fellowship’s doctrinal position could join Evangel Fellowship which would ‘relate to SIM International in fellowship and communication’. The Fellowship expanded to include denominations historically related to SIM in South America and Asia, as well as those in Africa.¹⁰⁶ The Evangel Fellowship newsletter of March 1991 recorded the struggle of SIM-related churches over the need for ‘a stronger organisation with international recognition’. As an interdenominational mission society and not a denomination, SIM had not encouraged any church to adopt the SIM name; however, the churches were asking how they should identify themselves in the international community’.¹⁰⁷ Hay recorded that as a result of ‘open communication between the

¹⁰⁴ The phrase ‘in Africa’ was changed to ‘throughout the world’ in 1990. See ‘Tracking Evangel Fellowship Resolutions 1981-1996’, SIM Archives.

¹⁰⁵ Hay, *The Master Plan*, 117-119.

¹⁰⁶ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 198.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Evangel Fellowship Struggles with the Question of Identity’ in *Evangel Fellowship Newsletter*, No. 3, March 1991, 2.

mission and the churches, for 17 years the felt needs of the churches in regard to their relationship with the mission internationally were satisfied’.

At the 1992 meeting of the Fellowship in Burkina Faso, a resolution was passed that Rev. Dr Panya Baba and Dr Howard Brant should ‘work together at the international level to complete missions research throughout the national churches of the Evangel Fellowship with a view to establishing international co-ordination for joint missionary outreach’. In February 1996, when the Fellowship met in England, it was recommended that the Fellowship formed an association called the ‘Evangel Fellowship Missions Association’ to be the missionary arm of the Fellowship, the purpose of which included enabling missionaries from ‘countries which are otherwise connected to the wider ministries of Evangel Members to participate in mission outreach’.¹⁰⁸ At the meeting of the Fellowship in 2000, the constitution of the organisation was ratified; its name was changed to ‘Evangel Fellowship International’ defined as ‘the association of national churches related to SIM’.¹⁰⁹ Corwin observed that the formation of Evangel Fellowship was a turning point helping SIM to understand the importance of ‘connectional relationships to the long-term health and maturity of the churches being formed’.¹¹⁰ The newsletters and reports published by the Fellowship display an emphasis on mission and evangelism, as well as the desire for identity and connection with other believers around the world. The relationship with SIM at International level appeared strong, with a clear desire for partnership with other churches in the Fellowship as well as with SIM.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Tracking Evangel Fellowship Resolutions 1981-1996’, 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Evangel Fellowship International News 2000’, SIM Archives.

¹¹⁰ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 198.

Plueddemann recalled the encouragement of seeing leaders from churches in different nations grow in their vision for mission as they heard testimonies of what was happening in other churches in the Fellowship. He described it as ‘a beautiful example of diversity, but it wasn’t SIM diversity’.¹¹¹ It may be that the SIM leaders who attended meetings of the Evangel Fellowship were inspired by the diversity they saw at work in the Fellowship. However, Mary Evans¹¹² expressed concern about the formation of Evangel Fellowship, suggesting it created a false unity between diverse churches linked only by the fact that they stemmed from the ministry of SIM.¹¹³

The reports and publications from the Fellowship suggest that as the period of independence in Africa had passed, the churches were keen to be associated with SIM and saw this identification as a source of strength. There is, however, some suggestion that the relationship was more complex at country level than it was with SIM internationally. The examples above from Nigeria and Niger illustrate tensions that existed, and efforts that were made to maintain good relationships. A similar process of working through ‘long-standing tensions’ between church and mission took place in Ethiopia, culminating in a ‘celebration of unity and signing of a memorandum of understanding’ between SIM and the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church in 2002.¹¹⁴ It is evident that some of these tensions were caused by missionary attitudes.

¹¹¹ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

¹¹² See chapter 3, page 107.

¹¹³ Evans, interview, 25 October 2016.

¹¹⁴ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 178.

As discussed in chapter two, attitudes of white superiority and racism were present in SIM before the internationalisation of the organisation began.¹¹⁵ This sensitive topic was addressed by the Justice Task Force in 2010 which identified a Community Service Ministry Consultation hosted by SIM in Kenya in 1993 as a ‘watershed moment in the history of race relations in SIM because the Africans who attended these meetings voiced their deep concerns about the attitudes of missionaries, and because the mission listened to and started to act on the issues that they voiced’. The Task Force’s report identified Board of Governors members Allison Howell and Howard Brant as ‘leading the fight against racism at the international level’ from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s; they were among some of the missionaries in Ghana and Ethiopia who apologised to church leaders in 1998 for the ways that the mission’s collective racism had damaged relationships and peoples’ understanding of the gospel.¹¹⁶ Howell recalled a number of meetings that took place in Ghana as a result of misunderstandings between the church and mission. A lack of understanding amongst the church leaders regarding the difference between the way in which finances were handled by a faith mission, as opposed to a church established by a denomination, was one of the key issues. Another issue was the way church leaders perceived the way they were treated by missionaries. Howell observed that on some occasions their grievances were genuine; on others an action with no ill will had been misinterpreted and led to a break down in relationships.¹¹⁷ Marshall was at the Consultation in Kenya in 1993, and suggested that ‘the voice of

¹¹⁵ See chapter 2, page 68.

¹¹⁶ In June 2009 the SIM Board of Governors requested the International Director to gather a Task Force to ‘look into the issues of social justice, including the area of gender issues, within the SIM ministry context.’ Recommendations were made to the Board in 2010. ‘Report to the SIM Board of Governors on the Research and Recommendations of the SIM Justice Task Force June 2010’, 50, McGregor personal papers.

¹¹⁷ Allison Howell, email, 18 November 2018.

SIM's church partners with increasing calls to address ethnic discrimination laid the early foundation needed before the diversity agenda could be more broadly considered'. She also underlined the significance of inter-personal relationships between church and mission leaders in this process of development.¹¹⁸ Howell suggested that in the 1980s and early 1990s, SIM as a whole was 'emerging from a "post-colonial" mentality amongst some missionaries in their attitudes towards the church and capabilities of African church leaders'.¹¹⁹ SIM has increasingly demonstrated an openness to acknowledge racist attitudes or discrimination in its past, evident in the apologies and events described above, and in the frank discussion of 'Issues of Race and Diversity' by Tim Geysbeek in Corwin's history of SIM.¹²⁰

Tensions in mission-church relationships were revealed through some of the responses to the 'Seize the Day' survey. For example, a question was raised from Angola regarding how SIM defined a mature church; the church was feeling excluded from discussion and decision-making and questioned how it was perceived by the mission. A respondent from Benin called for a greater degree of independence between church and mission, with a move away from what they described as 'a strong dependency on the mission and a fairly exclusive attitude towards other missions'.¹²¹ The need for the relationship between mission and church to be sufficiently independent to allow some freedom in ministry, while still working in partnership, was raised by respondents from several countries, including Ethiopia

¹¹⁸ Marshall, email, 9 January 2017.

¹¹⁹ Referring perhaps to the period of adjustment for experienced missionaries as the nations in which they were serving emerged from colonial rule.

¹²⁰ Geysbeek, 'Issues of Race and Diversity', in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, see especially 227-229.

¹²¹ 'OpenDo 360 sample', Seize the Day papers.

and India. The need to rethink a very close or exclusive relationship with one church partner was highlighted by several former AEF fields in Southern Africa, including Malawi and Zambia.¹²²

Underdeveloped Ecclesiology and Ambiguities of Partnership

One of the reasons for the tensions just described, and one of the complexities of SIM's relationships with the church, arose from the fact that SIM was an interdenominational mission. This could cause tensions with particular churches or denominations on the field when SIM wanted to work in partnership with more than one church. In his discussion of the patterns of relationship which developed between church and mission, Fuller identified 'indigenous responsibility' as the pattern adopted by SIM, AEF and AIM with their related churches in Nigeria, Zambia and Kenya. This pattern, he explained, develops from a partnership relation between church and mission during which the national church gains experience until it is able to take over responsibility for the work. 'The mission and church retain separate identities, but work together', the national church taking responsibility for the work and continuing in international partnership with the mission.¹²³ While the nature of the relationship between mission and church is addressed in some of the literature such as Fuller's book, and in records of the discussions surrounding the turnover in Nigeria, questions of ecclesiology are rarely addressed. This is perhaps due to SIM's focus on mission, and the nature of its tradition as an evangelical, interdenominational mission agency, with predominantly North American leadership

¹²² 'Open questions Second Sample Batch – Do', Seize the Day papers.

¹²³ Fuller, *Mission Church Dynamics*, 40-41.

at this time. Writing from the perspective of the church, and from a leadership role in ECWA, Turaki briefly addressed the question of ECWA's organisational structure in his history of SIM/ECWA. He explained that SIM rejected an Episcopal model, was sympathetic to a Congregational model, but chose a 'modified form' of the Presbyterian model of church polity when ECWA was founded in 1954. 'Powers, decision-making and policies were formulated by the Assembly or Council.'¹²⁴

Within the mission itself, discussion appears to have been much more focused on the relationship between church and mission, than on church polity. General Council Reports from 1975 included a discussion paper from Ray Davis, General Director of the mission at that time. He wrote: 'Throughout its history SIM has maintained the policy of the autonomy of the local church'. The church was always 'independent and autonomous although in the closest of fellowship with the mission'. SIM's policy was to 'maintain a partner relationship... a structure whereby both church and mission maintain separate organisational identity'.¹²⁵

The development of 'denominations' planted by an interdenominational mission resulted in a complex relationship in some SIM fields, due to misunderstanding or differences of expectation. This was highlighted by several respondents to the 'Seize the Day' survey, notably the following observation from Ethiopia which described confusion over the way SIM should relate to the Kale Heywet Church: 'We are an interdenominational mission, but not on the field. There is a tension in this. We need

¹²⁴ Turaki, *An Introduction to the History of SIM/ECWA*, 281.

¹²⁵ R. J. Davis, 'Supplement to General Council Tentative Agenda for Discussion by Councils and members of the Mission prior to General Council Meeting June 1975', dated January 15, 1975. Held in General Council 1975 Minutes and Reports, MC-1, SIM Archives.

to really look at what it means to be partners. Our current relationship is unhealthy'. Lionel Young described a similar tension faced by AIM in its relationship with the church it planted in Kenya, the AIC:

The interdenominational character of the mission was an obvious impediment, beclouding the already complex problem of mission-church relationships. How could a coalition of Evangelical missionaries from various denominations merge with a newly formed and 'independent' African denomination?¹²⁶

There are parallels between the stories of AIM and AIC in Kenya, and SIM and ECWA in Nigeria, with years of negotiation and discussion as the balance of the relationship between church and mission was worked out. There seem to be some significant differences, however. Young described an ultimatum in 1970 from the African church leaders to AIM, pressing for the fusion of church and mission, and 'calling AIM to come to terms with the new conditions in Africa'.¹²⁷ The circumstances in Nigeria differed as the turnover of 1976 was instigated by SIM, perhaps more far-sighted as an organisation than AIM, and aware of the potential dangers of the missionaries holding onto control rather than encouraging indigenous leadership in ECWA. In the SIM case, many of the negotiations and discussions to achieve a balance in the relationship followed the turnover rather than preceded it. Also in contrast to AIM's story, the debates between SIM and ECWA focused on a partnership relationship, rather than on 'merger' which was the situation Young

¹²⁶ Young, 'The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, 1939-1975', 180. In chapters 5 and 6 of his thesis, Young described tensions in the changing relationship between mission and church from 1964-75, tensions which show similarities to those experienced between SIM and ECWA in Nigeria after the 1976 turnover.

¹²⁷ Young, 'The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya', 197.

described which preceded the signing of any agreement between AIC and AIM in Kenya.

Even a partnership was not without future complications, however, and in a number of SIM countries, very close ties to partner churches came to be viewed as restrictive. A response in the 'Seize the Day' review from an SIM missionary in Bolivia underlined the challenge, stating, 'interdenominational is the way to go; we need to start breaking free of the ties that we have to the "SIM-related churches" and think on a broader scale'. These challenges would appear to be a result of the changing relationship between church and mission, as the SIM-related churches matured, and as SIM's vision to support the developing missionary vision of churches in the majority world grew. Missionaries serving in younger SIM fields such as Chile and Ecuador observed the value of having no national church partner, a model very different from the traditional pattern seen in the older African fields. They explained, 'we are convinced of the value of our non-denominational and interdenominational position' in Chile. The response from Ecuador described SIM's 'neutral presence by virtue of not being tied to an SIM-related denomination'. The tone of some of the responses to the survey displayed a level of frustration with the emphasis placed on historic partnerships with an SIM-related church, and even suggested that SIM's policies, vision and goals were often expressed in a way that assumed that nature of ministry situation in all SIM fields. A response from India urged the recognition of partnerships with already existing national mission agencies and institutions.¹²⁸ The value of working in healthy partnership with the indigenous church was evident in

¹²⁸ 'OpenUnderstand 360 sample', Seize the Day papers.

many comments. Alongside that there were expressions of desire for a relationship that gave the church the freedom to mature and pursue its own initiatives apart from SIM, and for the mission to have the freedom to work with more than one church group or denomination.¹²⁹ Alistair Hornal, former chair of the SIM Board in the UK, and member of the SIM Board of Governors, suggested that historically ‘the very real desire to be servant-hearted had actually led to the church dominating the mission in some former AEF fields’. Following the merger with SIM in 1998 there was a desire to ‘in effect renegotiate church mission agreements’.¹³⁰ Where a church had seen itself as a ‘favoured partner’ this at times led to misunderstanding or mistrust, even a feeling of abandonment as the ‘parent’ was felt to be leaving the church it had planted, the ‘child’. These contexts have been the most challenging for SIM to work through.¹³¹

The increasing diversity of the mission seems to have been helpful in addressing these tensions and improving relationships with churches. Diane Marshall, in her role as Deputy International Director for SIM in Asia, observed that the ‘changing composition of SIM’s membership was attractive to both traditional and newer sending context sending churches’, and the ‘global nature’ of SIM’s strategy and structures¹³² had been a source of strength in conversations between the mission and Korean and Indian churches.¹³³ Bogunjoko described the benefit of SIM-related churches having observed the diversity in SIM’s mission workforce, increasingly

¹²⁹ ‘Open Questions Second Sample Batch – Understand’, Seize the Day papers. See especially comments from Ghana and Zambia, 15, 46.

¹³⁰ Alistair Hornal, interview, 4 October 2016.

¹³¹ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

¹³² See discussion in chapter 5.

¹³³ Marshall, email, 9 January 2017.

made up of different nationalities and denominations, in order to encourage acceptance of the mission's desire to work with other denominations in the country. The emphasis of being interdenominational as a core value of SIM was also beneficial in enabling the mission to protect this value, even as it encouraged a denominational church to develop its own mission agency. Changes in governance, to be discussed in detail in the following chapter, have seen the appointment of national SIM Boards in each new signatory country. In Ghana the board that was appointed was made up of Ghanaians and missionaries of other nationalities; it was chaired by a Ghanaian but did not include representatives from the church SIM planted, a situation which it was felt clarified that the mission was 'not just there for the historic church partner' without stating it so directly.¹³⁴ An invitation to join the SIM East Africa Sending Office Board in September 2012 was described as 'mind-blowing' and a 'huge surprise' by the Ethiopian Baptist minister who received it. He went on to say:

Then I discovered, of all things unimagined, that there were others like me – nationals from other denominations who were invited to serve on the board: a brother from a Lutheran denomination, a brother from a Mennonite related denomination, a sister from an International Evangelical Church (IEC), a couple from an independent charismatic denomination, etc. This was my first time to hear, see and experience a longstanding and strong mission agency, such as SIM, becoming open and inclusive of nationals and even allow them to lead it!¹³⁵

He went on to describe the Ethiopian Global Mission Network, an indigenous network of close to 20 denominations, ministries and mission agencies founded six

¹³⁴ Anonymous email interview, 27 November 2017.

¹³⁵ Dr. Samuel Kebreab, SIM East African Office Board Member. Letter shown to me by Jim Plueddemann.

months after the East African Office had begun to operate, to encourage Ethiopia as a missionary sending country, and which had inspired passion for mission in church leaders in Ethiopia, as well as fostered partnership in ministry and resources.

Conclusion

SIM's vision to work in partnership with the indigenous church to encourage and facilitate congregations to be equipped for cross-cultural mission is evident in its early history, notwithstanding a reluctance to encourage the development of African leaders in the period before the Second World War, observed by Geysbeek and Turaki.¹³⁶ As the organisation broadened its approach to adapt to a new model for mission, no longer bound by traditional sending and receiving nations, but seeking to support missionaries sent from new sending nations across the majority world, SIM and some of the churches it had planted faced the challenge of a changing relationship. Change came more slowly in some of SIM's older mission fields, where there was a long-established relationship with one church, resulting in greater reluctance to embrace a new approach. The 'Seize the Day' review built on foundations for change which had already been laid during Plueddemann's tenure as International Director. As a result of the review process itself, the pursuit of increased diversity within SIM, and acceptance of it within the mission and the churches with which it worked in partnership, was accelerated. As the following chapter will show, in order to fulfil the vision to be a 'mission enabling mission',

¹³⁶ See pages 135-6.

significant change would be needed in governance structures, and in finance and personnel procedures.

Chapter 5: Key Issues of Increased Diversity –

Governance and Structures in SIM

This chapter will discuss the effects of cultural diversity on the governance and structures of SIM. The vision to become a ‘mission enabling mission’ and actively pursue an ethos of diversity demonstrated in the previous chapters would demand changes and adjustments in the mission’s governance, financial and recruitment processes. This chapter will examine the developments which took place during the period 1975-2015, and the way in which they reflect the growth of cultural diversity in SIM. Significantly, the changes which took place reflect a move from a shareholder model, in which the ‘power’ held equated to the financial contribution brought to the organisation, to a stakeholder model of governance and a recognition that the increasing diversity of SIM brought with it the need to give voice to the new countries joining the mission. The developments I will discuss demonstrate SIM’s response to the challenges to its existing systems and structures as the organisation sought to enable and support an increasingly diverse missionary workforce. One non-western Country Director in SIM observed, ‘Sometimes our structures were founded from a certain cultural perspective so don’t make it easy to embrace cultural diversity’.¹ Western models and structures came to be seen by some as barriers to greater diversity, and over the period of my research, the appetite for change grew, even in long-cherished systems such as that of missionary financial support. It is also important to note a tension that existed between the vision of SIM’s leaders, notably McGregor, to embrace diversity and ensure that the organisation’s governance

¹ Anonymous email, 21 December 2017.

structures reflected that ethos, and the national realities and different regulatory regimes in the countries which were part of SIM's structure. The desire and vision for structural change had to satisfy the laws of the countries in which SIM was represented, and while SIM's leaders sought to accommodate non-western approaches and diversify the holders of accountability in the mission, they faced increasingly stringent regulations and requirements laid down for charities in the West, such as those of the British Charity Commission and the Canadian Revenue Agency.²

The origins of SIM's governance and financial support systems reflect the characteristics of the faith missions pioneered by Hudson Taylor and CIM, founded in 1865, which emphasised simplicity in a reaction to the powerful structures of the voluntary societies and the high levels of bureaucracy created between sending churches and the missionaries they supported.³ SIM and CIM had close links through their North American Councils.⁴ An important aspect of the faith mission ethos was the central and visionary role of the mission founders, demonstrated by Taylor and Bingham in the early years of CIM and SIM respectively. Taylor's original vision was to lead his mission from China with no home structure. He led CIM from the field from its founding in 1865 until 1872 with just one home representative whose role was to forward contributions from home supporters to the missionaries in China. In 1872, Taylor was persuaded to appoint a home council, but his conviction for

² See page 193.

³ See introduction, page 19.

⁴ Alwyn J. Austin, 'Blessed Adversity' in Carpenter and Shenk (eds.), *Earthen Vessels*, 57. See chapter 2, page 65.

‘personal direction by God-given leaders, rather than committee rule’ was retained.⁵ SIM’s story differed slightly. Its three founders, Bingham, Kent and Gowans, arrived in Lagos on 4 December 1893. Within a year of their arrival, only Bingham survived. He later explained, ‘Since there was no Board at home to send on reinforcements or to act for me in any way, five months after their deaths I decided to return to see what could be done to arouse interest in the great Sudan and to form a responsible Board’.⁶ Bingham formed a council in Canada, with members from Canada and the US. He chaired the council, ‘which existed to give him counsel and backing’.⁷ In a time line of SIM’s organisational structures, Hay observed that ‘the organisation was all very loose with minimal structure. Each missionary on the field did his or her own thing and related, when necessary, directly to the general director back in Canada’. Bingham led from the home end, as opposed to Taylor’s leadership from China, but the pivotal role and authority of the founders of the two missions in their early governance structures was very similar.

When Bingham and Herbert MacKenzie, a member of the SIM Council, visited the field in 1915, they saw significant growth in the church, but also a lack of order and organisation amongst the missionaries. Bingham recorded that MacKenzie likened the situation to the days of the Judges, when ‘every man did that which was right in his own eyes’. Bingham was in agreement and, with the Council’s support, he ‘moved the adoption of the Principles and Practice of the China Inland Mission, and

⁵ Brian Stanley, ‘Home Support for Overseas Missions in Early Victorian England c.1838-1873’. PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1979, 304.

⁶ Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years*, 25.

⁷ Ian M Hay, ‘A Time Line Depicting Changes in SIM Organizational Structure from 1893-1993’, Appendix G in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 363.

moved the appointment of a General Director at the home end and also a Field Director'.⁸ Guy Playfair was appointed as Field Director in 1915, an appointment driven by the decision that in future SIM was to be organised 'so that decisions would be made as close to the action as possible'. The field missionaries were to relate to and report to Playfair, who was in turn accountable to Bingham and the Council in Canada for the activities on the field. Ministry decisions lay with Playfair and his council.⁹

Interwoven with the faith mission ideal of simple organisational structures was their approach to missionary financial support. Dana Robert noted that 'the new faith missions seemed to be unhampered by bureaucratic machinery because missionaries prayed to God for every need instead of depending upon a denominational budget'.¹⁰ Funds were not to be raised by 'supposedly "human" methods – networks of auxiliaries and associations – but by divine agency, being prayed in from supporters whom God moved to give'.¹¹ Carpenter suggested that as well as an exercise in trusting God to provide, the faith missions' practice of not directly soliciting funds avoided criticism that they were competing for funds with the older mission boards.¹² In his 1961 biography of Bingham, J. H. Hunter began his chapter on 'Faith and Finance' with the following observation: 'The financing of a Mission that has no church behind it and yet makes an appeal to Christians of all denominations and of

⁸ Judges 17:6. Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years*, 44-45.

⁹ Hay, 'Time Line' in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 364.

¹⁰ Dana L. Robert, "'The Crisis of Missions': Premillennial Mission Theory and the Origins of Independent Evangelical Missions' in Carpenter and Shenk (eds.) *Earthen Vessels*, 38.

¹¹ Stanley, 'Where Have Our Mission Structures Come From?', 43.

¹² Joel Carpenter, 'Propagating the Faith Once Delivered' in Carpenter and Shenk (eds.) *Earthen Vessels*, 99.

none presents a problem and is an adventure in faith that many Christians to this day cannot comprehend'.¹³ Bingham did differ from Taylor in his attitude towards no public statement of financial need. Hunter explained that Bingham 'followed the policy "full information, but no solicitation"', claiming that God was not limited to one method of faith', a claim that led him to depart from Hudson Taylor in this crucial respect.

It is against this background that the recent narrative of SIM's history must be considered. Hay described the period of 1915-1957 as one of 'organisational crisis and consolidation' in SIM's history.¹⁴ The expansion of the mission in East and West Africa, which became separate SIM entities with their own director, in addition to the home base in Canada, with additional councils being established in the US, Australia, New Zealand and the UK, began to dilute the original purist ideals of the faith missions with minimal structure. The pluralisation of fields of work and support bases, which accelerated during the period of my research, brought about the internationalisation of SIM and also necessitated the development of organisational structures and systems which would support the work of a more complex mission. The move towards greater cultural diversity was accompanied by a move away from the pure faith mission ideal. It perhaps also provided an example of different institutional logics¹⁵ at work within SIM as different assumptions, patterns and values came together in one larger organisation.

¹³ Hunter, *A Flame of Fire*, 234, 237.

¹⁴ Hay, 'Time Line' in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 364.

¹⁵ The concept was first introduced by Friedland and Alford in 'Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practices, and Institutional Contradictions' in Powell and DiMaggio (eds.) *The New Institutionalism in*

Governance Structures in SIM – Responding to Changing Circumstances

The developments in organisational structure, which eventually led to the governance structure of 2015 which represented a radical change reflecting the diversity of the mission, began during Ian Hay's leadership of SIM. Following two periods of crisis in the mission surrounding the appointment of the General Director, first following Bingham's death in 1942, and secondly during the appointment of Playfair's successor in 1956-7, the lack of mechanism through which these appointments could be made resulted in tension and division. This precipitated a meeting of the councils from Canada, US, UK, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand with representatives from the East and West Africa Councils in 1956. Up to this point, there had been no legal bond between the councils or with the General Director.¹⁶ The overall governance of the mission was clarified during the 1950s following the recommendation at that meeting that a Memorandum of Agreement be established between the Canadian and US offices, the only two offices legally registered at the time. The Memorandum established that 'the administration of the work as a whole shall be delegated to the General Director by the General Council and he shall be charged with the general oversight of the Mission.' The title of General Director had been in use since 1918. Bingham was the founder and first General Director. His roles in the early years were described in several different ways: he was appointed

Organizational Analysis, 232–63 and developed further by Patricia H. Thornton, William Ocasio and Michael Lounsbury in *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure and Process* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199601936.003.0003). Thornton and Ocasio defined an institutional logic as 'the socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their daily activity, organize time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences', Patricia H. Thornton, and William Ocasio, (2008) 'Institutional Logics' in R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin-Andersson, and R. Suddaby (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, pp. 99–129. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/10.4135/9781849200387>).

¹⁶ Hay, 'Time Line' in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 365-6.

Secretary working under an Executive Council in 1898; in 1903 the ‘Practice and Principles’ called Bingham the Superintendent under a Board of Trustees assisted by an Advisory Council. By 1907, he was the General Secretary, assisted overseas by a Field Secretary and Field Committee. After years as Secretary, General Secretary, or Secretary-Treasurer, in 1918 the Canada Council appointed Bingham General Director, a title retained until 2000, when it was changed to International Director. As other offices were established, Bingham became their ‘General Director’ as well.¹⁷ The Memorandum of Agreement clarifying the structure of the organisation was added to the mission’s ‘Principles and Practice’ in 1958, and combined with the SIM Handbook in 1966-7, resulting in what the Governance Review Task Force of 2012¹⁸ described as a ‘comprehensive basis for the various entities [of SIM] working together’.

In his summary of the mission’s organisational history in the years immediately following the creation of the Memorandum of Agreement, Hay observed the role of the sending councils in the structure: ‘each home director and home council had to work within the laws of their country to ensure that all legal requirements were cared for and that the mission was run in each place with integrity’.¹⁹ This situation foreshadowed some of the challenges ahead for the increasingly internationalised mission SIM was to become, and highlighted the tension between national legal regulations and requirements, and the development of a central international vision.

¹⁷ From a summary in the ‘Governance Review Task Force Report to Board of Governors’ June 2012, 17-18, McGregor personal papers.

¹⁸ See page 194.

¹⁹ Hay, ‘Time Line’ in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 366.

When Hay was appointed as SIM's fifth general director, twelve directors were reporting to him, a situation soon recognised as unsustainable and the decision was taken to appoint a deputy general director, Harold Fuller, as well as staff officers including a treasurer, to be part of the international office.²⁰ The establishment of SIM legal entities in Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland and the UK,²¹ in addition to the two councils in Canada and the US which had signed the Memorandum of Agreement, encouraged Hay to make further changes to the governance structure. He observed that the General Council, including home and area directors, three additional Canadian and US members, the General Director and his Deputy, as well as five members at large, had not only grown too large, but lacked accountability. Hay was conscious of recent scandals in the Christian world²² which made organisations like SIM vulnerable to claims of financial misconduct; he was determined to improve the accountability in SIM. The existing situation concerned Hay. He explained: 'the council to which the General Director was accountable was composed mostly of people appointed by him... and responsible to him for their work'. He proposed changes to the existing Memorandum of Agreement to include all the existing SIM legal entities in sending countries, the creation of a 'truly responsible' Board of Governors to control the operations of the General Director and set broad policy for the mission, and the establishment of a General Director's Council, made up of all Directors and International staff to handle the administrative

²⁰ Hay, 'Time Line', in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 368-9.

²¹ The SIM London Council was established in 1932, and the Northern Ireland Committee in 1939. SIM was incorporated in Australia and the UK in 1958. SIM was incorporated in New Zealand in 1971, and in Switzerland, as the headquarters for SIM in southern Europe, in 1977. See Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 152-168.

²² Dryer recalled the impact of the scandal surrounding TV evangelists, Jim and Tammy Bakker, in the late 1970s and 1980s, highlighting Bakker's lack of accountability to anyone. Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

matters of the mission.²³ This proposal anticipated the later move from a shareholder to stakeholder model as it gave voice to the growing number of countries and associated councils which formed SIM.

In a letter circulated to the membership of the mission in May 1984, Hay explained that ‘the growing internationalness of the mission, and the significant participation of Councils and constituencies beyond the borders of North America, gave reason to extend the partnership relationship’.²⁴ The changes Hay oversaw included consideration that ‘additional sending corporations may need to be accommodated’ within the agreement in the future, demonstrating once again Hay’s forward-thinking approach to his leadership.²⁵ Included in the prerequisites for an office to become a new signatory to the agreement was the requirement for a group of Christians already in the country, with a deep interest in SIM, who would be able to form a National Council. The Council was ‘to meet the legal requirements within the country, each signatory to the Memorandum of Agreement is itself a corporation with the council members forming its board as well as to assist and advise the National Director in his responsibilities’.²⁶ As will be shown later in this chapter, the importance attributed to the formation of an effective National Council would remain significant in SIM’s new governance structure, and would be a key part of the significant changes which took place at the end of my research period. The recognition of the changing composition of SIM, specifically its increasing international character, was the cause

²³ ‘Dr Hay Shares Thoughts on SIM’s Structure’, *Intercom*, No.60, January 1984, SIM Archives.

²⁴ Letter from the General Director to the Mission Membership, ‘SIM International Nomination of Members-at-large Board of Governors’, May 25, 1984, held at SIM Archives, Box: SIM BoG-01 1978-1999 file #7.

²⁵ See chapter 2, page 89.

²⁶ International Council Minutes, 1986, Section O – Organization, 16-19, SIM Archives.

and force behind much of the change which took place in the governance structures of the organisation throughout this period.

David Dryer from the UK was a member of the Board of Governors from its inception in 1984, and served on the Board for 12 years. He highlighted the significance of such a ‘cultural change to have a non-executive, non-missionary body at the top of the organisation to whom the organisation was accountable’. In an observation that perhaps highlights a clash of institutional logics, Dryer recalled genuine culture shock from North American missionaries that the organisation was ‘reflecting even then our modest worldwide nature’ in appointing representatives of the existing sending nations, which at that time included Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, and the UK, and who were not missionaries, to the new Board, and that missionaries would be accountable to them. A ‘corporate logic’ was perhaps perceived by some missionaries as in conflict with the existing ‘religion and community logic’ on which their values and assumptions were based.²⁷ Dryer also recalled a commitment to include an invited external member at each Board meeting, as ‘a deliberate attempt to be more open when the mission was still a fairly closed society’.²⁸ The intention was that this should be a member from a developing world country, a church or mission leader, not from SIM, who would bring a new and different cultural perspective to the Board’s discussions. An openness to diversity and different perspectives, as well as at the same time a degree of resistance to

²⁷ See footnote 15 on page 183.

²⁸ Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

change, are threads running through the forty years of SIM's history covered by this study.

The International Council, which met for the first time in April 1986, was formed of members of the mission including the Area and National Directors, and 'was created to provide full participation of the Mission members in the direction of the work as a whole'. SIM missionaries were members, not employees of the mission. The 1984 Manual explained: 'Missionaries should recognize... their dependence upon the Lord, who called them and to whom they are ultimately responsible. The Mission exists to assist them in fulfilling their ministry for Christ. Therefore, loyalty both to Christ and to the Mission is absolutely essential'. This emphasised the spiritual ideals of the mission, reflecting its faith mission origins. Membership status indicated commitment to the values and purpose of the mission, required active participation in the ministries and gave the member the right to be involved in the organisation's decision-making processes through entitlement to vote.²⁹ Missionaries were classed as 'self-employed' responsible for their own tax liability, at home or on the field. The *SIM Finance Principles and Practice* document, current in 2015, explained that where applicable, the sending office withheld income taxes on missionaries' salaries and paid them directly to the home country's tax department.³⁰ 'Ultimately tax liability was based on local laws of both sending and field countries'.³¹ This system

²⁹ SIM Manual 1984, Section 3, 26, and SIM Manual 2010, Personnel Section, 6.8.1, SIM Archives.

³⁰ UK missionaries for example would only be included on the payroll when back in the UK as they do not pay UK income tax while are overseas.

³¹ *SIM Finance Principles & Practice*, produced by SIM International, April 2016, 21. Tax laws varied between countries. Any tax liability was included in the missionary's required support budget.

demonstrates the way in which the mission had to accommodate itself to the laws and financial regulations of the different countries in which it operated.

The new Board of Governors also included five elected members-at-large from within the mission, again giving voice to a wider section of the organisation.

Members of the mission were invited to nominate eligible missionaries, who were selected by a voting process. The only ‘special requirement’ was that at least one of the five was to be a woman.³² In his General Director’s report to the Board of Governors at their 1986 meeting, Hay reflected on the organisational changes that had taken place observing:

We have successfully decentralised in both our home and field operations... and strengthened our international structure both at the board and staff levels. Hopefully by this process we are getting the best of both worlds, co-ordination and cohesion within a unified body, while at the same time allowing for diversification and effective decision-making as close to the action as possible. This latter, of course, has been the strength of SIM historically.³³

The continued emphasis on decisions being made as close to the action as possible retained this value of faith missions discussed above,³⁴ although the need for increased co-ordination and organisation was a move away from the original faith mission ideals. Hay also urged the Board to accept further restructuring to reduce the number of people reporting directly to the General Director, while not creating a

³² ‘Dr Hay Answers Your Questions About International Council and Board of Governors’, *Intercom* No. 72, March 1986.

³³ Ian M. Hay, ‘General Director Report to Board of Governors’, SIM International Board of Governors, April 1986, Appendix A, SIM Archives.

³⁴ See page 182.

situation where the General Director was remote from the work of the mission. The Board of Governors agreed change was necessary in order to help the next general director and, before Plueddemann took over the leadership of SIM in 1993, four deputy general directors were appointed with separate geographic responsibilities.³⁵

In 1992 the East Asia Council became autonomous from the SIM Australia office, and became the eighth co-signatory of the Joint Ministry Agreement.³⁶ As the East Asia office in Singapore thrived under Andrew Ng's leadership,³⁷ this inspired confidence in the increasing diversity in the mission.³⁸ The number of Koreans joining SIM had increased in the early years of Plueddemann's leadership. At that time, they were sent through the East Asia office, and Plueddemann recalled cultural clashes which resulted in Koreans suggesting they would prefer to go through the Australia office as they would rather relate to Australians than Singaporean Chinese. One of Plueddemann's goals was to set up a separate sending office in South Korea. He described facing questions regarding why foreigners should go to Korea and 'tell them how to do mission'. Plueddemann's argument was that when Korea joined SIM, it was 'not joining an American mission, but rather becoming co-owner of an international mission'. As a signatory to the Joint Ministry Agreement, Korea would be represented on the Board of Governors, to which the International Director reported. He would therefore be reporting to Koreans too. They were convinced. The Korea Council was established in 1997, and the SIM Korea office opened in 2004.

³⁵ Hay in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 370.

³⁶ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 174.

³⁷ See chapter 7 for Andrew Ng's story.

³⁸ Corwin, interview, 7 February 2017.

Plueddemann observed that some were perhaps still asking themselves why they would join SIM when there were Korean mission agencies they could join.³⁹ As the cultural diversity of SIM has increased, the question of why people from nations such as South Korea, Nigeria, or Ethiopia choose to join an international mission like SIM rather than a national agency is an intriguing one. There is perhaps an openness to learning from other cultures, to working alongside those from different backgrounds, and a sense of the benefits of a multicultural organisation. Those who intentionally join a diverse organisation may be more willing and able to face the challenges such diversity can bring.⁴⁰ The first decade of the 21st century witnessed the establishment of SIM entities in Latin America, Asia and Africa: SIM Latino was established in Guatemala in 2003 to send Latinos to serve cross-culturally around the world; a North East India Council was established in 2008; a West Africa office was set up in Cote d'Ivoire in 2010; and an East Africa Service Centre was established in Nairobi in 2012.⁴¹

The Need and Time for Greater Change

Two factors came together under McGregor's leadership which combined to underline the need for significant change in SIM's governance. At top leadership level, there was an increasing desire that the structure of the organisation should reflect the vision and ethos of diversity.⁴² The final report of the 'Seize the Day' review in January 2005 stated: 'It is inevitable that the increasing (and welcome)

³⁹ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁴⁰ The dynamics and challenges of multicultural teams will be discussed in chapter 6.

⁴¹ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 178-181.

⁴² McGregor, interview, 6 February 2019.

tempo of the ‘emerging missions’ movement ... will require SIM to make significant changes to the way it operates, how it is structured and organised’.⁴³ The creation of the new SIM entities listed above further demonstrated the growing diversity of the mission, yet the existing organisational structure did not acknowledge that. Dorothy Haile, who joined SIM as International Personnel Director at the time of the merger with AEF in 1998, described a ‘gradual acceptance of the significance of SIM reflecting the global realities of mission and the governance implications of that’.⁴⁴ The second factor was the tightening of Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) regulations. The regulatory regimes of the SIM sending countries were pushing the organisation towards western models of financial and business accountability, even as McGregor was striving for a new stakeholder-based governance model. By 2007, it was recognised that the Joint Ministry Agreement was not rigorous enough to meet the tracking requirements of the CRA of funds donated to the joint ministries. A review and redraft of the Joint Ministry Agreement (JMA) was conducted in 2011 in order to find a way through the CRA requirements. The recommendation was outlined by the Governance Review Task Force in its 2012 report:

The new Joint Ministry Agreement in which the signatories are represented by a Joint Ministry Committee (JMC) will be responsible for the appointment of an International Director and the officers. Further, the new JMA provides for subsidiary agreements with other entities than the signatories, which can thereby engage all legally-defined SIM offices in formal arrangements with the JMA as has not been done until now.⁴⁵

⁴³ ‘Seize the Day Final Report’, 8 January 2005, McGregor personal papers.

⁴⁴ Dorothy Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

⁴⁵ ‘Governance Review Task Force Report’, 19.

The revised JMA was approved by the Board of Governors in 2011 for implementation in 2012; however, the process of review and discussion had prompted calls for a full governance review. McGregor brought a proposal from the Board Executive Committee to the 2011 Board of Governors meeting. The proposal was approved and a Governance Review Task Force and reference group appointed.⁴⁶

In a 2019 interview, McGregor emphasised that ‘diversity was the fundamental driving force’ for his desire for the governance review to take place. He explained:

A major outcome of the ‘Seize the Day’ review was the decision to open the door of entry to SIM for non-western cultures where God was raising a vision for mission. This outcome aligned with my passion to see this take place as I witnessed the growing work of God’s Spirit in non-western nations.⁴⁷

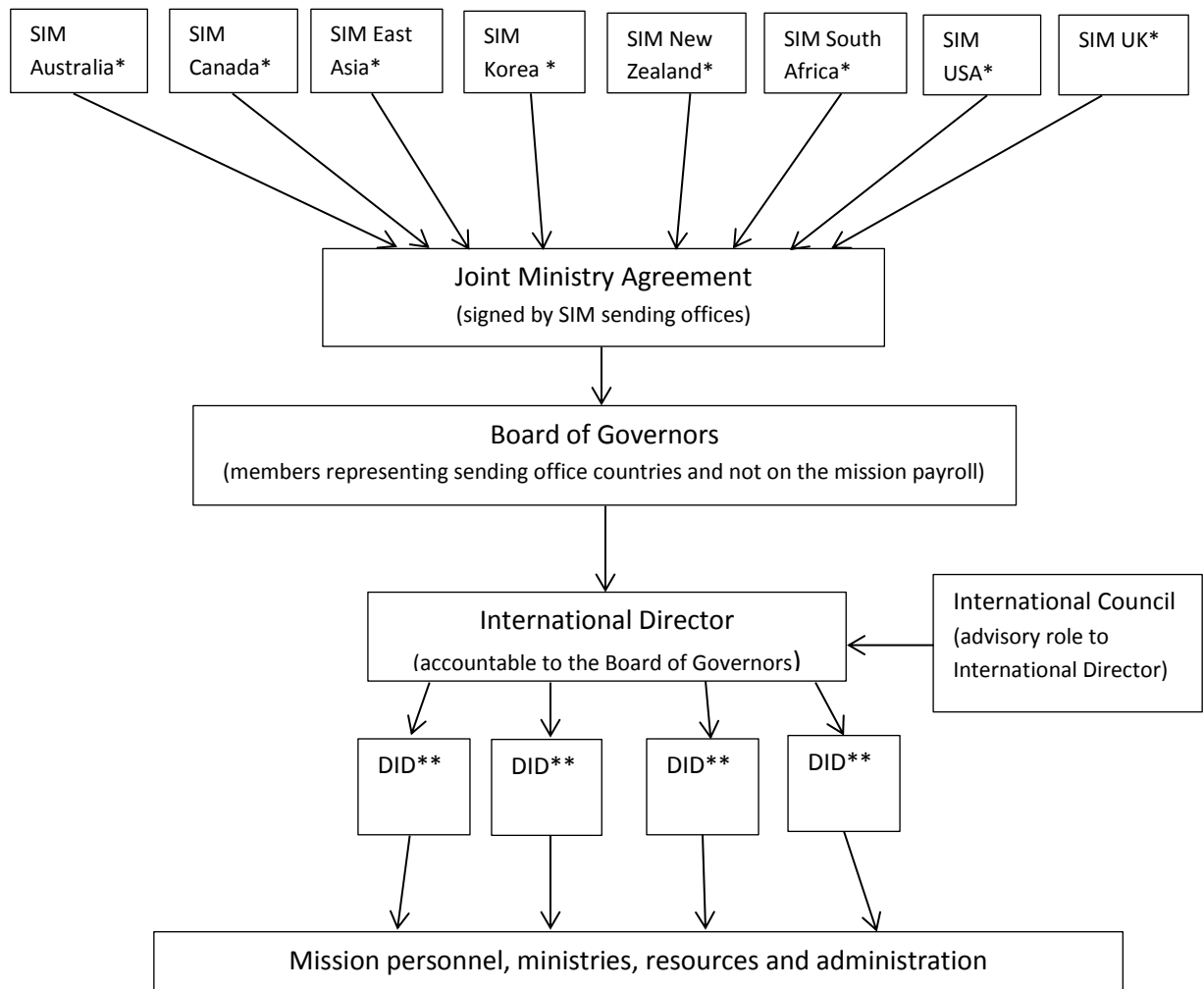
As the new sending offices in West and East Africa, North East India and Latin America became established, it became clear that the existing governance structure gave no opportunity for these new entities to speak into the governance of the organisation.⁴⁸ McGregor was conscious that although his International Leadership Team was more diverse than ever before, and that leaders from non-western countries were being appointed within the mission, fundamentally the governance structure was still ‘embedded in a model in which eight or nine traditional sending bodies, based on the level of their financial input into the organisation which gave them representation on the Board, controlled the governance structure of the

⁴⁶ Official Minutes, SIM Board of Governors Annual General Meeting, 13-15 June 2011, Fort Mill, SC, USA, McGregor personal papers.

⁴⁷ McGregor, interview, 6 February 2019 and email, 5 March 2019.

⁴⁸ See Figure 6 Organisation Chart A, page 195.

mission'. As a result, the mission was effectively controlled by western shareholders, while the new non-western entities joining the mission had little voice.⁴⁹



* Sending offices, 'shareholders'. ** Deputy International Director

Figure 6: SIM Organisation Chart A – A shareholder governance model⁵⁰

The terms of reference of the Review Task Force included a request to review the governance structures of similar organisations and draw lessons helpful for SIM, and to evaluate other possible governance models, drawing on expertise from outside the

⁴⁹ McGregor, reflections shared in conversation, 6 February 2019; email, 5 March 2019; and interview, 26 September 2016.

⁵⁰ Chart adapted from 'Governance Model Presentation', February 2013, McGregor personal papers.

mission.⁵¹ The Task Force read Mary Lederleitner's book *Cross-Cultural Partnerships: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Mission* in preparation for their initial meetings.⁵² Lederleitner, a mission leader and researcher, had served for many years with Wycliffe Global Alliance in international leadership roles. The task force consulted with her via Skype on issues the book raised, and about the recently established Wycliffe Global Alliance. There was no formal review of other governance models; task force members had informal contact with other missions to draw from and share experiences. Alistair Hornal, chair of the Governance Task Force, also met with Chris Reveley from OMF.⁵³ OMF went through a similar strategic review and subsequent restructuring between 2010 and 2015; it too was seeking to reflect the current global context as well as address internal pressures within the organisation.⁵⁴

Hornal recalled that it was the approach taken by Wycliffe which 'made sense to us, and gained immediate affirmation from the SIM leadership'.⁵⁵ Kirk Franklin, Executive Director of the Wycliffe Global Alliance, explained the process of review and change which had taken place in his MA thesis, 'The Wycliffe Global Alliance – From a U.S. Based International Mission to a Global Movement for Bible Translation'.⁵⁶ At a Wycliffe Bible Translators International (WBTI) Global Leaders

⁵¹ Minutes of Board of Governors meeting, 13-15 June 2011.

⁵² Mary T. Lederleitner, *Cross-cultural Partnerships: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010).

⁵³ Alistair Hornal, email correspondence, 5-7 February 2019.

⁵⁴ Jon Fuller, 'Future Proofing OMF', *Mission Round Table* 12:1 (January-April 2017), 18, <https://omf.org/blog/2017/06/12/mission-round-table-vol-12-no-1-jan-apr-2017/> and Warren Beattie, email, 14 February 2019.

⁵⁵ Hornal, email, 7 February 2019.

⁵⁶ Franklin, 'The Wycliffe Global Alliance'.

Meeting in 2006, emphasis was made on the need for a truly global organisational structure. A suggestion was also put forward that ‘the structure should change from an organisation of organisations to an alliance of organisations’. In 2011, a Leadership Development Roundtable took place in Manila attended by 27 people from Wycliffe as well as experienced leaders from Interserve International, OM International, OMF International, and SIM. A regional structure review in 2010 focused on Africa, and led to the appointment of Africans to leadership roles at the start of 2011. In the same year, ‘WBTI’s “doing business as” name was changed to the Wycliffe Global Alliance, reflecting an alliance of over 110 Wycliffe Member Organisations and newer Wycliffe Partner Organisations’, a move Franklin described as moving from ‘being an international body to being an increasingly global movement’. Boone Aldridge has noted that ‘according to the organisation’s leadership, the new name better conveyed the twenty-first century nature of WBTI in that it was no longer a western-centric enterprise, but rather a worldwide network of partner organisations focused on Bible translation’.⁵⁷ Franklin highlighted the challenge mission agencies like Wycliffe faced, acknowledging that most popular leadership theories have ‘a western orientation’, resulting in ‘culturally bound’ leadership principles which ‘create obstacles in cross cultural situations’. He concluded ‘The global mission context requires a leadership model that places a priority on people from different cultures participating together in a community of trust’.

⁵⁷ Aldridge, *For the Gospel's Sake*, 239.

This recognition of the importance of participation from all cultures in the new context of global mission can be seen clearly in the review process which took place in SIM. The Governance Review Task Force report referenced an address given by Andrew Walls in 2002 to emphasise this. Walls highlighted the passing of the baton to Christians in Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁵⁸ The report drew attention to the conclusions and commitments from the ‘Seize the Day’ review, that SIM would collaborate with, and encourage, emerging mission movements, and ‘intentionally pursue an ethos of multicultural diversity’. It also drew attention to the revised core values: SIM is ‘strengthened through diversity’, and SIM should be ‘responsive to our times’. The report concluded:

It is in recognition of the fact that the current Joint Ministry Agreement as written is insufficient to enable SIM to take full advantage of this growing diversity... and to live up to its core values that the Task Force chose to look beyond current SIM governance practices in finding a model. It is also in recognition of the above commitment and consistent with SIM’s core values that the task force propose a future direction that incorporates its diversity ... The goal is not just to address the current reality of mission, but to position SIM governance for the future of missions and missionary recruitment and sending.⁵⁹

At the core of the changes in SIM’s governance structure was the shift from a shareholder model in which money controlled the organisation, to a stakeholder

⁵⁸ Andrew Walls, ‘Demographics, Power and the Gospel in the 21st Century’, 2002 (Unpublished Paper), quoted in ‘Governance Review Task Force Report’, 19-20. Address given at SIL International Conference and WBTI Convention, 6 June 2002, available online at <http://www.wycliffe.net/missiology?id=3041>. Accessed 4 March 2019.

⁵⁹ ‘Governance Review Task Force Report’, 20-21.

model in which everyone had a place and a voice in the new structure.⁶⁰ The Task Force report concluded that some of SIM's structures had lagged behind what was happening in centres of Christianity around the world, and emphasised the 'need for shared participation by those who represent these centres'.⁶¹ In their discussions, the Task Force acknowledged differences in legal requirements between different countries, as well as highlighting different cultural approaches to trust, noting that western management books expect trust to be earned, whereas in other cultures trust may be expected unless or until it is broken. The emphasis placed on documentation and objective controls in low context cultures, in which particular attention is given to explicit communication and ideas, in contrast to the importance of strong relationships in high context cultures, in which attention is focused on the physical context and the subtleties it communicates, was noted. Plueddemann explained the concept of context as the degree of sensitivity of a person to what is going on around them. His understanding of the significance of context came from reading Edward Hall's book, *Beyond Culture*. Hall highlighted the difference in communication styles between high and low context cultures. 'A high context message is one in which most of the information is in the physical context or internalized in the person, very little is in the explicit, transmitted part of the message. Low context is the opposite: the mass of the information is in the explicit code'. In a high context culture, people pay particular attention to their surroundings, the atmosphere, the unspoken. In a low context culture, the focus is on explicit communication and ideas,

⁶⁰ McGregor, interview, 6 February 2019.

⁶¹ 'Governance Review Task Force Report', 25.

the precise words used, and concepts outlined.⁶² The report advised that ‘acceptable minima’ be applied in all contexts where SIM operates and stated that written agreements would be encouraged. However, the advice of local believers regarding what ‘good governance looks like in their context’ must be sought. The cultural and attitudinal differences recognised in these discussions could perhaps also be interpreted as different institutional logics at play representing different frames of reference which influence actions and practices as well as an individual’s sense of identity.⁶³ In its review of the existing governance model, the Task Force concluded that the existing Joint Ministry Agreement was restrictive, focused on shareholders, noting in particular that in some circumstances it required proportional voting according to financial contribution. In an increasingly diverse organisation, a growing part of the mission would have no representation.⁶⁴

Following consultation with SIM’s Global Leaders Forum in Lima in March 2012, as well as by correspondence, a new governance structure was proposed by the Task Force in its report to the Board of Governors in June 2012. The model was that of an alliance or network, rather than a single organisation, based on the principles seen in the model adopted by the Wycliffe Global Alliance. This model would enable SIM Canada to remain fully part of SIM without locking everything in SIM internationally to the requirements of the Canadian Revenue Agency regulations. It was the way in which an internationalised SIM could conform to the national legal

⁶² The concept of high context and low context cultures was made popular by Edward T. Hall in his book, *Beyond Culture* (New York; Garden City: Anchor Books, 1977). See also Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures*, 78-79.

⁶³ Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury, *The Institutional Logics Perspective*, 2.

⁶⁴ ‘Governance Review Task Force Report’, 27-29, 42.

requirements made of charitable organisations.⁶⁵ An SIM Mission Agreement signed by all SIM entities⁶⁶ replaced the existing Joint Ministry Agreement, signed only by the traditional sending offices. Signatories to the Mission Agreement did so in ‘acceptance without reserve of the Statement of Faith, and agreement with the Mission Purpose, Vision, Core Values and Covenant’.⁶⁷ They agreed to ‘work as a functional unit of “the Mission” and accept SIM structures, governance, and “chain of command” as defined in the Mission’s *Principles and Policy*, to serve the interests of the community of signatories, their members and constituents’.

Central to the new governance model was an SIM Global Assembly made up of mission leaders and Board chairs from every country with an SIM presence, as well as representatives of partner organisations and church groups in agreement with the SIM covenant.⁶⁸ The aim of the Global Assembly was ‘to hear one another’s voices rather than conduct votes’.⁶⁹ McGregor described the Assembly as ‘the heart and conscience of the organisation and the moral authority’. The Assembly approved the

⁶⁵ Hornal, email, 7 February 2019. Hornal led discussions in Canada with lawyers to find a solution. A new Joint Venture Agreement was signed between SIM Canada and SIM International Inc., representing the other entities which are part of SIM, thus enabling SIM Canada to fulfil their obligations under the Canada Revenue Authority. International Director’s Report to SIM Board of Governors’ Meeting, June 2013, McGregor personal papers.

⁶⁶ An ‘SIM entity’ may be a legally registered body or other local entity. Malcolm McGregor, ‘Governance Model Presentation’, February 2013, McGregor personal papers.

⁶⁷ The SIM Covenant was introduced by McGregor in 2012 and signed by all individuals who were part of the mission.

⁶⁸ The Evangel Fellowship was cited as an example. See chapter 4, page 166. The delegates attending the 2015 Assembly included 50 Country Directors and 24 Board Chairs. Some SIM entities sent a ‘local Christian’ delegate with their Country Director, perhaps in countries which had not yet established a local Board. Five partner organisations were represented. Figures compiled from delegate statistics from Keith Walker, SIM Global Director of Strategic Development.

⁶⁹ ‘Governance Review Task Force Report’, 5. Walker explained that the Business Meeting element was only a part of the Global Assembly. The Country Director and Board Chair from each represented SIM entity were entitled to vote. The real ‘direction setting conversations were more inclusive’, and gave opportunities for all delegates to speak into discussions. Observations by Keith Walker, phone call to the author, 28 March 2019.

appointment of the Board of Governors which was ‘empowered by the signatories of the Mission Agreement to oversee the purpose of the mission worldwide and give accountability to the International Director’.⁷⁰ The new model was approved in principle at the Board of Governors meeting in June 2012. The new Mission Agreement was to be effective from 1st January 2014. The first signatories, required in order to activate the new agreement, would be the current signatories to the Joint Ministry Agreement. Other SIM entities, starting with those with some form of independent local governance structure, would then be invited to sign the new Mission Agreement.⁷¹ The first SIM Global Assembly met in Chiang Mai, Thailand in March 2015. As of that business meeting, there were thirty-two signatories to the Mission Agreement.⁷² Not all of the thirty-two SIM entities they represented had national Boards at that time, but they were allowed to sign on the basis of a commitment to establishing culturally appropriate governance structures within their countries within five years.⁷³ Walker highlighted a deliberate attempt to listen to voices outside the organisation by inviting leaders from other organisations to attend the Assembly.⁷⁴

The most significant and noticeable element in the new governance structure was the shift in power away from the traditional western sending nations, particularly the US. Although significant internationalisation had taken place within SIM, and there was a

⁷⁰ McGregor, ‘Governance Model Presentation’, February 2013.

⁷¹ ‘Road Map to New Governance Structure’, April 2013, Draft 4, in the International Director’s report to the SIM Board of Governors’ Meeting, June 2013, McGregor personal papers.

⁷² Joshua Bogunjoko, ‘Three-Year Report to the Global Assembly’, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 3 March 2015.

⁷³ Hornal, interview, 4 October 2016.

⁷⁴ Walker, phone call, 28 March 2019.

strong and clear commitment to an ethos of cultural diversity, this had not yet been reflected in the mission's governance. In order for that to happen, SIM USA had to let go of the control which it had retained on the basis of financial contribution and numbers of missionaries,⁷⁵ and the resulting entitlement to three seats on the Board of Governors. The new Mission Agreement signed by all SIM entities marked a shift in attitude; no longer was representation proportional to financial contribution to the mission by each office, but now each SIM entity was entitled to be a signatory and given a voice in the mission.⁷⁶ Hornal noted that while the 'number of missionaries coming from other cultures will grow markedly, North America will continue to provide a significant proportion of the finance of the mission, so there was significant generosity of spirit to reduce the North American influence'.⁷⁷

For McGregor, the change in governance structure was very significant. As he explained: 'It was really important for us to truly say that in all our structures and areas of operation we are truly global in our mindset, in our thinking and in our structures'. His last Board of Governors' meeting as International Director included the approval of the new structure which Bogunjoko, his successor, would implement. McGregor described the approval of the new governance structure as 'a great place for me to finish'.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ See chapter 2, page 68.

⁷⁶ See Figure 7, Organisation Chart B, page 204.

⁷⁷ Hornal, interview, 4 October 2016.

⁷⁸ McGregor, interview, 26 September 2016.

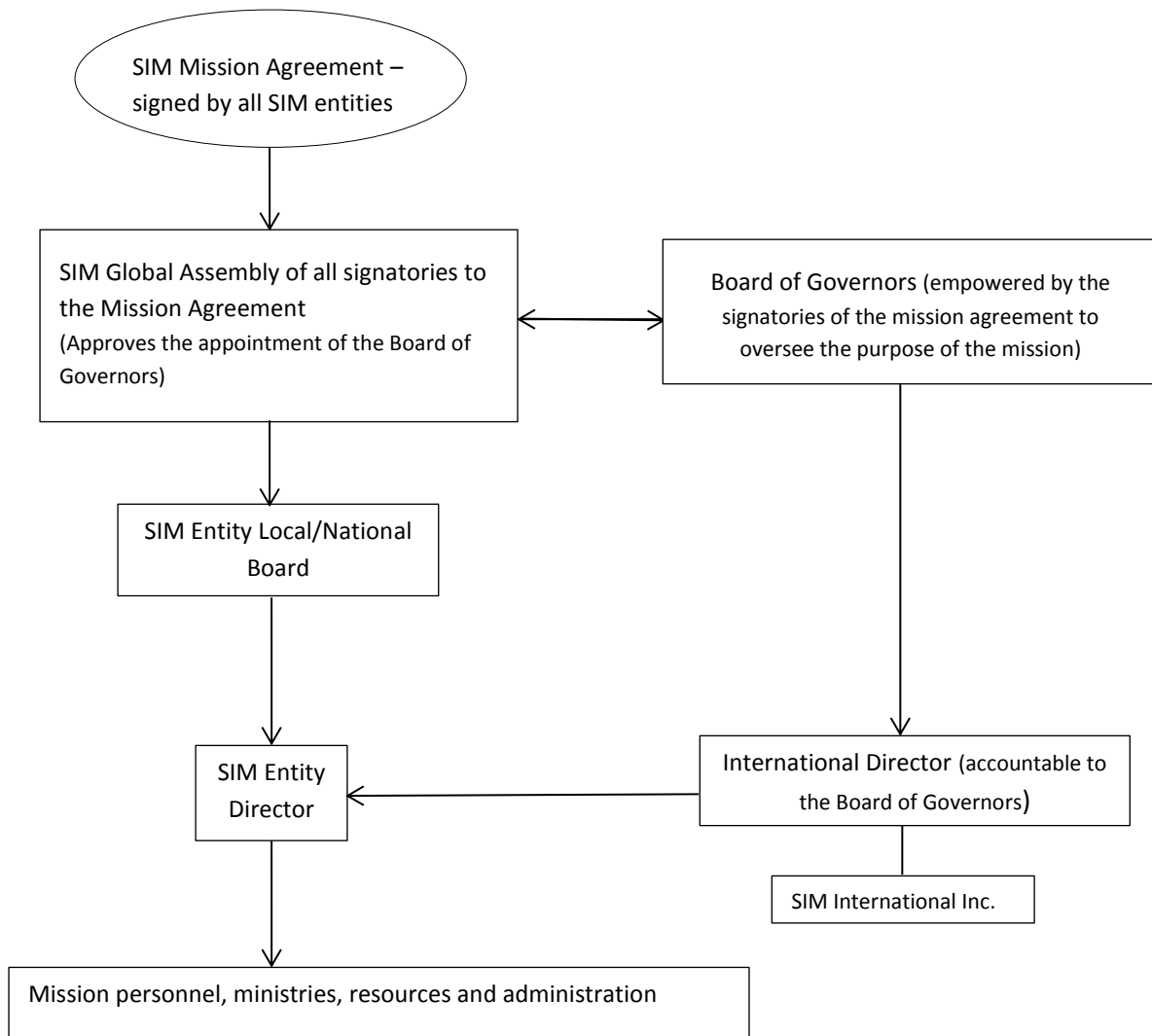


Figure 7: SIM Organisation Chart B – A stakeholder governance model⁷⁹

In Bogunjoko’s address to the first meeting of the Global Assembly, he stated that at least six other organisations had consulted SIM regarding their own desire ‘to internationalise their membership and decision-making structures’, perhaps suggesting that SIM and Wycliffe were leading the way in organisational change which would reflect the increased diversity of their organisations. Their experience had underlined how difficult it was to ‘give up power’, he explained, and he paid

⁷⁹ Chart adapted from ‘Governance Review Task Force Report’, 53.

tribute to the Board of SIM USA for their humility and willingness to relinquish the power they held under the old structure. He also thanked the eight signatories under the old model who had offered unanimous consent to the new structure, again giving up power in order that it was distributed right across SIM.⁸⁰ In a later reflection on the old system, Bogunjoko suggested it had been restrictive and diminishing for those wishing to join the organisation; it was perceived as being ‘owned’ by the eight signatories.⁸¹

The composition of the old Board of Governors was representative of the number of missionaries sent by the sending offices: America had three places, UK two, Canada two, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, and East Asia each had one. The new Board of Governors Charter by-laws stated that anyone who had signed the SIM Commitment⁸² was eligible to serve on the Board, and that a signatory of the SIM Mission Agreement who accounted for more than one third of SIM mission members⁸³ would have a right to one seat on the Board.⁸⁴ In 2015, this applied only to the US. It guaranteed that SIM USA would be represented on the Board, but would no longer be entitled to more than a single voice. Gillian Philips, chair of the UK Board when the new structure was introduced, and a member of the Board of Governors, highlighted the Board’s goal to increase its diversity, and to ensure it

⁸⁰ Bogunjoko, ‘Three-Year Report to the Global Assembly’.

⁸¹ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

⁸² The SIM Commitment was introduced in 2012. Each person who joined the Mission signed the Commitment which included the SIM Ethos Statement, SIM Statement of Faith, SIM Mission Statement and SIM Core Values. McGregor introduced the Commitment with the aim of uniting the organisation around an ‘inspiring document that gripped the heart, rather than a policy document to guide the organisation’. See International Director’s Report to the Board of Governors, June 2013, and SIM Mission Policy Draft Document 7 March 2013. Both from McGregor personal papers.

⁸³ See page 188.

⁸⁴ ‘Board of Governors Charter Bye-Laws’, First Draft, 30 November 2012, McGregor personal papers.

included a mix of skills, experience and cultures. The membership of the Board of Governors in March 2015 included two Koreans, one South African and a Singaporean out of a total of fourteen. When Hornal completed his term of service on the Board of Governors in 2015, his replacement was the first Ethiopian to serve on the Board, Kifle Berhanu, a businessman who also served on the SIM East African Sending Council.⁸⁵ As Hornal suggested, this appointment marked a significant step away from a Board composed of only the traditional sending countries.

Challenges and Limitations of the New Governance Structure

In addition to the radical change represented by the new model, it is important to recognise the challenges it presented. The greatest of these lay in the appointment of national Boards or Councils for all SIM entities which were signatories to the Mission Agreement. Different cultural attitudes and expectations surrounding what it means to be on such a Board was a key issue highlighted by Phillips, and one that was being worked through in the early years of the new structure from 2015 onwards. Different assumptions and values, different ‘logics’, could become a source of tension if they came into conflict. The Boards were to include a third of non-SIM members, encouraging the inclusion of local Christians or church leaders. In some contexts, welcoming ‘non-SIM’ people onto the SIM Board was proving difficult for existing members. However, as shown in the previous chapter, the invitation to join such a Board was welcomed with surprise by an Ethiopian Baptist pastor invited on

⁸⁵ Hornal, interview, 4 October 2016 and Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

to the East Africa Sending Office Board.⁸⁶ A western missionary serving in Nigeria also observed the positive experience of a Nigerian who had served in an advisory capacity before the new structure required it; he had been ‘well respected for his wisdom and cultural advice’.⁸⁷

Bogunjoko acknowledged early in 2017 that work on the national boards was ongoing, recognising the western thinking prevalent in approach and attitudes to the way the boards would operate, citing as an example an expectation that decision-making would be by vote rather than discussion until a consensus was reached. He emphasised that he did not wish to throw out one approach simply to replace it by another that was also ‘culturally slanted’, and stressed the need to ‘find a balance’, and to encourage the different SIM ‘entities to shape their governance structure to match their context’.⁸⁸ Although outside the scope of my research period, the ongoing implementation and effectiveness of the new structure, particularly the establishment of national boards, is an important subject for future research.

A further challenge to be faced in the governance model, highlighted by a number of interviewees, focused on language. Hornal reflected on his unrealised hope of achieving a model which was less centrally prescriptive and which placed more emphasis on what was carried in the heart than laid down in heavy documentation, thus more appropriate for oral cultures and contexts in which English was not the

⁸⁶ See chapter 4, page 176-7.

⁸⁷ Anonymous email, 16 January 2018.

⁸⁸ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

primary language. Recognition of the need for multi-lingual discussion had been acknowledged. In his 2014 paper, 'Charting Change in SIM', Walker had observed that soon, SIM 'international consultation processes... may need to be conducted multi-lingually. A need already exists and will become greater as our governance structures develop so that a global range of stakeholders needs to have voice into our decision-making processes'.⁸⁹ Some translation was made available at the 2015 Global Assembly,⁹⁰ and the discussion which took place there, as a whole organisation, to agree on the new mission vision statement considered understanding and meanings across different languages and cultures.⁹¹ Until the SIM Manual was revised and reviewed as part of the new governance structure, it had been stated that English was SIM's 'language of business'. This was taken out during the review process. In the new *SIM Global Principles and Policy*, reference was made to members' responsibility to ensure that 'communication must be suited to the cultural distinctive of each country and the giftedness of the SIM member'.⁹² The importance of choice of language for communication within teams and the organisation more widely will be discussed in chapter 6. At a governance and leadership level, a persistent use of documentation, the default approach in western governance styles, presented a hurdle for leaders for whom English was not their first language.

⁸⁹ Keith Walker, 'Charting Change in SIM. Ten Years On...', February 2014, Walker personal papers.

⁹⁰ Translation was available in French and Spanish. Delegates were asked to indicate their preference for translation when registering: 18 requested Spanish, and 13 requested French out of 174 present at the Assembly. Statistics from Walker.

⁹¹ Reflections from Phillips and Bogunjoko in personal interviews.

⁹² Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017. *SIM Global Principles and Policy*, third draft 'SIM Mission Policy', 7 March 2013, McGregor personal papers.

The Seize the Day report on the Emerging Missions Movement stated that ‘getting organisation and finance right would be fundamental to moving forward with the emerging missions vision’.⁹³ The above discussion has demonstrated that significant organisational change was achieved through the governance review, and by 2015 all SIM entities had a voice within the new model through the new Mission Agreement and Global Assembly. The question of SIM’s financial support system, and the need once again for flexibility and change in order to adapt to the mission’s increasing diversity, was a further challenge the organisation had to face, and one which faced significant resistance.

SIM’s Missionary Financial Support System

The missionary support system in operation in 1975, known commonly as the ‘Pooling System’, had its roots in the actions of SIM’s three founders who pooled all their resources into one central fund when they began their journey to West Africa in 1893. The system was modified after the Second World War, and again in the mid-1960s to establish separate ‘pools’ for missionary allowance, area missionary care, and passage. The SIM Manual explained how the system worked as it was under Hay’s leadership:

All support funds received are pooled. Each missionary's salary allowance and amenities will be based on the concept of equal earning power from home countries and equal purchasing power at the current location, regardless of support received, home country, or assignment.

⁹³ ‘Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches’, Seize the Day report, 16 December 2004, McGregor personal papers.

In an explanatory document produced for a financial task force in 1993, Hay expanded on this: ‘The salary allowance pool is shared among all missionaries every month, providing each one with an amount as equal as possible in purchasing power. If the pool is full because all supporters met their commitments, each missionary receives a full salary; if it is not full, each receives a proportionate, lesser amount’. He explained that the monthly support figure a missionary was required to raise before beginning to serve overseas was a support quota which was the amount the mission needed to maintain the missionary on the field.⁹⁴ As the explanation in the SIM Manual cited above made clear, the concepts of ‘equal earning power’ and ‘equal purchasing power’ were foundational to the support system. It has not been possible to confirm when these concepts were first introduced, but it is clear from an article included in a ‘Special Finance Issue’ of the mission periodical, *Africa Now* November-December 1976, that they were in use by that time.⁹⁵ Equal earning power was intended to ensure that missionaries from different sending countries were raising support in approximately equal proportions, based on the relative abilities of their supporters to raise money in their domestic economies. Equal purchasing power assessed the cost of living in each field country and made payments in proportion.⁹⁶ The use of these concepts demonstrates the way in which the mission had worked to find a way of ensuring some parity of remuneration to reflect different economies as it had internationalised within the West.

⁹⁴ Ian Hay, ‘SIM Pools How did we get this way?’ Prepared for Financial Task Force, 10-12 August 1993, SIM Archives.

⁹⁵ *Africa Now*, November-December 1976, issue 89.

⁹⁶ David Dryer, ‘Re-engineering the Sacred Cow: A reflection on experience as Chairman of the Support Task Force of SIM’, CBTS Theological Reflection Dissertation, April 2000, Dryer personal papers.

Hay highlighted the fact that by 1993 the number of missionaries from countries with lower earning power had increased. In the face of increasing internationalisation, the system began to seem inadequate. At the same time, some missionaries from countries ‘which raise more and work in countries which receive less are not satisfied’. He did not specify which countries, but Plueddemann recalled that missionaries from Germany and America were raising more than those from the UK around this time, due to the relevant earning power in these countries. If they were working in a country where the cost of living was low, they could be receiving much less than they raised.⁹⁷ Hay’s recommendation was that the pool system should be changed. He had become increasingly aware of the limitations of the existing system, and recognised it as a hindrance to the internationalisation of SIM. While he was aware of occasions when his parents had received no allowance while serving as missionaries in Nigeria during the Great Depression of the 1930s, he knew that the pool system had been a source of strength in the mission over the years. But he could also see that it ‘made it very difficult for us to know how to cope if we bring in a Peruvian, for example, to serve with SIM’. Hay recounted a heated debate when he proposed to a General Council meeting that a fund be set up to raise money to help missionaries who would find it difficult to raise financial support. He recalled that one of the Directors, whose own sending office was finding it hard to get the money needed for its missionaries, was livid at the idea of raising money to help someone else. There was so much opposition that Hay withdrew the proposal, in order to avoid a negative motion.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

⁹⁸ Hay, recollections shared in conversation with McGregor, 16 November 2017. It has not been possible to find any formal record of this debate in the General Council minutes at the SIM Archives.

Plueddemann, Hay's successor, had also quickly realised the limitations of the existing system when he observed the tensions that existed particularly surrounding the principle of putting in the earning power of the country you were from, and taking out the cost of living in the country where you went to serve.⁹⁹ Plueddemann was concerned that people were trying to find a way to manipulate the pooling system, and realised that for missionaries from countries with an even lower earning power than those currently part of the system, it would simply not work. These tensions and observations became part of the motivation for Plueddemann to develop the core values of the mission: a set of values which would remain constant in the change that he anticipated in SIM's governance and financial systems if the organisation was to become truly international.¹⁰⁰ One of those core values, of particular relevance to the financial support system, was that SIM is 'a sharing community'; the accompanying text stated that SIM was committed to 'the shared use and responsibility of financial resources'.¹⁰¹

Although significant questions had been raised in the early 1990s about whether the support system could continue in its existing form, it was 1997 before a Support Task Force to perform a wide review of the missionary support system was established under the leadership of David Dryer, who had recently completed his term on the Board of Governors. The Task Force included nationals from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, USA, and the UK; their fields of service included India, Kenya, Peru, Cote d'Ivoire, and SIM home offices, with an age range from late 20s

⁹⁹ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017. See discussion in chapter 2, page 91.

¹⁰⁰ See chapter 3, page 103.

¹⁰¹ 'SIM's 10 Core Values', promotional leaflet.

to early 70s.¹⁰² Dryer emphasised that ‘every single one of them could see we had to change radically to accommodate missionaries from the developing world’.¹⁰³ Liz McGregor served on the Task Force and recalled the team looking at the financial support systems of other agencies; her recollection was that ‘we quickly discovered that SIM was ahead of the game, both in tackling the issue and with a serious commitment to take action based on our findings’.¹⁰⁴ In an article entitled ‘Swimming Upstream’ published in OMF’s *Mission Round Table* in 2017, Andrea Roldan, International Facilitator for Serve Asia, and a member of the Lausanne Movement’s Younger Leaders Team, reflected on the challenge faced by Filipino missionaries who wanted to join OMF to serve God in Japan. Finance, she wrote, was the biggest challenge faced by someone from a low income country wishing to join OMF.¹⁰⁵ The date of this article suggests that SIM was perhaps one of the early missions to face up to this challenge.

The Task Force reported on its discussions to the International Council in 2000. Referring to the ‘external environment’, mission from ‘everywhere to everywhere’ was identified as a key trend. The report recognised that ‘the ability to send two-thirds world missionaries may become increasingly important to SIM’, yet SIM was currently ‘a mission for the wealthy’. It stated the desire to include missionaries from the two-thirds world, but avoid competing with two-thirds world sending agencies, and creating dependency. The call was for flexibility to accommodate greater

¹⁰² Dryer, ‘Re-engineering the Sacred Cow’, 5.

¹⁰³ Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Liz McGregor, conversation, 6 February 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Andrea Roldan, ‘Swimming Upstream’, *Mission Round Table* 12:1 (January- April 2017), 30. <https://omf.org/blog/2017/06/12/mission-round-table-vol-12-no-1-jan-apr-2017/>.

diversity within the mission.¹⁰⁶ The report and proposal submitted by the Support Task Force acknowledged the difficulties in finding an acceptable way forward, observing an emerging willingness to contemplate change, but also recognising that the current system was a mature one, and ‘its strategies have reflected core values of the mission to the extent that some see the existing system as the only way to reflect those values’. The report argued that the core value of ‘sharing’ could be achieved in other ways, such as ‘smaller pools and a lower entry threshold that includes more sending countries’ than the existing system. The Task Force recommended the adoption of a model which Dryer summed up as ‘put minimum financial burdens and allow maximum flexibility’.¹⁰⁷ The report presented the model as one which offered a combination of support to the mission’s organisation and individual flexibility; it lowered the entry threshold for new sending countries, and would readily evolve to meet changing circumstances. It retained an amended form of ‘equal earning power’, acknowledging that the mission was not yet ready to drop that.¹⁰⁸

The International Council did not fully accept the recommendations of the Task Force, adopting some elements but with modifications, described later in a presentation by the 2006 Support System Development Group as ‘minor changes

¹⁰⁶ ‘Support Task Force Proposal to International Council’, January 5, 2000. John Shea Box 2, SIM Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Dryer, personal interview, and ‘Re-engineering the Sacred Cow’. The model distinguished between common costs (basic salary, and costs to keep the mission functioning) and selectable and flexible costs (all other costs dependent on personal needs, including additional salary for location, passage, and family costs). Common costs would be raised by all missionaries; selectable and flexible costs would vary according to circumstances. Pooling was retained for common costs only.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Support Task Force Proposal to International Council’.

which did not fully address the issues'.¹⁰⁹ Dryer was a management consultant, experienced in the process of managing change. This outcome was a source of frustration for him; he described it later as a 'messy compromise'. While there was recognition of the limitations of the current system within the International Leadership of the mission, the senior management team had adopted a neutral position to changing the support system to avoid influencing the work of the Task Force. In a theological reflection paper written shortly after the International Council's decision, Dryer emphasised the significance of the message given to missionaries over the previous 25 years that 'the sharing of funds embodied in the support system is a distinctive feature of SIM's ethos. There is an implicit assumption that the support system is founded on biblical principles, and that it is a tangible expression of deeply held values'. Dryer titled his paper 'Re-engineering the Sacred Cow', a reflection of his perception of prevailing attitudes towards the existing system and the challenge the Task Force faced. It was an attitude which appears to have been behind significant resistance to any radical change, particularly amongst some senior finance people in the organisation, perhaps also anticipating the amount of work significant changes to the system would require. There appeared to be more appetite for change amongst those in personnel roles and involved in recruitment, who were therefore more likely to be focused on the need to help missionaries from more new sending countries join the mission. The Task Force report had acknowledged that a consensus would be difficult to achieve and it was proved correct.

¹⁰⁹ 'SIM Support System Plan, Support System Development Group 2006', presentation slides, SIM Archives.

The experience and background of those involved was certainly a factor in their different opinions and attitudes. Dryer's experience in overseeing processes of change, and the views of his Task Force team, notably the member from Singapore who was 'impatient of barriers posed by western administrative and financial systems' to those from Asia seeking to join the mission, resulted in a clear appetite for change.¹¹⁰ For Plueddemann in his role as International Director, leading an organisation made up of volunteers, rather than a business of salaried individuals, it was crucial not to move too quickly and risk losing people in the process.¹¹¹ Perhaps this is another instance of a conflict of institutional logics resulting in tension as corporate and community approaches came into conflict.¹¹² With hindsight, it is possible to see that the work of the Support Task Force, and the discussions surrounding its recommendations, did in fact make a significant contribution to achieving change. Dryer recalled a conversation with John Shea, a member of the Task Force and later one of Plueddemann's Deputy International Directors, in which Shea had said: 'Don't worry, this is a super tanker turning round, we've started to turn'.¹¹³

In 2003, the Finance Committee of the Board of Governors stated:

The committee believes strongly that the current support system has been amended many times in order to accommodate new sending offices and increased diversity within SIM and it is now so heavily dependent on cross-

¹¹⁰ Dryer, 'Re-engineering the Sacred Cow', 7.

¹¹¹ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

¹¹² See page 183, note 15 and chapter 3 of Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury, *The Institutional Logics Perspective*.

¹¹³ Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

subsidization that its long-term viability is highly doubtful. Urgent consideration should be given to the development of a more robust system.¹¹⁴

Work on this system was ongoing when the ‘Seize the Day’ review took place in 2004. The ‘Seize the Day’ report which focused on ‘Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches’ described finance as ‘a critical issue at present’, emphasising the need for agreement and implementation of the proposed new support system. Area Directors’ responses to questionnaires conducted as part of the review identified seventeen potentially serious challenges to recruiting missionaries from the emerging church, of which fourteen were finance-related. SIM members expressed reservations about the financial implications of majority world missionaries joining the mission, perhaps demonstrating fear of change and uncertainty regarding the implications for their own support levels and fundraising.¹¹⁵ McGregor recollected a number of conversations with some directors in the mission who appeared resistant to increasing diversity, concerned that it would result in the end of the pooled support system because it could not stretch far enough to accommodate those from new sending countries. He was also aware that this may have been a smokescreen for other concerns that the cultural differences between their own culture and that of those joining the mission may have been felt to be too great.¹¹⁶

McGregor was serving as the SIM UK Director when the Support Task Force reported to International Council in 2000. As a result he was very conscious of the

¹¹⁴ ‘SIM Support System Plan, Support System Development Group 2006’.

¹¹⁵ ‘Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches’ report, Seize the Day, 16 December 2004, 4. McGregor personal papers and interview, 26 September 2016.

¹¹⁶ McGregor, interview, 26 June 2018.

debates that had taken place, and the weight placed on the core value, ‘a sharing community’. As discussed in chapter 3, McGregor updated the core values of SIM in 2005. The eighth core value – ‘a sharing community’ – was replaced by ‘a learning, growing community’ and the reference to ‘shared use and responsibility of financial resources’ was taken out.¹¹⁷ The word ‘sharing’ was inserted into the ‘dependent on God’ core value, but there was no longer any direct reference to financial resources. McGregor confirmed that there was a clear connection with the changes that were taking place in the support system when this change was made. ‘We felt this value was tying us into the old pooling system and was limiting the ability of people from the majority world coming into SIM – it was unaffordable for them’. Building on the discussions that had taken place and work that had been done under Plueddemann, McGregor felt that there was an openness to a new support system in the early years of his leadership of the mission.¹¹⁸

In 2006 a Support System Development Group proposed a new system. Significant changes included support requirements set by those responsible for the choices, and missionaries would choose, within set limits, desired benefits and corresponding support requirements. The recommendation concluded: “‘Support 2006’ is designed on a modular platform that is flexible, adaptable, allows for personal choices, encourages responsibility, welcomes majority world missionaries, and excludes long term subsidies’.¹¹⁹ The system was implemented across SIM from 1 January 2006

¹¹⁷ See page 214.

¹¹⁸ McGregor, email, 1 February 2019 and conversation, 6 February 2019. The full list of core values is found at www.sim.org/core-values, accessed 15 February 2019.

¹¹⁹ ‘SIM Support System Plan, Support System Development Group 2006’.

and continues to be the member support system to the present day. The objectives of the system, approved by the Board of Governors, emphasised flexibility to allow ‘accessibility and diversity’. Decisions are to ‘be made where they can best be made – costs are determined where expenses are incurred’, reflecting an enduring faith mission principle discussed above. The system does not depend on long-term, mandatory, cross-country subsidies, and it ‘encourages and incorporates sharing and generosity that is structured and enabling, that avoids promoting dependency’.¹²⁰

‘Support 2006’ was the flexible system Dryer had hoped to introduce in 2000, based on individual support agreements rather than the pooling system. Dryer reflected on ‘ten years of hard labour and pushing a stone up a hill to try and get people to accept this’.¹²¹ In an interview in 2017, Plueddemann observed that the changes to the support system ‘went as far as Dryer wanted it to go, but it took longer!’¹²²

Bogunjoko emphasised the importance of incremental change, suggesting that too radical or too big a change could have split the organisation. He also reflected on the end of the compulsory pooling system as particularly difficult for those from more communal cultures.¹²³ In the sense in which it lost the emphasis on sharing, required by the pooling system, the new model was more individually focused and perhaps less attractive to some from non-western contexts. The eventual acceptance of a system which acknowledged that people have different expectations of living standards and that missionaries from poor backgrounds would not expect to live at a

¹²⁰ *SIM Finance Principles & Practice*, produced and published by SIM International, April 2016.

¹²¹ Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

¹²² Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

¹²³ Bogunjoko, conversation, 15 February 2016.

level that was greater than their sending environment, and built in the flexibility to enable that, was critical to increasing the diversity of the missionary workforce in SIM.¹²⁴ Plueddemann was keen to note that although the system enabled the mission to become truly international, it was not perfect and could result in significant inequality between the living accommodation of, for example, an Ethiopian and an American missionary living in India. It was hoped that there would be sharing and generosity within teams in such contexts.¹²⁵ Increased international diversity in the SIM missionary workforce was achieved at the cost of weakening the principle of equality, and a decreased emphasis on sharing and ‘bearing one another’s burdens’. For McGregor his hope was that the new finance system would result in ‘sharing from the heart, rather than legislated sharing’.¹²⁶ It is difficult to find evidence to demonstrate whether this did in fact take place, other than anecdotal evidence of missionaries with more financial support than they needed giving to under-supported colleagues to keep them on the field.¹²⁷

The subject of finances and support-raising has been a sensitive one for SIM, as it has for similar faith missions that have internationalised. It is clear from emails received from serving missionaries and leaders that it remains a difficult issue for some. Several missionaries mentioned tensions related to unequal financial support, and the ‘baggage’ of historic attitudes to finance and the levels of support missionaries were required to raise was highlighted.¹²⁸ SIM’s systems ‘remain a

¹²⁴ Hernal, interview, 4 October 2016.

¹²⁵ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

¹²⁶ McGregor, conversation, 6 February 2019.

¹²⁷ Anecdotal evidence, author’s own recollection.

¹²⁸ Anonymous personal interviews, November and December 2017.

barrier to diversity’ for one respondent who highlighted how resource intensive it was to change them, even when an issue was identified.¹²⁹ For example, SIM’s International Personnel Director, Helen Heron, highlighted the need for flexibility in previously mandatory requirements to be part of a health care policy. Missionaries from new sending countries had different expectations of the level of health care they would need, and in an emergency, medical evacuation to their home country may not be immediately beneficial, as would have been the assumption for a missionary from a country with a highly developed health care system.¹³⁰ In some cultures, the very concept of raising financial support is a foreign one, so missionaries from such contexts would struggle to raise their personal financial support in the way western missionaries have done for many years.¹³¹ Bogunjoko underlined the difficulty of changing the culture of how funds are raised for missionary support and ministry when it has ‘always been done a certain way’. The need for flexibility, and a willingness to negotiate in order to agree required support levels was challenging for those who appreciated the security of the old system. The growing diversity of the mission has meant that often those involved in these negotiations are from a context or culture in which negotiating the support level of a missionary with their sending church is more acceptable. Bogunjoko also identified increasing openness to diversity and its implications.¹³²

¹²⁹ Anonymous email, 27 November 2017.

¹³⁰ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

¹³¹ Anonymous Skype interview, 20 December 2017.

¹³² Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

Alongside the significant changes in SIM's governance model and its financial support system, personnel systems and processes were also challenged by the growing diversity of the mission. Differing expectations and attitudes across cultures, particularly regarding membership of SIM and a desire from some missionaries from new sending countries to have a genuine and equal stake in the organisation, became apparent as the mission wrestled with its increasing internationalisation.

Personnel Structures and Mission Membership

The process of, and eligibility for, application for membership of SIM was of course central to the composition of the missionary workforce. The changes in the support system were crucial to this, as all mission members were required to raise their financial support. As discussed in chapter 2, the membership policy of the mission from 1966 onwards, stated that candidates were to be considered 'without regard to race or nationality'.¹³³ The SIM National Council in the candidate's home country was responsible for granting membership of the mission. As an extract from the 1982 Manual demonstrates, the possibility that candidates from non-SIM countries might apply to the mission was addressed:

Candidates for cross-cultural service are considered without regard to race or nationality, to serve in any country other than their own, provided they meet Mission qualifications. The following criteria apply when considering candidates from countries where SIM has no National Office: The candidate must have a sending constituency which will provide a basis for prayer

¹³³ *Interim Edition 1966 Principles and Practice and Abridged Handbook of the Sudan Interior Mission*. See chapter 2, page 74.

support and financial support when needed. The candidate must apply for membership through an SIM National Office.¹³⁴

The 1984 Manual included a slight change as it stated candidates would be considered ‘normally for service in a country other than their own. SIM's candidate facilities exist primarily to channel missionaries into cross-cultural ministry’. The mission avoided local recruitment which might detract from national missionary endeavour. Three circumstances were identified in which applicants would be accepted for work in their own country: work in the national office, for ministry to internationals, or a cross-cultural ministry to a people group within their own country.¹³⁵ Further revisions are found in the 2004 Manual which stated, ‘in countries where SIM partners with a national church, the Mission normally encourages people to serve with a national mission agency. SIM does not want to detract from the national missionary ministry. Where appropriate, missionaries from emerging missions related to SIM may be encouraged to become Associate or dual members’. For candidates from countries in which ‘SIM has no presence, applicants may apply through their nearest SIM Office provided they are supported through prayer and finance by their church and sending constituency’.¹³⁶

As part of the 2004 ‘Seize the Day’ review, there was significant discussion regarding the question of full membership of SIM for missionaries from the majority world. The focus group report on ‘Emerging Missions from Majority World Churches’ noted that national church leaders were equivocal on whether full

¹³⁴ *SIM International Manual*, 1982 Edition, Section 3, 20, SIM Archives.

¹³⁵ *SIM International Manual*, 1984 Edition, 24, SIM Archives.

¹³⁶ *SIM Serving in Mission*, Manual 2004, Section 6, SIM Archives.

membership was necessary or desirable. The opinions of SIM missionaries were varied, but some expressed ‘substantial reservations’. A possible solution was proposed in which ‘Associate Membership’ status could be granted, conveying local but not mission-wide voting rights, and precluding appointment to some higher leadership offices. The report went on to say, ‘for those willing to jump through more procedural hoops and to pay more,¹³⁷ full membership would still be an option’.¹³⁸ The final ‘Seize the Day’ report considered the organisational implications of the membership question, and identified barriers to missionaries from new sending countries:

The current policy is that all SIM members must be formally linked to one of our nine Sending Offices. This means they are required to contribute to Sending Office and International Office administration costs. Crudely stated, these ‘club fees’ provide access to the privileges of membership. However, they already represent a significant barrier to recruitment in ‘non-traditional’ sending countries.

It was also recommended that the current organisational requirement that all sending activities needed to be under the ultimate oversight of one of the sending offices should be reviewed and probably abolished, citing the example of SIM Latino in Guatemala and a new SIM Council in Ecuador, which were technically sub-branches of SIM USA.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Full members of the mission were required to contribute to sending office and International Office administration costs, in addition to the prescribed support requirements for their country of service.

¹³⁸ ‘Emerging Missions from Majority World churches’, ‘Seize the Day’ report, 5.

¹³⁹ ‘Seize the Day Final Report’.

My research revealed strong and differing perceptions of the significance of full SIM membership. Bogunjoko described his own experience, to be discussed in detail in chapter 7, of being told that the only option open to him and his wife, as missionaries from Nigeria, was to become Associate Missionaries, a category normally applicable to those serving for less than four years. To him this meant becoming ‘second-class missionaries’, without voting rights, or the rights to be in leadership in the mission. Dorothy Haile, International Personnel Director during this period, described ‘vivid memories of working for years on making it possible for people who did not come from our founding owners to become members’. An important part of what she described as ‘a long hard process’ was her own gradual realisation of the significance of full membership. She explained that in many of SIM’s traditional sending countries it was insignificant because of the individualism of those countries. In contrast, for people from a ‘more collective communal cultural background, becoming a full member was much more significant’. Haile reflected that the cultural diversity of SIM pushed this process further than it would have been pushed otherwise because being members was so important in those contexts.¹⁴⁰

One missionary from a new sending country who was interviewed for this research shared his impassioned plea to SIM’s leadership that he could be granted membership. As an Associate, he lacked a sense of belonging in the mission, and felt confined to the fringe of the organisation. ‘We feel that we are people with a voice but voiceless. We feel that we are people with potential to contribute to international

¹⁴⁰ Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

missions work but not given sufficient opportunities and encouragement'.¹⁴¹ Donek Tesfaye, an Ethiopian who has served as SIM Deputy Director in Ethiopia since 2014, felt differently. She had previously worked in the Projects Office in Ethiopia for several years, and had managed the department up to 2012. Tesfaye explained that becoming a full member was a requirement of taking on the position of Deputy Director, but in her own mind, she said 'whether I have that title member or not, I've always felt that I am a member'. Her new boss had explained that for those she was serving, it was important for her to be seen as an equal member of SIM, not an employee. Although the attitudes to different 'status' appeared to be something of a mystery to her, Tesfaye was aware of a distinction between those who were employed and received a salary, and those who raised their own financial support.¹⁴²

A major step towards significant change in conferring membership was agreed by the Board of Governors in 2008. It was agreed that 'the International Director be given authority, on behalf of the Signatory Corporations, to grant membership to missionaries recommended by accredited partner entities'.¹⁴³ This change reflected something of the move from shareholder to stakeholder model, echoing the changes in governance, as it widened access for candidates from non-traditional SIM sending countries seeking to join the mission. Heron emphasised the importance of this for the new sending offices, explaining that West Africa, East Africa, and OCLA could now complete the application process themselves and then submit a 'recommendation for membership' to the Deputy International Director for their

¹⁴¹ Anonymous email, 5 November 2017.

¹⁴² Donek Tesfaye, Skype interview, 11 January 2017.

¹⁴³ Board of Governors Minutes 2008, SIM Archives.

region, to the International Personnel Director, and one other member of the International Leadership Team. This group reviews the process, not the application. If due process has been followed, they recommend it to the International Director who grants membership.¹⁴⁴ The categories of ‘member’ and ‘associate’ continued in use, but it is notable that the 2013 draft document of *SIM Mission Principles and Policy* strongly emphasised that the different categories were ‘not an indication of level of commitment to SIM, or level of spirituality’. Reflecting the new governance structure, the document also stated that ‘SIM members are accepted for service without regard to race or nationality by a Council/Board of an SIM Signatory Corporation or by the International Director.’¹⁴⁵

When considering the systems and processes by which the organisation functions, Marshall described the complexity of an application process for new workers that would be appropriate and acceptable in the country from which the missionary was sent, as well as in the country where they would serve.¹⁴⁶ Heron also described the challenge of finding appropriate disciplinary procedures for a situation in which a missionary is from a culture where you should not shame someone. Finding a way to ‘restore not harm the person within the scope of SIM policies’ was a cultural challenge the personnel staff faced. They concluded that a verbal warning would be sufficiently grave, which proved to be the case.¹⁴⁷ SIM’s well-established procedures and processes have been stretched as the organisation has increased in diversity.

¹⁴⁴ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

¹⁴⁵ *SIM Global Principles and Policy*, third draft.

¹⁴⁶ Marshall, email, 9 January 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

Respondents described ongoing challenges, but also gave a strong impression of an organisation which had become increasingly flexible and willing to adapt to the demands of the new situation.

Marriage between Missionaries and Host Country Believers

One policy issue which highlighted the question of the definition of a missionary in SIM, and brought the topic of eligibility for membership of the organisation into sharp focus, was the subject of cross-cultural marriage for an SIM missionary. The 1976 SIM Manual made it clear that both husband and wife were to be members of the mission, and marriage to someone not a member of the mission was not permitted. The 1991 edition of the SIM Manual appears to be the first specific reference to cross-cultural marriage for a mission member. It stated that ‘a single member may choose a marriage partner, within or outside of mission membership, of any race or nationality. However, since husband and wife must both ultimately be members of the mission, marriage to someone who is not a member must culminate in the spouse becoming a member within one year, or in the resignation of the member from SIM’. It was not until the 2004 Manual that there was any reference to the possibility of remaining a member of the mission following marriage to a non-member who did not join the mission: an ‘exception could be sought from and approved by the sending council with the approval of the International Director, providing the spouse was supportive of the member’s calling’.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Extracts from SIM Manuals 1976 – 2004, SIM Archives.

Recalling a discussion in 1999, Heron felt that the complexities of cross-cultural marriage, potential, including financial, obligations to wider family, had been viewed as a likely distraction to ministry and that the issue was perceived as too complicated to be dealt with. The specification that missionaries be involved in cross-cultural ministry was also a contributing factor to the resistance to someone serving within their own country.¹⁴⁹ Haile suggested that this was based on a wrong assumption that there is a uniform culture within a country.¹⁵⁰ Within the history of SIM during the last twenty years, there are examples of successful cross-cultural marriage in which both husband and wife are now SIM members and serving in the country of the host country believer, as well as examples of situations in which the SIM member had to leave the mission as there was no acceptable ministry placement for their spouse who wished to join the mission, or in which the host country did not grant permission for the spouse to remain a non-member of the mission.¹⁵¹ One respondent shared that their marriage to a host country believer had enhanced their ministry.¹⁵² There are complex issues and attitudes at work in these situations including some prejudice against cross-cultural marriage, resistance to change, as well as changes in societal norms. For McGregor, facing up to the challenges this issue presented was important. Both he and Phillips expressed the same sentiment: if SIM could not have cross-cultural marriages in the organisation, then it could not be a cross-cultural mission.¹⁵³ Bogunjoko reflected that by 2015 any remaining resistance to cross-cultural marriage would be down to an individual rather than organisational attitude. Over the 40 years of my research period, the change in attitude and approach to this issue eventually

¹⁴⁹ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

¹⁵⁰ Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

¹⁵¹ Examples given known to the author or shared in interview, October 2016.

¹⁵² Anonymous interview, 16 January 2018.

¹⁵³ McGregor and Phillips, personal interviews.

caught up with the changes which had taken place in societal attitudes to cross-cultural partnerships, as well as taking a more modern approach to only one marriage partner being a mission member.

Conclusion

As the above survey of changes and developments in SIM's governance, structures and processes has demonstrated, the 40 years from 1975-2015 brought significant and necessary change as the mission pursued its vision of cultural diversity. Faith missions had originated with an attempt to break away from a model in which the power of money was central to determining mission policy; however, the shareholder governance model which existed in SIM in 1975 was essentially one in which policy was determined by the wealthy nations perceived as 'owning' the mission. The move to a stakeholder model, giving voice and 'ownership' to all SIM entities, was a radical and important change. In addition, the mission adopted a more flexible missionary support system, and adjusted its personnel processes to facilitate and support the new level of internationalisation. The new systems were not without issues and concerns, however. The loss of the pooling system was felt strongly by some, illustrated by comments from Plueddemann and Bogunjoko above. And in spite of the changes, several people interviewed commented on the persistence of western thinking and processes even in the new systems. Phillips emphasised how easy it was to carry western attitudes and expectations into the new model, when the more difficult route was to work out what appropriate local governance structures

would look like.¹⁵⁴ Two missionary respondents highlighted the ongoing western approach to meetings and decision-making, as well as to personnel processes such as a missionary's 'end-of-term review'.¹⁵⁵ Such systems are commonly expected in western business environments but quite unfamiliar in some other cultures.

Bogunjoko highlighted the challenge being faced on voting for leadership, something SIM has always done, but which is difficult for a culture in which a Director is appointed by the Board. The mission leadership was reflecting, he explained, and asking whether SIM should change and adjust to a different approach, or whether the National Boards in which voting for leaders was difficult should adjust. 'Because they are also joining an international organisation, so everything cannot stay local. If you choose to be a part of an international organisation, you also recognise that there are some international adjustments you have to make as much as that international organisation has to adjust to you.'¹⁵⁶ Such dilemmas and adjustments are central to the effective working of multicultural teams, the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁵⁴ Hernal and Phillips, reflections shared in interviews.

¹⁵⁵ Anonymous email and Skype interview, 8 December 2017 and 12 December 2017.

¹⁵⁶ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

Chapter 6: Key Issues of Increased Diversity –

The Challenges and Benefits of Multicultural Teams

Introduction

In his discussion of ‘interculturalisation’ in *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch reflected, ‘We are beginning to realise that all theologies, including those in the West, need one another; they influence, challenge, enrich and invigorate each other’,¹ an observation which points to the enriching effect a multicultural team can produce. Darrell Whiteman argued that the ‘inclusion of human cultural diversity [within our primary identity as God’s children] is necessary to give us a fuller picture of God’s creation and how we need all of these perspectives from different languages and cultures to be able to understand God in all of God’s fullness’.² Whiteman identified the way in which multicultural teams can provide a better understanding of God and His creation. The internationalisation of SIM has resulted in a growing number of increasingly multicultural teams. This chapter will examine SIM’s response to this issue of increased diversity and, through the testimony of serving missionaries interviewed by email and Skype, discuss some of the challenges and benefits they have experienced as part of multicultural teams in SIM.

In order to find in-depth theoretical discussion of the issues to be addressed in this chapter, it is necessary to turn to the fields of management science and sociology and

¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 467.

² Darrell L. Whiteman, ‘The Role of Ethnicity and Culture in Shaping Western Mission Agency Identity’, *Missiology: An International Review* 34, no. 1 (2006), 67.

begin with a brief review of some of this literature. A growing body of literature on management and organisational science, published in the 1980s and early 1990s, addressed the increasing cultural diversity in organisations and teams. Charles Handy in *Understanding Organizations* highlighted the potential advantage of difference, arguing that ‘a changing organisation is one that uses differences to grow better, that treats... people as individuals who are rightly different and usefully different’.³ This is applicable to SIM’s growing cultural diversity and underlines the potential source of strength to be found in multicultural teams. The potential challenges and sources of conflict were identified by Geert Hofstede, Dutch social psychologist. He researched the impact of culture on organisations, publishing his observations in *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values*⁴ in 1980, and later *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* in which he suggested that ‘Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster’.⁵ Hofstede explored culture as ‘mental software’, patterns of thinking, feeling and acting, derived from a person’s social environment, and to be distinguished from human nature and personality. The need to understand cultural difference in order to function effectively as a diverse team was demonstrated through Hofstede’s research. He showed that manifestations of culture occurred at different levels of depth, with values at the deepest level, and

³ Handy, *Understanding Organizations*, 292. See also Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, *Riding the Waves of Culture*.

⁴ Geert H. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values*. Cross-cultural Research and Methodology Series; v. 5. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1980).

⁵ Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*. Initial material for Hofstede’s cross-national study consisted of answers of employees from subsidiaries of the IBM Corporation in different countries. These were collected as part of larger survey material on employee attitudes from 72 national subsidiaries, 38 occupations, 20 languages in 1968 and 1972, 251. See also introduction, page 26.

practices, including rituals and symbols, closer to the surface.⁶ He identified several dimensions of cultures including power distance,⁷ individualism versus collectivism,⁸ masculinity versus femininity as a dimension of culture,⁹ uncertainty avoidance and tolerance of ambiguity.¹⁰ In *Breaking through Culture Shock: What You Need to Succeed in International Business*, Elisabeth Marx, using Hofstede's explanation of different layers of culture, identified the need to understand other people's culture, which she defined as 'the way things are done', as the biggest challenge in international management.¹¹ The concept of institutional logics, discussed in the previous chapter,¹² is also relevant here as the different frames of reference, values and assumptions of an organisational culture come up against the majority culture in which missionaries are serving, and the cultures and interpretations of the different nationalities represented on a diverse team.

Erin Meyer, a professor at INSEAD international business school, in her 2014 work *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*, identified 'eight scales that map the world's cultures' to show how cultures vary between extremes in their approach to communicating, evaluating, persuading,

⁶ Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, 4-5, 9.

⁷ See chapter 4, page 165.

⁸ Collectivism emphasised the importance of the group and of relationship over task. Individualism emphasised the identity of the individual and the significance of the task over relationship. See Hofstede, *Culture and Organizations*, 67.

⁹ Hofstede's research revealed a masculine emphasis on earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge, while the feminine emphasis was on relationship with a manager, co-operation with colleagues, living area, employment security. See Hofstede, *Culture and Organizations*, 81-82.

¹⁰ A lower tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity resulted in a preference for formal structure, rules and laws. See Hofstede, *Culture and Organizations*, 121-123.

¹¹ Marx, *Breaking through Culture Shock*, 42-3.

¹² See especially chapter 5, page 183, footnote 15.

leading, deciding, trusting, disagreeing and scheduling.¹³ Differences can be turned into a team's greatest assets, she argued, when a leader understands the behaviour of their team members. The importance of understanding was developed further by Earley and Ang in 2003. They introduced the concept of cultural intelligence, which they defined as the capability to function effectively in intercultural contexts, rather than just understand cultural difference.¹⁴ Ang, Van Dyne and Rockstuhl explained that the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) 'addressed a need in cross-cultural psychology to go beyond describing and explaining cultural differences in behaviour. Being able to function effectively across cultures also requires the capability to bridge such differences. CQ research addresses capabilities that facilitate the bridging of cultural differences'. They argued that in the context of globalization, 'it was crucial to understand why and how some people thrive in intercultural contexts whereas others do not'. Cultural intelligence referred to a person's capability to function effectively in an intercultural context.¹⁵ This relatively recent concept is a useful one when considering the effectiveness of multicultural teams in SIM. It is particularly relevant in the consideration of the importance of the attitudes of team members towards their colleagues and context to be discussed later in the chapter, and seems to be a significant factor in an effective multicultural team.¹⁶

¹³ Meyer, *The Culture Map*, 16.

¹⁴ Earley and Ang, *Cultural Intelligence*.

¹⁵ Soon Ang, Linn Van Dyne, and Thomas Rockstuhl, 'Cultural Intelligence: Origins, Conceptualization, Evolution, and Methodological Diversity.' *Handbook of Advances in Culture and Psychology, Volume 5*, ed. Michele J. Gelfand, Chi-yue Chiu, and Ying-yi Hong (2015; published online Apr. 2015), 274, 278-9.

¹⁶ See page 281.

The sociological concept of ‘otherness’ is also relevant to the discussion of the importance of attitude. The concept that attitudes to difference and perceived ‘otherness’ may be a contributory factor to relationships in a team appears to be supported by research done by Katharine Jacobs in 2005. In her PhD thesis on ‘Managing Cultural Diversity: Exploring the Role of Similarity and Difference in Social Contexts’, Jacobs tested a ‘value in diversity’ hypothesis against a ‘Similarity-Attraction’ hypothesis and a ‘Similarity-Differentiation’ hypothesis. Her results highlighted ‘complexities in participants’ anticipated experience’ with similar and dissimilar others. ‘Anticipated activity with dissimilar others was associated with negative feelings such as anger, but was also associated with positive experiences such as greater learning from and a greater importance to the activity’. She observed that the ‘experience of associating with a dissimilar other carries with it both potential for heightened negative emotion and anxiety, and potential for heightened value and learning. These potential benefits and costs of associating with dissimilar others have great implications for policy for managing cultural diversity’.¹⁷ As this chapter will demonstrate, SIM’s awareness of the challenges that resulted from its increased cultural diversity, the impact on its missionary teams, and its investment in time and training to respond to it, reveal an understanding of the potential negatives and the potential benefits which Jacobs identified.

From about the mid-1970s evangelical literature on Christian mission had also begun to address the question of effective communication across cultures. Marvin Mayers’

¹⁷ K. E. Jacobs, ‘Managing Cultural Diversity: Exploring the role of similarity and difference in social contexts’, PhD Thesis, Georgetown University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, US, 2005, 79, 82.

book *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-cultural Evangelism* was first published in 1974 and used widely as a text book in mission programmes. Making use of case studies, Mayers described the book as ‘a practical guide to effective communication in the cross-cultural setting’.¹⁸ A new and revised edition was published in 1987, demonstrating continued recognition of the need to communicate well, and understand other cultures. The author emphasised that the principles he outlined were applicable to any distinctive cultural encounter, so while the original intention of the book focused on cross-cultural evangelism, its message was also relevant to communication within teams of diverse cultures. Duane Elmer, Professor of International Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Illinois, addressed the specific issue of cross-cultural conflict in his 1993 book.¹⁹ The growing interest in diverse cultural contexts in mission was also reflected by articles in the *EMQ* which addressed the topic with increasing frequency from 1975-2015. Samuel Rowan highlighted the question of management in different cultural contexts in a 1983 article. Sandra L. Mackin discussed the specific challenges of relationships in multicultural teams in her 1992 article, ‘Multinational Teams: Smooth as Silk or Rough as Rawhide?’ From her own experience in a team in the Philippines, Mackin highlighted the need for multicultural teams to focus on adjustment to the cultural differences within the team, as well as on their adjustment to the culture in which they were serving.²⁰

¹⁸ Mayers, *Christianity confronts Culture*, preface.

¹⁹ Duane Elmer, *Cross-cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

²⁰ See also chapter 1, page 55. *EMQ* archives, <https://missionexus.org/emq/emq-archives>. Samuel Rowan, ‘Doing Mission’ (October 1983), Sandra L Mackin, ‘Multinational Teams: Smooth as Silk or Rough as Rawhide?’ (April 1992). See also David R. Dunaetz, ‘Good Teams, Bad Teams: Under What Conditions Do Missionary Teams Function Effectively?’ (October 2010), Erik Plantenga, ‘The

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the relationship between the study of culture in anthropology and Christian mission has been complex.²¹ The language of plural cultures in Protestant missions developed in succession to the earlier (often rather crude) discourse of plural races.²² As such, it has tended to think in terms of broad and static ethnic categories rather than paying attention to subtler differences between urban and rural, gender, or generational cultures, or to changes in cultural patterns over time.²³ Charles Taber, in his book *The World is Too Much with us: 'Culture' in Modern Protestant Missions*, discussed the influence of anthropology, especially functionalist anthropology, on American Protestant missions. He highlighted the way that cultural anthropology had helped missionaries understand and appreciate the cultures in which they were working, and had facilitated cross-cultural communication through a greater consideration of the way their message would be received.²⁴ However, Taber emphasised the weaknesses of functional anthropology, and argued that missions at times 'borrowed too uncritically' from the social sciences, assuming 'each culture as a discrete, bounded, self-contained unit', and that the ideal culture was a 'pure' culture uncontaminated by external influences and in principle unchanging and stable.²⁵ He concluded his book by re-iterating that

Trust Factor in Multi-cultural teams' (January 2014), both emphasising the importance of trust in order for a team to be effective.

²¹ See introduction page 8.

²² Stanley, 'From "the Poor Heathen"', 3-10.

²³ Brian Howell noted the way in which Billy Graham's study of anthropology at Wheaton College in the 1940s informed his changing view of race in 'Anthropology and the Making of Billy Graham: Evangelicalism and Anthropology in the 20th-Century United States.' *American Anthropologist* 117, no. 1 (2015): 68.

²⁴ Taber, *The World is Too Much with Us*, 136.

²⁵ Taber, *The World is Too Much with Us*, 140-1. See also Shenk's General Introduction to Taber, xiii.

culture ‘is a very complex but very human reality... it is impossible to understand the human condition without understanding culture’.²⁶

While Taber’s focus was on the understanding of indigenous cultures, the above statement can also be applied to understanding cultures within missionary teams. It underlines the need to acknowledge the complexities of culture, and appreciate that it is not static or unchanging, but rather constantly developing and influenced by social and environmental contexts, as well as affected by personality. Within SIM, Jim Plueddemann and Keith Walker stand out as those who demonstrated awareness of these complexities. In a discussion of Hofstede’s power distance in *Leading Across Cultures*, Plueddemann noted that ‘country differences give a general idea of what to expect, but cross-cultural practitioners would be wise to observe and evaluate each encounter with an open mind’.²⁷ In an article published in *EMQ* in 2013, Walker ‘explored the dangers of stereotyping cultures and the value of recognising that nationally distinct cultural traits do exist’, as well as highlighting the need to acknowledge significant variance within cultures.²⁸

SIM’s Response to Culturally Diverse Teams

Recognition of the importance of promoting understanding between cultures is clearly evident within SIM from the early 1980s. Dr Bill Kornfield, who joined SIM

²⁶ Taber, *The World is Too Much with Us*, 187-8.

²⁷ Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures*, 96.

²⁸ Keith Walker, ‘All Cretans Are Liars: Reflections on Aspects of Cross-cultural Analysis and Training’, *EMQ* (April 2013), <https://missionexus.org/all-cretans-are-liars-reflections-on-aspects-of-cross-cultural-analysis-and-training/>.

as part of the 1982 merger, introduced cross-cultural seminars that ‘sought to break down barriers to promote better dialogue between missionaries and the peoples with whom they were working’.²⁹ Details of one of Kornfield’s courses ‘Cross-cultural Communications’ which was held from 3-14 March 1986 at SIM International, Cedar Grove, NJ, are held in the SIM archives. Its stated purpose included the aim to become more aware of cross-cultural differences among expatriates, as well as nationals serving on the same team. This appears to be the earliest example of training within SIM which referenced cultural differences within missionary teams. The key textbook for the course was Mayers’ *Christianity Confronts Culture*. Course material also included Plueddemann’s article in the *Handbook of Intercultural Training Volume III*, ‘Sub-Saharan Africa: A Praxis Theory of Intercultural Training’. It is important to note Plueddemann’s understanding and experience of cross-cultural interaction which he brought to the leadership of SIM International from 1993.³⁰ This was a significant factor in his vision and the value he placed on the organisation becoming truly international discussed in previous chapters.³¹

As an increasing number of Asians began to join the mission in the 1980s, an article written by Tony Lee, General Secretary for SIM East Asia, was published in the mission’s internal newsletter, *Intercom*, in April 1986 with a covering note from International Director, Ian Hay. Hay’s note is worth quoting at length as it

²⁹ ‘Report to the SIM Board of Governors on the Research and Recommendations of the SIM Justice Task Force June 2010’, 48, McGregor personal papers.

³⁰ William J. Kornfield, ‘Syllabus - Cross-cultural Communications 3-14 March 1986’ and James E., Plueddemann, ‘Sub-Saharan Africa: A Praxis Theory of Intercultural Training’ in *Handbook of Intercultural Training, Volume III*, Eds. Dan Landis and Richard W. Brislin, (New York: Pergamon Press 1983). 133-142. Both held at SIM Archives. Also Mayers, *Christianity confronts Culture*.

³¹ See especially chapter 2, pages 90-93.

demonstrates the direction in which he was leading the mission, as well as his awareness of the challenges increasing cultural diversity brought:

We now have 19 members in the mission who come from Asia, with many more on the way. This is a major step forward for us as a mission. I firmly believe that this development is of the Lord. In the mission family we can demonstrate practically what the body of Christ means. I am sure that these new colleagues will be a major strength for SIM in the days ahead. We must remember, however, that this blessing brings with it potential tension, since these brothers and sisters come to us out of a cultural heritage distinct from the majority in the mission. Already, some problems have arisen because of cultural misunderstandings. For this reason, we have asked Mr. Tony Lee to prepare a paper which will help all of us to understand the cultural implications to us in SIM. Obviously, cultural understanding is a two-way street. Those from Asia have to adapt as well as do the majority in the mission. All of us need to understand each other's customs, allow for differences, and seek the Lord's grace as we strive to work together. Sensitivity to these needs will help us all on the personal level as well as corporately as a mission.³²

Lee's article covered cultural differences including use of language, temperament, physical touch, offensive gestures, formality, the meaning of an Asian 'yes', and levels of openness regarding personal or emotional topics. He addressed courtesies and customs in hospitality, greetings, gift-giving, family and children, as well as work ethos and style, including concepts of team, relationships, leadership, work pattern, and problem solving. He concluded with nine points of advice on how to welcome Asians into SIM. While Lee made some reference in his article to

³² Ian Hay, *Intercom* 82, April 1986.

differences between national cultures within Asia, the main emphasis was at a broad and general level of comparison between 'eastern and western' cultures.³³

The SIM International Council which met in 1986 passed a motion that papers describing the cultural differences between SIM minority and majority cultures (similar to that written by Lee on Asian cultures) should be prepared by all offices which considered themselves to represent minority cultures within SIM and circulated to all mission members. The papers would also serve as 'valuable resource material for International Orientation and other courses'.³⁴ The Council Minutes from 1986 also referred to the Pre-Field Orientation course, conducted in Lausanne, Switzerland from 25 October – 7 November 1986 and 21 February – 6 March 1987. These courses were considered as a trial which would be evaluated. The same International Council meeting recommended the appointment by the General Director of an International Co-ordinator for Language and Cultural Orientation.³⁵ These courses were a precursor to the SIM International Orientation Course which took place around 1991. Plueddemann and Allison Howell³⁶ taught on the course, which Corwin, SIM Research and Education Co-ordinator at the time, helped put together with Gordon Stanley, one of the Deputy International Directors.³⁷ SIM UK missionary, Brian Butler, now retired, discussed the course in an article published in *EMQ* in 1993 on 'Tensions in an International Mission'. The course was originally

³³ Tony Lee, 'Asians in SIM (Cultural differences between EASTERN and WESTERN culture)', Supplement to *Intercom* 82, April 1986, in 'Cross Cultural Studies Conflict Differences', SIM Archives.

³⁴ International Council Minutes, 1986, 35.

³⁵ International Council Minutes, 1986, 31-32.

³⁶ See chapter 4, 169.

³⁷ Corwin, interview, 7 February 2017.

intended for candidates immediately prior to leaving for the field, and included ‘specific training in appreciating SIM’s diversity as people mixed with those from other countries’ as well as other teaching about culture. Due to ‘logistical complexities’ the course ended. Butler noted that its replacement, aimed at the whole organisation, was resented by members who had been in the mission a long time and felt they did not need orientation. The course developed into the SIM International Outlook Course. Butler concluded his article with a statement which stressed the importance of investing time and effort into such training for the benefit of the organisation and its ministry: ‘Time and energy spent in planning and implementing training to defuse tensions in international missions will be amply rewarded by stronger, more culturally sensitive, and probably humbler workers’.³⁸ SIM appears to have followed this recommendation.

It is important to note the experience and contribution of several individuals within SIM who were influential in the way the organisation sought to manage the increasing diversity of its missionary workforce. Plueddemann’s awareness of different cultures, and different cultural approaches to learning, is illustrated in an article he wrote as a faculty member at Wheaton College on ‘Culture, Learning, and Missionary Training’ which highlighted the need for training and learning styles appropriate to different cultures.³⁹ The cultural awareness and sensitivity which Plueddemann brought to his role as International Director was important in the

³⁸ Brian Butler, ‘Tensions in an International Mission’, (October 1993), *EMQ* Archives, <https://missionexus.org/tensions-in-an-international-mission/>.

³⁹ James E. Plueddemann, ‘Culture, Learning and Missionary Training’, Wheaton College, February 1990, SIM Archives.

growing diversity of the mission. Allison Howell, an SIM missionary from Australia, also drew attention to the challenges of culturally diverse teams with a paper on ‘Resolving Conflict when people of different cultures work together’. During nine years of working in Northern Ghana, Howell had observed conflicts taking place due to lack of understanding of learned patterns and cultural ways to navigate disagreements.⁴⁰ She explained that her goal in writing the paper was to ‘help people from time-goal oriented, more individualistic societies, going to work in people-event oriented, relational societies understand better how their host culture dealt differently with conflict, disputes and confrontation’. Sharing observations she had made of the way the Kasena people in Ghana generally avoided confrontation, and direct speech or questioning, Howell also explained how the Kasena would show that you had offended them without saying so, and when a mediator or reconciler might be used to resolve a conflict. Howell emphasised the importance of understanding your own patterns of behaviour and conflict resolution.⁴¹ This self-awareness is key to the success of multicultural teams and will be discussed further later in the chapter.

In an article published in William D. Taylor’s *Kingdom Partnerships for Synergy in Missions*, Ron Wiebe, General Director of the Andes Evangelical Mission when it merged with SIM in 1982, and later one of SIM’s Deputy International Directors, acknowledged the tensions of increased diversity in SIM, but also considered the

⁴⁰ Her experience formed the basis of research for her University of Edinburgh PhD thesis, *The Religious Itinerary of a Ghanaian People* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1997).

⁴¹ Allison M. Howell, ‘Resolving Conflict when people of different cultures work together’, SIM Ghana, August 1990, SIM Archives.

advantages of a multicultural mission, including that it was ‘an expression of the body of Christ, which enriched personal growth through transcending one’s own nationality and culture’. It provides checks and balances of national tendencies. He also stated that SIM believed internationalness enhanced missionaries’ ability to understand and appreciate their own and their colleagues’ culture, to better understand their own and their colleagues’ theology and ecclesiology, to appreciate the primacy of their citizenship in heaven, and to consider others better than themselves.⁴²

Following the merger with AEF in 1998, Dorothy Haile joined the SIM International leadership team, originally with an education brief. Brian and Maureen Butler were recently retired, and passed on the materials from the International Outlook course mentioned above to Haile. She had previously attended a Kornfield training course and had written an assignment on multicultural teams. Once living in the US, Haile enrolled on a course Dr Liane Roembke, author of *Building Credible Multicultural Teams*⁴³ was running at Fuller Theological Seminary, on training for multicultural teams. This was before SIM’s ‘Seize the Day’ review, during which Haile realised how relevant and important this training was for the mission.⁴⁴ The section on ‘Cultural Diversity’ in the ‘Seize the Day’ final report, stated:

Much has already been done... to help non-western (mainly Asian) missionaries integrate into the life and work of SIM. Present trends indicate

⁴² Ronald Wiebe, ‘Internationalizing Agency Membership as a Model of Partnership’ in William D. Taylor, *Kingdom Partnerships for Synergy in Missions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1994), 157-8.

⁴³ Liane Roembke, *Building Credible Multicultural Teams* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000).

⁴⁴ Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

that Asia, notably Korea, will continue to grow into a very significant force within SIM... The need to accommodate and benefit from this increasing cultural diversity has serious implications in such matters as orientation, member care, the mission and team languages used, social expectations and wider diversity in economic wealth.... This will require reconsideration of a number of our cherished values (such as 'equality'). It will also bring with it the need to prepare our personnel for the difficulties that diversity can bring.⁴⁵

In the 'Organisation Reviews' document of the Seize the Day review, reference was made to issues requiring proactive involvement at leadership level. This included the expanding diversity of ministry teams, and talks about taking a more formal and systematic approach to training and equipping. McGregor suggested that this may have reflected an acknowledgement that there were already some difficulties within multicultural teams, as well as a recognition that bringing increasing numbers of different nationalities and ethnicities into the organisation was likely to bring challenges.⁴⁶ In the Personnel Section of the SIM Manual from 2005, a section on 'National Distinctions' noted:

SIM is international. Contact with missionaries from other countries and cultures provides opportunity to develop an international outlook and to see the viewpoints of others. Sometimes, however, there is a tendency to feel that one's own background, manner of speech, dress and other cultural things are superior. Missionaries must be careful to avoid comments and conversation that may give offence to others and not to take offence at remarks and actions that are made innocently.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ 'Seize the Day final report', 8 January 2005, 146, McGregor personal papers.

⁴⁶ Malcolm McGregor, interview, 26 September 2019 and 'Organisation Review Report' (Draft) December 2004, 'Seize the Day' Papers, McGregor personal papers.

⁴⁷ Personnel Section from SIM Manual 2005 edition, McGregor personal papers.

The awareness of issues which were likely to occur with the increased cultural diversity in the mission is clear from the above reports and statements. This was the foundation for the introduction of ‘Multicultural Teams Training Workshops’.

Multicultural Teams Training Workshops

Haile confirmed that recognition of a growing number of increasingly multicultural teams in the mission, a desire to become more diverse culturally, and a recognition of existing issues related to cultural diversity were all factors in prompting the recommendation from the ‘Seize the Day’ review that multicultural teams training should be introduced.⁴⁸ In a later document summarising the ‘Philosophy and Practice of Multicultural Teams Workshops in SIM’, a desire ‘to make the core value “Strengthened through Diversity” a practical reality’ in SIM’s teams was listed as one of the stimuli for the workshops.⁴⁹ Haile was in the midst of completing a Master’s degree in ‘Adult Education with Theological Reflection’ through Chester College, then under Liverpool University, and was determined that the training would be done in a way that was consistent with adult education principles and methods, participatory rather than as a series of lectures on particular cultures, and in a way in which participants were encouraged to think through issues from their own cultural perspective and share insights with others at the workshop in order that they learned from each other. Phillips emphasised Haile’s key role in implementing the workshops: ‘Dorothy did the research and the thinking, she developed a programme, she made it happen’. Phillips also highlighted the significance of the introduction of

⁴⁸ Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

⁴⁹ ‘Philosophy and Practice of Multicultural Teams Workshops in SIM’, date unknown estimated 2014, Dorothy Haile personal papers.

the training workshops as an acknowledgement of the multicultural teams in SIM, and as a statement that the organisation needed to work out how to have effective culturally diverse teams.⁵⁰

The first training workshop took place in Johannesburg, 31 October – 4 November 2005, attended by nineteen participants, including facilitators, from fourteen nationalities. Participants were told, ‘We are holding this workshop because of the growing diversity of SIM’s missionary teams and our recognition that we all have lots to learn about how those teams can function more effectively to the glory of God’. Participants were expected to share their own cultural perspectives and experience in order that the group would learn from each other. The expectation was that participants would return to their place of ministry and share what they had learned in their own teams and contexts. Topics discussed included cultural understanding and expectations of ‘team’, conceptual issues of culture including leadership styles, power, individualism/collectivism, communication styles and expectations, and trust. Common areas of misunderstanding and difficulty were also discussed including decision-making, teaching styles and methods, language (especially a team where several mother tongues were represented), gender, money (and related lifestyle issues), conflict resolution styles, generational issues. Some practical applications were included with discussion of prayer meetings, conferences, planning and business meetings, social events, relaxation, and friendship.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Gillian Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

⁵¹ ‘Multicultural Teams Training Workshop’, Johannesburg, South Africa, 31 October-4 November 2005. Materials for participants, SIM Archives.

A list of final recommendations was produced at the end of this first workshop. It included the definition that ‘a multicultural team is a group of missionaries from different cultural backgrounds working towards a common vision’.⁵² It also stated that team leaders need multicultural understanding and appreciation; this may require specific training, and/or experience on a multicultural team. SIM teams will normally be multicultural. Team members will be supportive of teams that are diverse both culturally and because of personality, age and gender differences. Multicultural teams will intentionally work ‘towards active inclusiveness, in order to reflect the unity we have as the body of Christ’. There was a recommendation that, ‘as much as possible, in light of biblical values, in an SIM team the host culture will take a leading role in forming the values and habits of team life’. It was felt that this approach could help acceptance in how the host culture perceived the missionaries, as well as giving team members a strong motivation to learn the host culture, and reducing individual cultural bias. However, it was also thought that it could inhibit the leadership style of someone who may not function well in this cultural context, and noted that care was needed to ensure the host culture’s perception of missionaries’ lifestyle changes would be understood in the right way. It was recognised that some contexts could be more difficult situations in which to adopt the host culture as the norm, a Muslim culture, an extreme climate, or a situation in which there were particular health considerations for missionaries, were cited as potential issues in this context.⁵³ There is perhaps an essentialisation of the ‘host culture’ here, and a tendency towards an over-simplified view that does not give

⁵² There is ambiguity regarding whether or not this definition assumed that multicultural teams comprised expatriate missionaries only.

⁵³ Final Recommendations, ‘Multicultural Teams Training Workshop’, Johannesburg.

sufficient weight to the complexities of cultures which are living and changing rather than static.

Interviews conducted with those who attended and in some cases, later led, one of the workshops revealed a generally, although not wholly, positive view of their effectiveness and impact. Reflections from a co-leader of several of the workshops noted that in the early workshops the dynamics of nationalities of the participants had not worked well. There were too many Americans, the American respondent recalled, and as westerners, they had been unaware of how much influence their presence had on the way discussions went. The respondent also regretted that they ‘never managed to have enough black Africans in a workshop to really make a big difference in our discussions’. One workshop in Asia had enough non-Americans to get the input of people from India, the respondent recalled. ‘We had Indians, there was a Thai, a Korean, but not very many Americans in one group and it was wonderful’. An American co-leader described the challenge of a western, particularly American, tendency to jump in first to any open discussion, while those from Asian cultures would often wait to be asked for their opinion, observing, ‘They think before they talk, and Americans don’t. ... It’s so sad to miss what the non-westerners have to offer because of the unwritten hierarchy that means they won’t speak; they let others speak ahead of them’.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Anonymous Skype interview, 8 December 2017.

A British missionary, who co-led a Spanish language workshop, was encouraged that the people who attended from Bolivia, two Bolivians and two non-Bolivians, returned to Bolivia and shared parts of the workshop at the team conferences over the following years. ‘That’s the whole point of it, you train people and then they will replicate that’.⁵⁵ However, a Korean missionary who attended a workshop felt that the training was based on the ‘theory and western perspective of how westerners needed to treat non-western colleagues rather than having a deep study of knowing human nature on an equal basis’.⁵⁶ An observation from a British missionary working in Southern Africa described an emphasis on ‘missionaries from traditional SIM sending countries having to adapt and be sensitive to the cultures of those from new sending countries’ rather than a two-way process in which both sides were learning and improving their understanding.⁵⁷

Helen Heron, who took over from Haile as International Personnel Director, observed that the training workshops initially focused on raising awareness of cultural differences which affected how people worked. Later, workshops were requested by a particular team, and became a practical training tool applied to a particular team context.⁵⁸ UK missionary, Ann Christian, who has worked with teams in Latin America, Africa and Asia, stressed the value of workshops which provided an opportunity for different cultures to explore cultural differences that can lead to misunderstanding. She had observed several cultures who found brief western

⁵⁵ Christian, interview, 7 September 2016.

⁵⁶ Anonymous email, 22 January 2018.

⁵⁷ Anonymous email, 23 November 2017.

⁵⁸ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

greetings such as, ‘Oh Hello’, as brusque. She explained how helpful it had been for multicultural teams of which she had been a member to listen to different nationalities talking about something simple like hospitality and time-keeping, in a way that explained many ‘why?’ questions, recalling an enlightening discussion:

Why... why... If I invite you at 5.30, I expect you there at 5.30... We would never dream of being there at 5.30 because we may embarrass you if you’re not ready... Well of course I’ll be ready.

She recommended that everyone in SIM should go through one of the training workshops.⁵⁹ This sentiment was endorsed by a British missionary who has worked in a very diverse team in West Africa. She stressed how much the team had benefitted from the workshops run at their team conferences, and urged that such training continued: ‘Much of what we learn about working in diverse teams happens in day-to-day living, but much can be learned through the research and study of others and passed on through specific training events like these.’⁶⁰

Following Haile’s retirement in 2015, specific multicultural teams training workshops seem to have ended. However several missionary respondents, from western and Asian backgrounds, highlighted a need for more training; one observed, ‘along with the increase of cultural diversity there needs to be more intra-mission cross-cultural training’.⁶¹ Heron explained that issues of diversity had been incorporated into other training, such as personnel workshops, and leadership

⁵⁹ Christian, interview, 7 September 2016.

⁶⁰ Anonymous email, 20 December 2017.

⁶¹ Anonymous emails, 8 and 16 January 2018.

training. This appears not to be recognised by some of those interviewed, or is perhaps not felt to provide sufficient specific cross-cultural training.

It is noticeable that there was little attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshops by conducting any follow-up or monitoring of their impact. Haile explained: 'I never did any follow-up really. There is only anecdotal evidence of the outcomes'. She was aware of a specific occasion when participants were not able to pass on the training to their own teams. This was after a women's only workshop run by an American and Singaporean missionary. The participants felt that they were 'encouraging and pastorally supportive gatherings', but many of the women who attended came from cultural backgrounds where they felt they had no say on their teams beforehand and did not have the confidence to do much afterwards. Many of those would have been Asian women. As a more general observation, Haile explained, people who had participated in one of the workshops, and thought about the topics, were much more willing to live with the fact that cultural differences are simply different, not wrong.⁶² The lack of formal follow-up and evaluation of the workshops appears to be a weakness in the organisation. Gillian Phillips, Board Member, concurred with this, noting a tendency to introduce great initiatives, but then not necessarily monitor or continue them, but rather move on to another initiative.⁶³

⁶² Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

⁶³ Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

As well as cultural diversity within teams, three of the people interviewed also mentioned the significance of diverse personalities, demonstrating an awareness of the complexities of the differences to be considered within diverse teams. One suggested that ‘it is relatively easier to understand, get along with and work with someone of a similar personality of whatever culture’.⁶⁴ Andrew Ng noted that it can be ‘too easy to blame diversity when [conflict] can be inter-personal differences’.⁶⁵ Bogunjoko also recognised the significance of personality as well as cultural differences in leadership styles. He reflected that ‘we forget in leadership that sometimes actually the personality is far more important than the culture a person comes from. And a lot of personality issues are viewed as cultural and they’re not, it’s just the person’.⁶⁶ The recommendations that came from the first multicultural teams training workshop noted that personality seemed to be more important than culture in how people respond to conflict, but culture has a strong influence on how they approach conflict resolution.⁶⁷ Although there appears to have been no formal assessment of the impact of these workshops, the comments made by those interviewed suggest that they were an effective response to increasingly multicultural teams, and that the training was valued by the majority of those who received it. In training of this sort, there was a danger of generalising or stereotyping cultures rather than taking a more nuanced approach.⁶⁸ However, although two or three respondents described weaknesses in the approach of the workshops, the fact that cultural

⁶⁴ Anonymous email, 16 January 2018.

⁶⁵ Andrew Ng, email, 14 December 2017; anonymous email, 16 January 2018 and Skype interview, 8 December 2017.

⁶⁶ Joshua Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

⁶⁷ Final Recommendations, ‘Multicultural Teams Training Workshop’.

⁶⁸ See Walker, ‘All Cretans are Liars’.

differences were being recognised and discussed was beneficial in the organisation's aim of achieving strength through diversity.

Specific Challenges

In a doctoral thesis that examined what effective multicultural leadership and followership looked like in SIL International,⁶⁹ another faith-based, non-profit, international organisation, EunSun Hong heard from an SIL team which had taken part in a multicultural team workshop the previous year. As the team leader reviewed what they had learned, she 'realized that understanding was one thing, but behaviour change from cultural understanding was another'.⁷⁰ SIM's multicultural teams training workshops appear to have aided understanding, but the practical realities of behaviour in culturally diverse teams often brought another level of challenge.

The discussion above on multicultural teams training demonstrates SIM's acknowledgement that increasingly culturally diverse teams brought challenges that needed to be addressed. Keith Walker reflected that the 'significant amounts of time, energy and resource' which had been invested into multicultural teams training demonstrated SIM's recognition of the relational challenges in culturally diverse teams, and the need to devote time and effort to ensure these teams could succeed.⁷¹ Justin Agnes and his family served with SIM in South Sudan, from January 2009 to November 2010, and Kenya, from January 2012 to July 2015, on a very culturally

⁶⁹ SIL International was previously known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL).

⁷⁰ Hong, *A Grounded Theory of Leadership and Followership*, 190.

⁷¹ Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

diverse team. In his book *Drowning in a Thick Soup: A haphazard study in team life and relationships* he shared the struggles he faced as part of a multicultural team, and highlighted the challenges of relating to and communicating with colleagues from other cultures.⁷² In this section I will discuss some of the specific challenges faced by multicultural teams in SIM that were highlighted during my research.

a. Leadership Style

One very experienced European missionary recalled that in all their years in the mission, ‘the one time I actually lost it, incendiary with anger, stood up in a large meeting, went out and slammed the door’ was due to the leadership style of a white South African man’.⁷³ Leadership style was one of the topics addressed on the multicultural teams training workshops. Haile recalled that when the workshops began, virtually all SIM’s leaders, except in the East Asia office, were western. Differences in western leadership styles, which were partly cultural and partly personality, were addressed. She observed that the wider development of non-western leadership appointments heightened the need, something she ‘suspected (speaking in 2016) was still an issue and not clearly enough understood or accepted’.⁷⁴

⁷² Justin Agnes, *Drowning in a Thick Soup: A haphazard study in team life and relationships*. (Self-published in the UK, June 2016. Available from Amazon).

⁷³ Anonymous interview, 7 September 2016.

⁷⁴ Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

Heron outlined some of the challenges she was aware of, explaining that ‘when a strong authoritarian leader exerted more authority than SIM was used to, this caused team members to feel disempowered, and unhappy when not consulted’. In this situation, she said the team members would be vocal about it. However, in a circumstance where those not happy are reluctant to speak out, out of respect for the leader, the difficulties became more difficult to recognise.⁷⁵ Discussions and votes in meetings are a more western concept, so it is important to interpret situations through that lens, and not assume that all other cultures operate in the same way. In an interview in 2016, McGregor emphasised the importance of SIM’s core values in the organisation’s approach to leadership. Core value #8 states:

We believe in the worth and giftedness of each person in SIM and of those we seek to serve. We practise the giving and receiving of discipleship, life-long learning, consultative leadership, mutual development, and training as enduring disciplines.

A consultative leadership approach was laid down in the values, and was discussed with anyone coming into leadership. McGregor explained that this was particularly significant for someone coming from a culture where leadership styles were more authoritarian.⁷⁶ Bogunjoko highlighted the challenge not just of leadership style, but of expectations. He explained:

We have an increase in non-westerners in leadership, but I don’t think the expectation of those who they are leading has changed. So even though you are a non-westerner you are still expected to lead with western values ... The benefit to SIM is when an Ethiopian leads like an Ethiopian who is adjusting

⁷⁵ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

⁷⁶ McGregor, interview, 29 September 2016.

to the needs of a Canadian ... We lose something if an Ethiopian leads like a Canadian. We lose his Ethiopian-ness. But we need that.⁷⁷

The testimony of those interviewed suggested the greatest challenge came when westerners were being led by Asian missionaries. One British missionary who served for most of his missionary career as part of a non-western team described a multicultural team as ‘a rich experience, but one which does not come without effort and commitment [to strength through diversity]... The greatest adjustment for me was when a non-western leader took over from me. The style of non-western leadership was more difficult for me to adjust to than being a western leader among non-western team-mates’.⁷⁸ Testimonies from a team in Africa described problems due to communication style and approach to conflict resolution when an Asian became team leader over a mostly western team. One respondent expressed the feeling that SIM leadership could have better helped the leader and the team adjust.⁷⁹ The appointment of leaders also raised a question of possible positive discrimination with one respondent describing a statement from someone in international leadership that ‘leadership positions will be filled based on merit not ethnicity’. This suggested a perception that in some situations, ethnicity was seen as a key component of merit.⁸⁰ There were complex perceptions and dynamics at work in these appointments as the mission pursued an ethos of diversity.

⁷⁷ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

⁷⁸ Anonymous email, 8 January 2018.

⁷⁹ Anonymous email, 10 November 2017.

⁸⁰ Anonymous email, 27 November 2017.

b. Language

Geert Hofstede highlighted the significance of language difference as it contributed to ‘mistaken cultural perceptions’. He stated that ‘to establish a more fundamental intercultural understanding, the foreign partner must acquire the host culture language. Having to express oneself in another language means learning to adopt someone else’s reference frame’.⁸¹ Andrew Ng described the question of language as a tough and very heated issue as SIM incorporated missionaries from non-English speaking nations. Out of discussion which took place during his time as Deputy International Director for SIM in Asia, it was agreed ‘for manageability, to use one main language of communication for all to learn as much as possible, while allowing regional or even local groups to use other languages. Whenever possible, for important international communications, they will be translated for non-English speakers: French, Korean, Chinese (Mandarin), Spanish, or others as needed. While it is not ideal, we will keep working for any possible improvement’. His comments gave a sense that there was no alternative option at the time, and acknowledged the advantage for missionaries who spoke a second, especially an international, language. Without that, it was much harder for someone to develop into a leadership role.⁸²

The SIM Personnel Manual of 2005 stated:

Although English is the language of international communication in SIM, an SIM team may choose to adopt as their ‘team language’ a national language

⁸¹ Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, 212-3.

⁸² Andrew Ng, email, 22 November 2017.

of the country where they work... In such a case, missionaries will be required to achieve sufficient fluency in the 'team language' to communicate well with missionary and national colleagues. A reasonable level of English, especially reading ability, is also strongly recommended.⁸³

The recommendations from the first multicultural teams training workshop included a statement which recorded the high value placed on the team language being that of the host culture. The need for teams to discuss and consider this at annual team conferences was emphasised. The recommendations also urged the SIM International office to become more multilingual, to increase the use of translation of important documents, and provide help for non-native speakers taking on leadership roles to improve their English if needed.⁸⁴ A German participant at one of the early workshops returned to her ministry in Peru determined to introduce Spanish as the team language but met with significant resistance from other team members, including Koreans, who felt that their English would suffer.⁸⁵ The issue was discussed at the SIM Peru Council meetings on several occasions, and then raised again in April 2008. The minutes of that meeting recorded that 'since SIM's international language is English and it is necessary for reading most of SIM's publications, it is still felt that it is beneficial for us all to have a common language. Since opinion on this topic is still very divided, no change was proposed for the time being'.⁸⁶ By 2015, however, change appears to have taken place as the minutes of the Council meetings were recorded in Spanish.⁸⁷ A British missionary who was seconded to West Africa for a year remarked on the wisdom of the team there. Made

⁸³ SIM Manual, Personnel Section 2005, McGregor personal papers.

⁸⁴ 'Multicultural Teams Training Workshop', Johannesburg. 'Final Recommendations', SIM Archives.

⁸⁵ Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

⁸⁶ Peru Council Meeting Summary Minutes, 15-17 April 2008, Pacific Andes Councils (Row J-1-2), SIM Archives.

⁸⁷ Peru Advisory Council Minutes, April 2015, SIM Archives.

up of a significant number of French speakers, they alternated between English and French at their business meetings, prayer meetings, and team conferences. One would be in English translated into French; the next one would be in French translated into English, so one language was ‘not in charge of everything’. The need for some missionaries to learn English, then the business language of the country in which they are serving, and also the local language of the area where they worked was a high demand, which could be a challenge for recruitment.⁸⁸ One Ethiopian missionary interviewed for this project explained ‘for some of us English is our sixth and seventh language, my wife’s eighth language. Therefore, understanding those who speak English as a first language is hard, but understanding those who speak English as a second language is even harder’.⁸⁹ Phillips noted the value and importance of simply recognising the challenge faced by missionaries sometimes needing to process several languages at once as you were communicating with them.⁹⁰

Hornal strongly expressed his feeling that the ‘need to break the dominance of English within the mission is really quite significant. I think that makes a vast difference from the point of view of the way that people relate to one another within the team, but also how they relate to national believers...An intentional approach to using the national language has got to be a good thing’.⁹¹ Walker also commented on the importance of changing from a monolingual approach, citing Directors’ meetings

⁸⁸ Anonymous interview, 7 September 2016.

⁸⁹ Anonymous email, 5 November 2017.

⁹⁰ Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

⁹¹ Hornal, interview, 4 October 2016.

in Europe and West Africa as an example. He observed that ‘it took primary language English speakers to say we will not allow this to be monolingual... Because the minority was so lacking in power in that context so it takes some of those who come from positions of power to push change through... to make it happen’.⁹² This is an interesting observation for what it reveals about where power lay and what it took to effect change. Majority cultures and those in leadership roles seemed best placed to bring about change.

c. Asians join an ‘African’ Mission

Perhaps the most significant cultural challenge that became clear from my research came when during the 1980s Asian, specifically Korean, missionaries began to join SIM, which had historically been considered an ‘African mission’. Hay recalled the problems that occurred when ‘non-European, non-French, non-English people, native Koreans came into the mission’. He also highlighted the need to have missionaries who could face the changes taking place in the organisation. He remembered a missionary speaking at SIM International describing the problems they had when a Korean went to work with them in South America. Hay commented: ‘He shouldn’t have been making that kind of speech, but he did. And that human nature had to be overcome in the mission. Those kinds of things slowed down the whole process of diversity.’⁹³ A report written by Howard Brant on a ‘Consultation on Partnership’ held at Wheaton College in May 1991 described research conducted by Revd Myung Hyuk Kim on Korean missionaries in a number of different mission organisations.

⁹² Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

⁹³ Hay, recollections shared in conversation with McGregor, 16 November 2017.

Kim found ‘a degree of frustration, particularly at the “different way” the organisations did mission’. The lack of Koreans in leadership positions, which meant that strategy and policy decisions were all made by non-Koreans, was also a source of frustration. Kim reported ‘in fact the 28 Koreans in OMF are wondering if they ought to have an autonomous department of all Koreans so they can do missions in the “Korean way”’.⁹⁴ In his MA thesis on the Wycliffe Global Alliance, Franklin also paid particular attention to the ‘specific context of Korean leadership’ as he highlighted the significant emphasis Koreans placed on respect for superiors and those in authority.⁹⁵

It is clear that similar challenges were experienced in SIM, and that SIM was attempting to find a way through the difficulties. An article dated November 1995 written by a missionary serving in West Africa addressed ‘Particular Factors to be aware of in the integration of one of the newest minority groups (Koreans) into SIM’. It discussed the problem of different authority structures, highlighting the significance of the strong authority structure the sending church holds for Koreans, which could result in conflict if the missionary is caught between the sending church and SIM authority structures. The authoritarian leadership style of Koreans was highlighted as something which could be perceived as ‘repressive’ by those unused to it. The article posed the question: ‘Can Koreans carry out leadership in a way that allows consensus and does not overly restrict others in SIM?’ Language learning was raised as a particular problem for Koreans who faced ‘tremendous hurdles of

⁹⁴ Howard Brant, Report on ‘Consultation on Partnership, Wheaton College, 9-11 May 1991, SIM Archives.

⁹⁵ Kirk Franklin, ‘The Wycliffe Global Alliance’, 118.

learning English, French and local languages' to serve in West Africa. Language also related to the challenge of education for Korean missionaries' children. Should they choose English or French speaking schools, or try to recruit Korean teachers who could teach small groups of missionary children? The need for greater understanding of communication styles was highlighted, following examples of Korean missionaries offended or embarrassed when they had lost face, or had not experienced the respect or politeness they would have received in their home country because of their position. The western approach to open debate or discussion of an idea had been hurtful to a Korean missionary.⁹⁶

One respondent explained the cause she saw behind the difficulties when Koreans first joined SIM, describing the very rich heritage of how Christianity grew in Korea, and the desire they had to replicate that in other places. This meant they placed a very high priority on prayer, and on using schools and hospitals as their 'methods' for mission. 'The downside is that they say this is the way to do mission. You have to build schools and you have to build hospitals because that's how Christianity is effective'. She felt that when they entered a multicultural environment, the older generation of Korean missionaries were not open to other ways to do mission.⁹⁷

McGregor also commented on the strong cultural identity of the early Korean missionaries joining SIM and the struggles that they had to embrace a more multicultural organisation: 'They were strongly embedded in their Korean ways, and that's certainly something that we wrestled with. Perhaps that could have been an

⁹⁶ 'Particular Factors to be aware of in the integration of one of the newest minority groups (Koreans) into SIM'. Anonymous, November 1995, SIM Archives.

⁹⁷ Anonymous interview, 8 September 2016.

influence on some people's thinking and concern about the kind of issues that might multiply with more cultures joining the mission'.⁹⁸

A leader in SIM Ethiopia, an Ethiopian, commented on their experience of the SIM team there. 'Koreans are pretty much a silo. We try to reach out to them, but in terms of whether we understand them well and whether we have managed to embrace them well I'm not so sure, and they don't really care whether we reach out to them or not'. The very strong allegiance of Korean missionaries to their sending church, above the SIM leadership in the country where they are serving, also proved difficult. The respondent reflected: 'I don't think we have managed to make them feel a part of SIM very well'.⁹⁹ One American missionary serving in Latin America expressed significant frustration 'that many fields have issues with Koreans as often they do not respond to rules, often have projects outside of the SIM system ... and don't have the same rules applied to them. I think we ignore it often. But this is not fair to someone else who has to answer to policies'.¹⁰⁰ A Korean missionary who served in a country in Southern Africa described the difficulties some of the 'old school missionaries' had in dealing with non-western missionaries when they first arrived on the field. Years later, during his appointment as country director, he told me 'some fellow workers opposed my appointment strongly because I am Korean. This was racial, and they would only accept a western leader. So I think continuing education to our fellow missionaries is still needed regarding diversity in SIM'.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ McGregor, interview, 29 September 2016.

⁹⁹ Anonymous Skype interview, 11 January 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous email, 3 December 2017.

¹⁰¹ Anonymous email, 22 January 2018.

While it is clear from my research that there have been significant challenges regarding the integration of Korean missionaries into SIM, Dryer observed the very positive contribution they made in the mission, and towards its increased diversity. Soon after Koreans began to join, he described seeing high-quality Korean missionaries doing great work in areas where westerners were perhaps finding it difficult to get to. ‘Their contribution was just so obviously powerful straightaway... Korea was sending high quality missionaries from the word go and we had a lot to learn from them’.¹⁰²

d. Team Dynamics

It is clear from my research that the experiences of multicultural teams across SIM differ, with some teams being more culturally diverse than others, and some embracing diversity more easily than others. Heron described her experience when she and her husband first arrived in Peru in 1992. She recalled that the SIM team there was very multicultural, albeit primarily made up of western cultures. As a former Andes Evangelical Mission team,¹⁰³ there were a lot of Australians and New Zealanders. There was only one American family when the Herons arrived. ‘Our experience was that SIM is a very diverse organisation and it was what we liked about it right from the beginning’, she reflected.¹⁰⁴ As the Peru team grew, the American contingent grew but there were always at least ten different nationalities on the team. Only when she began to visit other SIM teams did she experience ‘a dawning realisation’ that this was not the case everywhere. On a visit to Bolivia,

¹⁰² Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

¹⁰³ See chapter 1, page 37.

¹⁰⁴ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

Heron recalls thinking ‘this is really weird, everyone here is American’. Several of those interviewed observed the benefit of a team where no one culture was in the majority. Bremner observed that when a multicultural team has a majority culture, due to the number of team members who come from one cultural or ethnic background, it can become a major difficulty. ‘The majority group always ends up being the centre of gravity for the group even if they try hard to give complete equality to everyone’.¹⁰⁵ The greater flexibility and adaptability of SIM’s ‘younger’ fields noted in previous chapters was echoed again in this context as Haile reflected that countries which tended to have more multicultural teams were those which had less ‘historical baggage’ than others.¹⁰⁶

SIM’s team in Ghana stood out in my research as a particularly effective multicultural team. It was a team of approximately 25 adults of up to ten different nationalities including several non-western ethnicities. This level of diversity was said to have helped the team not to ‘import a dominant team culture’. One western missionary suggested that non-westerners may still have felt that the team was quite western, but also ‘expressed great appreciation for the inclusion they feel’. Several team members had attended multicultural teams training workshops, and similar training had been conducted within the Ghana team. The team was also said to be ‘intentional about orienting newcomers to multicultural team life... [being] constantly aware of our diversity and so [we] use any and all situations to learn about how different cultures would handle situations in their home context... to not make

¹⁰⁵ Bremner, email, 5 January 2017

¹⁰⁶ See also discussion of attitudes to change in different contexts in chapter 4, pages 150-1.

assumptions about the way people think and prefer to behave but to ask questions'.¹⁰⁷ This approach seems to leave space for complexities within cultures. A respondent who had a leadership position in this team recommended other team members to contact for interview; several were keen to share their experiences. A missionary from North East India described his initial feelings of fear of acceptance of himself as a missionary in SIM and by western or American missionaries. He felt an outsider for about two years, but gradually began to feel accepted as a part of the team. He cited the humility of his Canadian field leader and the leader's care and concern that he and his family should be welcomed and supported as they joined the team as having a significant impact on him.¹⁰⁸ It was clear that this team had strong fellowship and appreciation for each other.

In contrast to the Ghana team, a team leader in East Africa remarked that their team, although multicultural, was still very American in its composition and attitudes. 'We talk about valuing other cultures but have a long way to go to see that in reality. ... We pay lip service to the different cultures but then tend to want things done the American way'. The respondent observed that people from 'the non-traditional sending countries tend to gravitate to each other for support and understanding'.¹⁰⁹

Two respondents emphasised that differences between western cultures should not be underestimated. A UK missionary working in Asia had been surprised to experience

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous email, 27 November 2017.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous email, 10 December 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Anonymous email, 16 December 2017.

that some of the biggest conflicts came between English speakers, such as Americans, Australians and British. ‘There’s a misconception that because you all speak English, you all have a shared understanding of things’. When working with people whose first language is not English, she described the tendency to make a greater effort because the language difference was an obvious cultural difference. The different approaches between English-speaking cultures had caused misunderstanding. Written communication, such as emails between team members, was particularly easy to misunderstand. Awareness of the difference between cultures, and seeking help regarding how to phrase an email to someone of another culture in order not to offend them, had proved helpful in this team.¹¹⁰

In the midst of evidence of teams working to embrace diversity, and to work through its challenges, two respondents shared a sense of concern or perhaps resentment at what had happened in SIM. One told me: ‘At times, I have felt the pendulum of striving for diversity inclusion has swung too far, which has resulted in white American or western males being discriminated against in our efforts to include newer cultures.... Sometimes this resulted in people being overlooked who were in the majority but could have made a significant contribution, or the minority person chosen over the majority person to express diversity, even when that person was less qualified’.¹¹¹ Another explained: ‘As an American, I have felt left out sometimes as

¹¹⁰ Anonymous Skype interview, 20 December 2017.

¹¹¹ Anonymous email, 10 December 2017.

we might go to the other extreme to welcome in a majority world person and the ratio is not realistic or representative'.¹¹²

e. Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution appears to be a particular challenge in multicultural teams.

Conflicts often occur as a result of cultural misunderstanding, and can be compounded by different cultural approaches to try and resolve the issues. Hong's research on SIL highlighted the different approach to communicating disagreement between western and Asian cultures, finding that most westerners respectfully approached a leader directly about disagreement, while Asians would not approach a leader directly at first, often preferring to discuss the problem with others, and perhaps speak to the leader indirectly. Asian respondents she interviewed shared their discomfort at a western, individualistic, direct approach which could appear uncaring to the follower, and another described a sense of inferiority between them and western leaders. An Indian respondent emphasised the need for co-workers from different cultures to communicate together about their experiences and so to try and resolve any difficulties together.¹¹³ In an address to the Asia Missions Association Fourth Triennial Convention in California in 1986, SIM's Harold Fuller argued that 'most missionaries do not understand their own cultural distinctive, so do not realise how they may offend others'. He described time he had spent recently helping Australian and American members of SIM overcome tensions with each other that had arisen from misunderstanding each other's cultural mindset. He emphasised the

¹¹² Anonymous email, 3 December 2017.

¹¹³ Hong, *A Grounded Theory of Leadership and Followership*, 90-91, 102-3.

need to work on promoting understanding.¹¹⁴ Lee's article on Asians in SIM, mentioned above, was published around this time and was perhaps part of this effort.

Several interview respondents gave examples of cultural misunderstandings they had experienced. One who had been involved in running the multicultural teams training workshops had become very aware of the challenge of unwritten rules in different cultures which easily led to one culture causing unintentional offence to another. She described seating arrangements at a meeting, and the colour of the paper used for information handouts, both apparently simple situations, that had resulted in offence.¹¹⁵ Diane Marshall described 'several cases of young American single women who were not prepared for, or able to adapt to, the leadership style of an older Chinese male working in an Asian country, and equally the leader being unable to adapt to the expectations of young western women' which resulted in conflict.¹¹⁶ A missionary who had served for many years in West Africa wrote that 'so much misunderstanding occurs because of cultural values that are not understood or seen as legitimate ways to deal with life'. They described a conflict between an American and an African, who was shocked when the American invited them over for a meal while they were still in conflict. When the African heard the response of an American talking about hospitality on one of the multicultural training workshops, she suddenly understood that an American might invite someone for a meal to resolve a conflict. In Africa, she explained, if you are in conflict you would not share

¹¹⁴ Harold Fuller, Asia Missions Association Fourth Triennial Convention Pasadena, California, 6–12 October 1986, SIM Archives.

¹¹⁵ Anonymous Skype interview, 8 December 2017.

¹¹⁶ Diane Marshall, email, 9 January 2017.

food until the conflict was resolved. This situation had underlined the importance of learning about another's cultural preference to avoid such difficulty in relationships.¹¹⁷

An older and experienced missionary emphasised that generational differences could be as significant as ethnic cultural differences.¹¹⁸ Tesfaye also observed the significance of diversity in working styles and approach which had a huge impact on the way a team worked, and could result in clashes and tensions.¹¹⁹ Self-awareness and the right attitude went a long way to helping to resolve conflicts. The importance of such self-awareness will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

f. Sense of Equality?

The significance of a sense of equality was highlighted in the previous chapter as part of the discussion of changes to the missionary financial support system.¹²⁰ Issues surrounding finance, and the ability of some missionaries to sustain a higher standard of living, were highlighted as a source of tension. One British missionary noted that American missionaries seemed to be able to live at a higher level even than their British colleagues, which could cause resentment. Lifestyle issues and expectations could also cause tension without awareness and the avoidance of assumptions. For example, the assumption that all single missionaries would want to share

¹¹⁷ Anonymous email, 29 November 2016.

¹¹⁸ Anonymous email, 16 January 2018.

¹¹⁹ Tesfaye, Skype interview, 11 January 2017.

¹²⁰ See chapter 5, page 220.

accommodation was unhelpful; an older British single missionary would choose to live on her own, while a young Latin American missionary would want to share in order to get to know people and make connections.¹²¹ A number of respondents, mainly from the majority world, raised issues related to finance. An Ethiopian missionary described the financial challenge for missionaries from the majority world. ‘They don’t have funds for medical insurance, emergency evacuation, retirement, retreats and ministry funds. Their church may give them some funds for survival. How can you work in the same organisation with the wealthy westerners who are driving white four-wheel Land-cruisers yet you don’t have even a motor cycle?’¹²² Another respondent described the perception that money equated with power and authority, which made it more difficult for his voice to be heard as a missionary from the majority world.¹²³

There is a sense that perceived inequality in some situations was more significant than different standards of living. Mary Evans observed that the most important issue was again one of attitude. For someone to have more than you was not a problem, if they were willing to share what they had. An attitude of collegiality made a huge difference.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Christian, interview, 7 September 2016.

¹²² Anonymous email, 7 November 2017.

¹²³ Anonymous email, 23 November 2017.

¹²⁴ Evans, interview, 25 October 2016.

g. Distraction from Ministry

The above examples clearly demonstrate that achieving success as a multicultural team was not always straightforward, and it is important to note before discussing the benefits of multicultural teams, that some respondents were keen to stress that these issues were time-consuming and could become a distraction from ministry. One wrote that ‘the dissonance created by cultural and ethnic diversity can feel like a distraction from the purpose of a ministry team’.¹²⁵ Another suggested:

Diversity can create tensions... The time and energy spent on seeking to understand colleagues could sometimes be better spent seeking to understand the host culture. As someone who has sought to significantly identify and enter into the host culture where I serve, I find it hard to be pulled in multiple other cultural directions within the mission. It is disorientating and stressful at times.¹²⁶

Another respondent reflected: ‘If you are struggling to make it work within your team because of cultural differences it can be exhausting and can affect the ministry. If there are cross cultural issues in the team this is also not a good witness to those you are serving’.¹²⁷ It was also suggested that an emphasis on diversity at all costs could result in a loss of focus, and a danger of syncretism.¹²⁸

Many more respondents, while acknowledging that diversity could be hard work, expressed the view that the effort was worth it, and described the benefits multicultural teams brought to the organisation, benefits to which I will now turn.

¹²⁵ Anonymous email, 2 November 2017.

¹²⁶ Anonymous email, 16 January 2018.

¹²⁷ Anonymous email, 23 November 2017.

¹²⁸ Anonymous email, 21 December 2017.

Benefits

a. The Richness of Diversity

The enriching impact of diversity on teams, and individuals, was clear from my research. The opportunity to learn from other cultures and to see different ways of doing something for one missionary ‘gave more insight to life and how to live it with a rich diversity of ideas and thoughts on life’.¹²⁹ Bogunjoko argued that SIM missionaries ‘enrich each other as we embrace cultural diversity, linguistic diversity and even perspectives on the Bible itself’. He also emphasised that those who came from a background of experiencing the impact of mission from the other side (his family first heard the gospel from SIM missionaries in Nigeria), brought a different view of mission which enabled them to point out some of the historic mistakes that had been made, and so help to avoid their repetition.¹³⁰ He highlighted the value of Christians from different cultures studying the Bible together, suggesting that a western individualistic approach was balanced by a more communal understanding many majority world cultures brought to their reading: ‘we need to bring both of those together for a good understanding of Scripture’.¹³¹ An American respondent shared the view that ‘if we could get believers from every culture studying the Scriptures together we would probably come as close as possible to understanding them as God intended’.¹³²

¹²⁹ Anonymous email, 29 November 2016.

¹³⁰ See chapter 7, page 311-2.

¹³¹ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

¹³² Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017 and anonymous Skype interview, 8 December 2017.

An Ethiopian respondent described the value of diverse perspectives on a leadership team, each member bringing a unique view and perspective had created a team that was stronger than a mono-cultural equivalent. It also offered team members opportunity to grow themselves, as people and in emotional intelligence.¹³³

Respondents from teams in Latin America, Asia and Africa described the ‘richness of different perspectives and ideas, and even methods in ministry’,¹³⁴ the helpfulness of different insights and ways of doing things ‘which also act as a mirror, helping us understand ourselves better, and know areas where we need to change. Seeing Christ in different cultures reveals more of Christ to us’.¹³⁵ There were said to have been ‘huge benefits of having different cultural perspectives on a task force looking at multicultural teams training’. Insights on different approaches to connecting culturally with people, how to contextualise, and how to avoid cultural mistakes, were hugely valuable.¹³⁶ Times of understanding and times of deep misunderstanding brought richness. One missionary described having developed their deepest relationships with colleagues of a different culture precisely because they had had to work through misunderstandings. ‘The process was deeply painful, but at the end of it, the depth of understanding, love and relationship was deeper than I have had with any colleague of a culture similar to my own.... It challenges your own misconceptions, and ethnocentric thinking... challenges your way of living’.¹³⁷

¹³³ Tesfaye, Skype interview, 11 January 2017.

¹³⁴ Anonymous Skype interview, 20 December 2017.

¹³⁵ Anonymous email, 16 January 2018.

¹³⁶ Heron, interview, 8 September 2016.

¹³⁷ Anonymous email, 20 December 2017.

Missionary respondents expressed appreciation of the different qualities different cultures brought to a team: an Ethiopian observed that westerners in the team were cognitive, analytical thinkers. ‘They are good at shaping organizational structures and also exegetical interpretation of the scripture. Non-westerners in the team are good at understanding the grievances and pains of those who are suffering’.¹³⁸ An Australian missionary spoke of ‘greater access to the strengths that individuals, teams and countries bring from their diverse and distinct backgrounds, such as an emphasis on prayer by Koreans, planning by Americans, spontaneity of Latinos, hardworking Chinese diaspora.’¹³⁹ A team leader described his team as ‘diverse in skills, education, ethnicity, nationality and denomination. ... It makes us stronger because as we seek to cross barriers we must also learn to cross our own internal barriers. It causes us to work on our unity as an expression of the gospel’.¹⁴⁰

b. The Testimony of Diversity

As the previous quotation suggests, the testimony of multicultural teams to the communities in which they were working was a powerful one. Dave Bremner, Deputy International Director for East and Southern Africa, explained ‘we believe we better reflect the nature of God and His mission by being united in our diversity. Our multi-ethnic teams in so many countries of the world regularly see powerfully positive attitudes towards the missionaries and the ministry merely because they are part of a multi-ethnic team’.¹⁴¹ The diversity of SIM’s team in South Sudan, which

¹³⁸ Anonymous email, 7 November 2017.

¹³⁹ Marshall, email, 9 January 2017.

¹⁴⁰ Anonymous email, 27 November 2017.

¹⁴¹ Bremner, email, 5 January 2017.

had included Ethiopians, North East Indians, Kenyans and a wide spectrum of western missionaries, had opened doors of ministry amongst multiple tribes. ‘When people see the harmony and joint ministry between people of very different ethnic backgrounds, it reflects in a very tangible way the multinational, multiethnic nature of the Kingdom of God. The stereotypes of North-South dynamics no longer can be so easily assumed by people who observe [diverse] SIM teams working together’. Diane Marshall described the ‘powerful witness to communities that are not able to handle diversity and where there is conflict’.¹⁴²

The spiritual impact of culturally diverse teams was emphasised. Plueddemann recalled a team in India which included an American married to a Japanese, several missionaries from Guatemala, as well as Koreans and Ethiopians. This was a challenge to the Indians who told them that Christianity was a western religion.¹⁴³ A missionary spoke of the testimony of God’s sovereignty and love for all nations when multicultural teams with people of all nationalities and all cultures were seen to be loving, supporting and caring for each other.¹⁴⁴ A British missionary spoke of the theological basis for teams which are culturally diverse. ‘The Church is culturally diverse – it must be if we are obeying Christ’s command [to make disciples of all nations]. Missions must reflect that which they represent – the Body of Christ. Cultural diversity... is essential to Who we represent and the Body of which we are a part’.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Marshall, email, 9 January 2017.

¹⁴³ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Christian, interview, 7 September 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Anonymous email, 20 December 2017.

c. Diversity opens Doors for Ministry

Alongside the two benefits outlined above, the way in which increased cultural diversity within SIM has opened doors for ministry is important to acknowledge. Political tensions in a country may prohibit access for Americans for example, but there may be an open door for Korean missionaries.¹⁴⁶ Culturally diverse teams have been found to be less vulnerable to governments that favour or disapprove of certain passports. Diversity has widened access for ministry where westerners may have struggled to get a visa.¹⁴⁷ Missionaries from Indonesia have been able to build an effective ministry in a challenging area of another Asian country because of their ability to identify with the people amongst whom they are working. The impact of an Ethiopian missionary in Asia was more fruitful because he challenged the locally-held caricature of Christianity as ‘European, American, loud, domineering, and rich’. A Latin American missionary’s ability to identify more deeply with the way Indians viewed the importance of family opened doors for his ministry in India.¹⁴⁸ A missionary from North East India described the way diversity in SIM had provided an opportunity to demonstrate that ‘Christianity is not a white man religion’. When a Muslim saw many ethnicities within SIM working together it dispelled their conception that all missionaries are from the West and Christianity is for the white people’.¹⁴⁹ Bogunjoko emphasised the impact of multicultural teams, even in the context of ethnic conflict: ‘when a Canadian, an Ethiopian, and a North East Indian

¹⁴⁶ Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

¹⁴⁷ Marshall, email, 9 January 2017.

¹⁴⁸ McGregor, interview, 26 September 2016.

¹⁴⁹ Anonymous email, 10 December 2017.

are seen working together harmoniously, you begin to ask yourself questions. If these people can work together, why can we locally not work together?’¹⁵⁰

The Importance of Attitude

Cultural intelligence, the ability to function well in a multicultural context, discussed in the introduction to this chapter,¹⁵¹ has its foundations in the understanding of cultural differences. From that understanding, cultural intelligence involves the ability to build bridges across those differences in order to function effectively. In her research on SIL International, Hong noted the need for cultural understanding and sensitivity, good communication, and ‘an indefinable something’ she labelled ‘cultural savvy’. The importance of ‘fostering a multiculture friendly environment by acknowledging differences, understanding differences, appreciating differences, and encouraging the use of cultural strengths and not weaknesses’ was vital.¹⁵² It was evident from my research that the attitudes of missionaries to the multicultural context in which they were serving made a significant difference to the effectiveness of the team, and the fruitfulness of ministry. There is perhaps a link between their attitudes and their level of ‘cultural intelligence’. Whiteman emphasised the importance of understanding when he presented the need to discern:

...where and when our church and mission are shaped by cultural constraints and where they are in harmony with biblical values. Human beings are so brilliant at self-deception that we often confuse the two, believing that our understanding and practice of faith is thoroughly biblical, while in fact it is

¹⁵⁰ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

¹⁵¹ See page 236.

¹⁵² Hong, *A Grounded Theory of Leadership and Followership*, 168-9, 257.

often more cultural than Christian. In other words, we are often more American, or British, or Kikuyu, or Telugu, than we are Christian.¹⁵³

A missionary who had worked in a number of different cultural contexts described the way in which a culturally diverse team acted as a mirror to their own attitudes, teaching humility and the need to sit and listen, to ask and learn from other cultures. This missionary told me: ‘I love my team, they’re wonderful. So diverse, it’s just great’.¹⁵⁴ Her positive attitude to the increasing diversity within SIM was very clear. For others, there was a sense that their identity as a missionary may have been so wrapped up in their culture, that they felt threatened by the idea of missionaries from another culture or country wanting to become part of their ‘expatriate missionary club’. Walker termed this ‘missionary clericalism’, describing situations in which missionaries wanted a safe place to talk with other missionaries ‘like them’ who understood the challenges and frustrations of their ministries. As more and more nationalities began to join SIM’s missionary workforce, some of that identity was threatened and the separation between missionary and those they came to ‘help’ was reduced. This was uncomfortable for some. Walker reflected that ‘in failing to have adequate self-awareness around this question of missionary identity, sometimes we have been culpable of giving the perception that [at a corporate level] we stand apart from people of the countries in which we serve in ways which aren’t godly’. He reflected, ‘we may not have aided the process of diversification in the past through having this sense that missionaries are a different species’.¹⁵⁵ Evans called for

¹⁵³ Whiteman, ‘The Role of Ethnicity and Culture in Shaping Western Mission Agency Identity’, 61.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous interview, 7 September 2016.

¹⁵⁵ Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

honesty from missionaries regarding their need for fellowship and support from others of the same nationality.¹⁵⁶ McGregor emphasised the need for missionaries to recognise that they could learn something from someone from a different and less privileged background. He described a potential clash if some western missionaries still had ‘a saviour mentality in mission and ministry’ rather than having an openness to the way God wanted to work in their own lives and through missionaries from other cultures.¹⁵⁷ Tesfaye reflected that the way missionaries related to Ethiopians had improved since she first became involved with SIM. However, she was less sure about the way diversity within the mission itself was handled, citing, for example, the way different cultures related to each other. She suggested that this was sometimes due to a lack of awareness, and sometimes because missionaries do not want to pay attention to the different perspectives cultures bring because it may require change or sacrifice in their own position. She had observed that conflict within a team was much harder to manage without self-awareness and a willingness to question one’s own views. Just one person in a team who was not willing to do that could make the team dysfunctional, and cause a loss of trust. ‘As beautiful as diversity is it can also be very hard when you don’t know how to manage it’, she reflected.¹⁵⁸

An experienced American missionary, who had worked in different cultures, reflected on her early missionary experience and demonstrated great self-awareness:

¹⁵⁶ Evans, interview, 25 October 2016.

¹⁵⁷ McGregor, interview, 26 September 2016.

¹⁵⁸ Tesfaye, Skype interview, 11 January 2017.

When we first became missionaries, I did not realise that our English, Scottish, South African, Canadian, and Australian colleagues were not as alike as we looked and sounded... I have learned to know and appreciate and work with and learn from people from all over the world, though I suspect they usually understand and study and accommodate themselves to my world view more than I do to theirs.

She was aware that not all missionaries have the self-awareness she described, but several times in the interview stressed the importance and impact of an attitude which was sensitive, humble and sought to understand another's culture. 'There is a sense in which an awareness of diversity and sensitivity to it goes a long way to making diversity a source of strength'.¹⁵⁹ This sort of attitude was evident in the responses from others interviewed. One explained that being part of a multicultural team had 'made me think through why I do what I do and what I think and if that is consistent with being Christ-like and not just because I am British'.¹⁶⁰ Another showed humility in the depth of their reflections as they wondered 'how to take multicultural teams training to the next point, that point where we can accept criticism of our own cultural biases and also have team-mates operate in the same space and be willing to accept criticism ... with growth as the desired outcome'.¹⁶¹ These comments describe challenges and hard work, but also demonstrate a willingness and commitment to face up to those difficulties and find a way through them in order that diversity can be a source of strength.

¹⁵⁹ Anonymous Skype interview, 8 December 2017.

¹⁶⁰ Anonymous email, 23 November 2017.

¹⁶¹ Anonymous email, 27 November 2017.

Not all teams and respondents in SIM have the same experience, and three of my respondents raised strong concerns. A South African leader in SIM felt that things had improved, ‘but diversity is still very superficial. We all have this mentality which I call “come and be like us”’.¹⁶² A Korean missionary still felt that:

‘non-western missionaries are not treated as equal in their fields, because English is the major team communication method and some native English speakers are not showing appreciation toward non-English speaking fellow missionaries’ accents. And I keep hearing western missionaries’ complaints toward multicultural and diversity in SIM. I feel some of our western colleagues feel a threat from non-western fellow workers’.¹⁶³

Another missionary reflected, ‘I sometimes feel that those of us with black skin or from non-traditional sending offices are being held up as trophies. Valuing diversity looks good on paper and we need to start somewhere but it has not arrived on the fields. Even having a black British Director¹⁶⁴ and a Nigerian International Director has not broken-down prejudices’.¹⁶⁵ While the immediate reaction to these comments is perhaps concern for a negative situation, and what may in other words be termed ‘tokenism’, June Sarpong, broadcaster and author, challenged that reaction with a different perspective. In a talk at Edinburgh Book Festival 2018 on her book, *Diversify: Six degrees of Integration because the world is separate enough*, she argued that tokenism can be the start of a process, it can ‘jump start’ a system to

¹⁶² Anonymous email, 21 December 2017.

¹⁶³ Anonymous email, 22 January 2018.

¹⁶⁴ Bev Howell served as SIM Kenya Director from 2013 to 2019.

¹⁶⁵ Anonymous email, 16 December 2017.

move things in the right direction.¹⁶⁶ Perhaps these appointments in SIM have begun to open the door for those that hope to follow.

When considering the effectiveness of multicultural teams in SIM, and the strong international and interdenominational ethos of the organisation, there is also a sense in which the people who apply to join the organisation may self-select. Does SIM attract people more likely to form successful multicultural teams and do well with diversity because they are people who are choosing to join an international organisation? SIM's selection processes, statement of faith and core values are all intended to play a part in recruiting candidates who will thrive in an international organisation, and value its diversity. McGregor explained the hope that this would result in an openness to different approaches and perspectives. He also emphasised the importance of orientation courses for new missionaries in order that they arrived in their new ministry setting 'with a mindset, not just "OK God is calling me here to do this", but, "I'm going to do it in the company of other people ... this is going to be about teamwork, about really embracing these people and understanding them"'.¹⁶⁷ As a Christian organisation there is also an expectation that God's grace will be at work in missionaries as they deal with cross-cultural contexts.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ June Sarpong at Edinburgh Book Festival, 15 August 2018. See also June Sarpong, *Diversify: Six degrees of Integration because the world is separate enough* (London, UK: HQ, 2017), based on research conducted at Nuffield College, Oxford University.

¹⁶⁷ McGregor, interview, 29 September 2016.

¹⁶⁸ Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

Conclusion

Celia Young, a business and organisational development consultant, has written about the importance not just of attracting people from diverse backgrounds to an organisation, but of keeping them. She explains, ‘This work requires us to go beyond just collecting people who might look different. We must allow them to be different once they arrive. After 20 years of consulting to organizations about diversity, I have not seen many companies make a significant move towards embracing people's differences’.¹⁶⁹ My research has found that since the 1980s, SIM has shown an awareness of the challenges that increasing cultural diversity has brought to its missionary teams, and worked to address those. Haile identified that SIM’s investment in training for multicultural teams resulted in a deepening understanding of the impact of culture on these relationships. As teams had previously worked hard at relationships with their host country believers, Haile suggested this was perhaps based on an ‘us and them hierarchical set of relationships’. A multicultural team added the complexity of making relationships within the team as well as beyond it, but it also opened the opportunity to recognise when colleagues from other cultures better understood their host country, and were able to open up new opportunities for ministry ‘provided the team is willing to listen to each other’.¹⁷⁰ The willingness to adapt and think differently in the light of new situations brought positive benefits to the SIM Ghana team, causing them ‘to rethink how we support people coming from countries and cultures that have a different funding system and different funding potential.... to think in a more ministry centric way [which] has led to more

¹⁶⁹ Celia Young, ‘Organization Culture Change: The Bottom Line of Diversity’, *Diversity Factor (Online)* 15, no. 1 (2007), 26.

¹⁷⁰ Haile, interview, 9 September 2016.

imaginative ways of funding ministry and ensuring that those from poorer cultures are still able to carry out the ministries God has called them to'.¹⁷¹

The experience of a missionary from Latin America who served in Asia for 11 years as part of a multicultural team, helpfully illustrates the process of change that has taken place in SIM over these years:

At the beginning it was a bit difficult not only for me to be Latino but for others as well since we were from a different culture. We felt Latinos, or Africans as second-class missionaries ... The missionaries were always from the west with years of experience in missions, but we came from poor countries called 'Third Worldmen' and we were a missionary field for many and now we were as comrades. But over time this has improved... and we feel part of the same team. And we see the respect and support that is given to each one, regardless of which country they come from, or what race or culture. This diversity has become a strength.¹⁷²

This is the experience of one SIM missionary from the majority world; other individuals would perhaps tell a different story. This account, however, does seem to reflect something of the wider narrative concerning multicultural teams within SIM. Challenges of misunderstanding between cultures, and tensions resulting from different attitudes and perspectives within the organisation, clearly persisted throughout my research period. However, the commitment to promote cross-cultural understanding, especially through the multicultural teams training programme, went a long way to heighten awareness of issues arising from cultural diversity, to improve cultural understanding, and contribute to increasing cultural intelligence

¹⁷¹ Anonymous email, 20 December 2017.

¹⁷² Anonymous email, 24 November 2017.

within the mission. In turn, missionaries benefitted from the richness of increased diversity, and the impact on SIM's ministry, both through the testimony of effective multicultural teams and the open doors to new ministry situations for non-western missionaries, was a positive one. The following chapter will explore two case studies, the experiences of Andrew Ng and Joshua Bogunjoko, and the significant contributions they made to SIM's increasing diversity.

Chapter 7: Two Case Studies of Growing Diversity –

Dr Andrew Ng and Dr Joshua Bogunjoko

Introduction

This final chapter before the conclusion of my thesis will examine two case studies of the growing diversity in SIM, two men from the majority world, one Asian and one African, who served in international leadership in the mission. It will consider the stories of Dr Andrew Ng, born in Malaysia and Singaporean by nationality, and Dr Joshua Bogunjoko from Nigeria, whose respective SIM experiences in a sense frame this research project. Andrew Ng made a formal application to join SIM in 1975 and was widely thought to be the first Asian missionary to serve with SIM. The date of his application determined the start date of my research period due to its significance to the growth of cultural diversity in SIM.¹ Joshua Bogunjoko was appointed as the International Director of SIM from 1 June 2013. His appointment as the first non-western leader of the mission, and his leadership and oversight of the first SIM Global Assembly in March 2015, which marked the implementation of the new governance model, determined the end date of my research period. This was an important date in SIM's history because of the change represented by the new governance structure as it was designed to reflect SIM's vision and ethos of cultural diversity, and introduce a 'stakeholder' model which gave a voice to all nationalities,

¹ Michiko Aoba was in fact the first Asian missionary to serve with SIM. See chapter 2, page 76-7.

rather than to a small group of western shareholder nations as had previously been the case.²

A number of experiences are common to both of these men: through their application and acceptance as members of SIM, both in a sense pioneered the way for others from their region to follow them. They both served as medical missionaries at Galmi Hospital in Niger,³ and both served as Deputy International Directors on McGregor's International Leadership Team from 2006. Both men had a significant impact on the history of SIM during this period; however, their experience of the application and selection process to become a member of the mission was notably different. It appears to have been a far smoother process for Andrew Ng and his wife Belinda than for Joshua Bogunjoko and his wife Joanna. An examination of their experiences through their own accounts will explore these different paths and suggest how they are indicative of some of the differences between one of SIM's historic field countries and a newer, perhaps more flexible, sending context in East Asia. It will also suggest some of the reasons behind the resistance the Bogunjokos faced in their path to membership of the mission. Reflecting on the stories of how these couples had joined SIM, McGregor observed that the Ngs' experience 'had gone reasonably well', while the Bogunjokos 'faced an uphill struggle with lots of twists and turns' and the need to break down some barriers.⁴ Plueddemann recalled the gifts and talent he had observed in both men: he described the 'tremendous job' Bogunjoko did at Galmi Hospital, and how much his departure from SIM Niger would be felt, and

² See chapter 5.

³ See page 295.

⁴ McGregor, interview, 4 February 2016.

described Ng as ‘a real visionary’, ‘dynamic’, and the reason SIM’s work had expanded in Asia.⁵ The contrasting experiences of Ng and Bogunjoko illustrate something of the benefits and challenges the organisation faced as it increased in cultural diversity, particularly as the mission worked through changes to its membership processes as enquiries grew from potential missionaries in the majority world. Their stories also demonstrate the significant impact these two men had as individuals during this period of the mission’s history, and what their presence on the International Leadership team from 2006 brought to SIM.

Andrew Ng’s Story⁶

As Andrew Ng reflected on his career with SIM in 2017, he wrote that ‘my experience is almost all positive’. His first contact with the mission was in 1965 through his home church in Singapore, Bartley Christian Church.⁷ The church held its first mission exhibition that year; the pastor had gathered mission literature from all the organisations he knew, including SIM. His pastor at Bartley Christian Church had worked at the SIM Australia office in Melbourne as a Bible college student. Knowing Ng’s interest in mission which had begun when he was just 11 years old, and his plans to study medicine, he suggested that Ng wrote to SIM to ask if they

⁵ Plueddemann, interview 18 February 2017.

⁶ Andrew Ng died from pancreatic cancer in January 2019. During his illness, he was keen to share his reflections and story with me, which he did in a series of emails, 5 September - 14 December 2017.

⁷ The church website records that it began out of Bartley Youth Fellowship with 25 members in 1962 as the first English-speaking church established by the Chinese National Evangelism Commission (CNEC). See <http://www.bartley.org.sg>. It is a non-denominational church, which focused on mission from the start: Ng recalled a decision to give one week of every month’s income to mission. The CNEC was originally formed as the Chinese Native Evangelistic Crusade supporting evangelists in China. Its vision was for local Christians to evangelise their own people. It expanded into other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and changed its name to the Christian Nationals Evangelism Commission, retaining the abbreviation CNEC. In 1985, it changed its name to Partners International. <https://www.partnersintl.org/about-us/history/>. Websites accessed 5 September 2019.

accepted Asians to serve with them. Ng's letter was sent to the main SIM Australia office in Sydney.⁸ He recalled that the then Home Director, the late John Neal, 'took a personal interest' and promised to table the question at the forthcoming meeting of the SIM General Council in New York.⁹ 'On his return from the US, he stopped by in Singapore just to see me and to tell me the positive answer. Asians are welcome!'¹⁰ As he related this story, Ng questioned whether Neal realised that it would be several years before he was ready to serve as a missionary as he was just beginning his medical training. Perhaps Neal was aware of that, and wanted to keep Ng's vision for mission alive as he arranged for Australian missionaries to visit Ng in Singapore on their way to Africa, thus maintaining contact with Ng over the following years. He also asked Ng to represent SIM and distribute the mission magazines of the time, *Africa Now* and *Sudan Witness*, and other mission materials. One encounter with a new missionary surgeon had a particular impact on Ng. Dr Barry Hicks was on his way from Australia to Ethiopia in 1967; his passion inspired Ng who dreamt of working under Hicks and learning surgery. This dream did not become a reality as ill health forced Hicks to return to Australia as Ng graduated from medical school with an MBBS from the then University of Singapore (now the National University of Singapore) in 1971. The introduction by Singapore of compulsory military service meant that Ng then had to complete a five-year study bond. He recalled with gratitude SIM's patience during what he described as a 'side-detour' for surgical training, military service and bond-service, done simultaneously. He married Belinda in 1973. In 1975, Andrew and Belinda had their first son and in

⁸ SIM's National Office and New South Wales state office was in Summer Hill, a suburb of Sydney. The office in Melbourne was the Victoria state office. Marshall, email, 14 June 2019.

⁹ Ng was uncertain of the exact date of this meeting, but estimated it took place in 1966.

¹⁰ Andrew Ng, email, 5 September 2017.

the same year, Ng completed his qualification as a surgeon at the University of Edinburgh (Royal College of Surgeons, FRCS) and then the University of Singapore (Masters of Medicine), after which he made a formal application to join SIM through the SIM Australia office. He completed the first half of a part-time Diploma in Theology at the Melbourne College of Divinity in 1976, the same year that he and Belinda were accepted as members of SIM to serve at Galmi Hospital.

Galmi Hospital in Niger was first opened in 1950 by Dr Burt Long; the nearest hospital was 700 miles away.¹¹ During the 1950s, the hospital expanded to 120 beds. A 60-bed unit specialising in the treatment of tuberculosis was opened in the 1960s and a dental clinic added in the 1970s. A village health project was established during the 1980s as a result of which a team visited 16 local communities each month to provide immunisations, pre-natal care, and supervision of 60 traditional midwives and 45 village health workers. Expansion of the hospital continued in the 1990s, including the addition of three new operating rooms. The hospital website records that on average during the 1990s, over 5,000 people were seen by the outpatient department clinics each month, and 4,500 admissions took place each year.¹²

Ng explained that after joining SIM, he and Belinda completed a three-week orientation course in Australia, and stayed on for a month of deputation meetings among Chinese churches, university students and SIM supporting churches. He

¹¹ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 158.

¹² See <http://www.galmi.org/history/>. Accessed 5 September 2019.

recalled, ‘Everyone in Australia was caring of us. We did face some natural East-West cultural differences but they were minor. We did not expect non-Chinese to be like Chinese and vice-versa. Singapore has been exposed to British (and other western) people and differences between us and them are known, though not evenly’. McGregor observed the significant role of the SIM Australia office in Ng’s route into the mission. The leadership there ‘championed Ng’s application, brought it under the umbrella of the sending office and pushed it through’. This was a ‘normal entry point’ into SIM, and as a medical doctor from affluent Singapore, there was an expectation that the Ngs could raise the required financial support and fit into SIM’s structures.¹³ It may be that the English fluency of many Singaporean Chinese Christians was also a helpful factor in their acceptance as potential missionaries.¹⁴ On their way to Africa, the Ngs spent nine months in Albertville, France for French language study, and began studying Hausa in preparation for their arrival in Niger where Andrew would be working as a surgeon, and Belinda would be involved in administration. An article published on the SIM International website in 2006 recorded that Ng performed his first operation within hours of arriving at Galmi Hospital,¹⁵ an action which reflected something of Ng’s proactive and determined character which was evident throughout his SIM career and would have a significant impact on the development of SIM’s work in East Asia.

¹³ McGregor, email, 4 June 2019.

¹⁴ Sylvia Ang, ‘I am More Chinese than You: Online Narratives of Locals and Migrants in Singapore’, *Cultural Studies Review*, 23:01, (2017) 112-113. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/csr.v23i1.5497>.

¹⁵ ‘Leading the Asian Mission Train: The Story of Dr Andrew and Belinda Ng’, 26 July 2006, <http://webservices.sim.org/index.php/content/leading-the-asian-mission-train>. Accessed 5 September 2019.

Ng described the culture at Galmi Hospital as ‘mainly western (American)’ when they arrived. He recalled that ‘while a few missionaries had uncertainties of an Asian fitting into a mainly western culture, most of them were very welcoming and tried their best to accept us’. Ng’s observations suggest he had a humble and accepting approach to any cultural clashes or misunderstandings. Around three months after their arrival, Ng was asked to take on the role of Station Head at Galmi. ‘I thanked them profusely but had to decline as I felt that I had not been there long enough ... I did not have the language and I was too young and still just finding my way... This gesture of a major mission station of 30-35 missionaries to a young “recruit” gave me confidence of their acceptance of Asians’.¹⁶ Whether the concept of Chinese and Japanese Americans as ‘model minorities’ which had developed in the US by the mid-1960s contributed to this acceptance of the Ngs by American missionaries is uncertain, but it may well have helped.¹⁷ It is clear that Ng’s leadership gifts had been recognised almost immediately on his arrival in Africa, and after their first five-year term at Galmi, he was asked to serve on the Francophone Field Area Council¹⁸ as Medical Co-ordinator, looking after all the SIM medical ministries in the area. Ng’s commitment to his medical ministry persisted and he was very conscious that Galmi Hospital was always short of surgeons, so he chose to be based at Galmi and served as a resident physician, sharing the work load with others, except when travelling for his administrative and Area Council responsibilities.

¹⁶ Ng, email, 10 September 2017.

¹⁷ See Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, ‘The Origins of the Model Minority’, *Journal of American Ethnic History* 36, no. 2 (2017):99. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jamerethnhist.36.2.0099>.

¹⁸ Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin. Togo was added a few years later.

After 12 years at Galmi, the Ngs faced the need to return to Singapore for the education of their children, and the compulsory military service requirement for their boys. Ng explained: ‘SIM leadership kindly prepared us and helped us to transition to the home office ministry as the Regional East Asia Director’. This appointment underlined an acknowledgement from SIM’s leadership of Ng’s leadership gifts and vision, and demonstrated a desire to keep the Ngs in SIM after their return to Singapore. It proved to be a very significant appointment for the growth and development of SIM’s work in sending missionaries from Asia. In Ng’s words, ‘the determination to see the growth and development of mission sending in Asia was really SIM’s vision and I was called upon to develop it’.¹⁹ He described it as ‘a courageous step with enormous implications for a traditional western mission agency that had no base in Asia’. Underlining McGregor’s observation noted above,²⁰ Ng stressed the important role played by SIM Australia as the office which oversaw the work initially. Their openness to processing applicants from Singapore for membership through SIM Australia is notable when compared with the experience of the Bogunjokos in Africa which will be discussed in the second half of this chapter.

An article published in the mission periodical, *Africa Now*, in 1980, entitled ‘The Asians are Coming’ suggested that the SIM Australia Council saw the Ngs’ application and acceptance as members of SIM as the beginning of a trend as enquiries were received from other Asians interested in missionary service in Africa. For most of these enquirers, application through the Australia office was not

¹⁹ Ng, email, 22 October 2017.

²⁰ See page 296.

possible, the article recorded, presumably due to distance and the need for travel to interviews. As a result, an SIM Reference Council was formed in Singapore, chaired by Tony Lee,²¹ and made up of Christian businessmen, professionals and pastors, to screen candidates on behalf of SIM Australia to which the committee was responsible.²² This laid the foundation for the development of the SIM East Asia Council which became autonomous from SIM Australia in 1992, directed by Ng.²³ Ng described the decision to develop the SIM East Asia region under one Singapore office as both cost-effective and a helpful way to facilitate ‘the sharing of mission know-how’ into several countries from one location. ‘It was a strategic use of scarce mission resources’.²⁴ Diane Marshall, Ng’s successor as Deputy International Director for the Asia-Pacific region, explained that the ‘intention was to provide a location from which to mobilise and send from Asia that was more appropriate than Australia’. The use of the term ‘East Asia’ was intended to reflect a broad geographical area and be inclusive’.²⁵ The number of enquiries from the region increased steadily, especially from South Korea. By 1997, there were 70 missionaries serving in SIM sent by the East Asia office. In 1998, the first year which recorded missionaries sent by the Korea Council separately, there were 40 missionaries under SIM’s Korea council, 3.3% of mission members, and 39 missionaries under the SIM East Asia office, 3.2% of mission members.²⁶ The SIM Korea Council was established in 1997, and the Korea office opened as a separate SIM entity in 2004. By 2014, there were 102 mission members sent by the East Asia office, 6.6% of the

²¹ See chapter 6, page 241.

²² Kerry Lovering, ‘The Asians are Coming!’ *Africa Now*, Issue 110, August-October 1980.

²³ Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 174.

²⁴ The East Asia Region included Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan and Korea.

²⁵ Marshall, email, 14 June 2019.

²⁶ Figures from SIM International Statistics, 1993-2003, Personnel Statistics, SIM Archives. See also chapter 5, page 191.

total of SIM members, and 91 sent by SIM Korea, 5.9% of mission members. Ng described the way in which the growth of these offices ‘encouraged the rest of the mission family’.²⁷ His own role in this growth was significant.

Ng recalled the further development of the ministry of the SIM East Asia office following SIM’s merger with ICF in 1989,²⁸ which put the Philippines as a field country under SIM East Asia’s oversight. He reflected that this decision by SIM’s international leadership ‘to entrust such an untested dual function structure [sending and receiving] to the new East Asia Office was a surprise and is commendable of their attitude towards newly emerging entities’. This willingness is in sharp contrast to the resistance of SIM Nigeria to take on a sending function, to be discussed later in this chapter. After Mongolia opened to missionaries in the early 1990s, Ng as Director for SIM East Asia was a pioneer in the foundation of Joint Christian Services International; JCS was established as ‘a consortium of evangelical agencies’ establishing work in the country.²⁹ An additional SIM office in Hong Kong was registered following the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997.³⁰ Ng explained that

²⁷ Ng, email, 22 October 2017.

²⁸ The Ceylon and India General Mission (founded in 1893) initially focused on work amongst Hindus in India’s villages. The work was broadened to include Muslims in South India after 1930, and into West Pakistan in 1954. The main focus of the Poona and Indian Village Mission (also founded in 1893) was a chain of centres along the pilgrim route from Poona to Pandharpur. Both missions became involved in literature and radio work in the 1960s. The organisations merged and became the International Christian Fellowship (ICF) in 1968. ICF was working in seven countries when it merged with SIM in 1989 – Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia and Senegal. See Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 80-89 and 134-138.

²⁹ The founding meeting of JCS (Joint Christian Services) was held in London, 1 October, 1992. See ‘JCS International Strategic Plan 1998-2002: Issues and Analysis of JCS International and its Work in Mongolia’, prepared by JCS International Management Team. SIM Archives, Howard Brant file no. 4.1.22.0 (cont’d) Mongolia.

³⁰ It is difficult to find accurate statistics for how many Hong Kong Chinese had been accepted into SIM before 1997; however one report suggested three members from Hong Kong were serving with SIM in 1995. Statistics from the SIM personnel system, supplied by the International Personnel Department, email 28 November 2016.

the region of Hong Kong and China was also put under the leadership of the SIM East Asia office due to the availability of Chinese language resources and bilingual people in the region. The diversity of what Ng described as ‘our combined East-West team’ opened doors for further expansion of SIM’s ministry in the area.

Andrew Ng served as SIM East Asia’s Director for 16 years before, at the request of his sending church in Singapore, he was granted a short sabbatical at the Overseas Ministries Study Centre in New Haven, Connecticut, US. In 2005, McGregor asked Ng to join the SIM International Leadership Team and take on the role of Deputy International Director (for SIM’s Asia-Pacific Region), based in the US. Ng explained that McGregor had ‘created the most diversified International Leadership Team in the history of SIM. This required our serving in the International Office [in South Carolina, US] physically together for three years to gel the team, before I returned to be based in Singapore for the Asia-Pacific region’.³¹ In returning to Singapore, Ng ‘pioneered the now accepted SIM understanding’ that members of the International Leadership Team should be based in the region for which they are responsible.³² Reflecting on his experience as part of the International Leadership Team, Ng described it as a ‘good rich experience... [with] no major frictions among us because of our diversity, chiefly because of the deep ethos that SIM had instilled into all of us’.³³ Ng remarked on the particular significance of McGregor’s actions for the growth of diversity in SIM at leadership level. He suggested that:

³¹ See chapter 2, page 98.

³² Marshall, email, 14 June 2019.

³³ Ng, email, 10 September 2010.

...the growth towards diversity was largely passive at the leadership level until Malcolm intentionally prioritized it at the very top level. He did it courageously as soon as he became the first non-US International Director... Out of the blue, he also diversified the composition of the International leadership team... I would say that Malcolm had set a pattern for all of SIM to diversify more intentionally.

Just before he turned 65, in January 2012, Ng stepped down from his position as Deputy International Director. He was appointed to be the Champion for New Initiatives in Missions, which he described as a consultant position within SIM for places to which missionaries have restricted access. After Bogunjoko's appointment in 2013, Ng served as mission consultant to SIM East Asia until his death in January 2019.

As Ng reflected on his career with SIM, he shared several significant observations. He began as a self-confessed 'African-die-hard missionary', indeed his heart for the work in Niger remained with him throughout his career, and SIM granted his request to return to Galmi Hospital as a surgeon for a short period every year.³⁴ But Ng wrote, 'somehow God taught me that He so loved the world and not just Africa. I also discovered that my real passion is not surgery, but "getting the gospel out and the rest are just details to be worked out". I think these two discoveries have enabled me to endure the trials and tribulations of mundane administration and leadership in the so-called sending office'.³⁵ Ng also highlighted the role of the three International Directors under whom he worked, Ian Hay, Jim Plueddemann and Malcolm

³⁴ His last visit was in January 2017, six months before his diagnosis with cancer.

³⁵ Ng, email, 22 October 2017.

McGregor, as ‘very gracious in encouraging me and trusting me with many things that had no precedents but only risks. Perhaps they were very cross-cultural and looked after me with great understanding of the diversity of an international organisation’. As the discussion of the growth of diversity in SIM in chapter 2 highlighted, the role of particular individuals in leadership positions in the organisation was significant. Ng’s observation supports this view as the International Directors he referred to trusted him with responsibility to further cultural diversity within SIM, and saw in him someone who shared that vision.

Ng’s own drive and passion for mission, as well as a pioneer spirit, were of great significance to SIM, and widely acknowledged. When Ng stepped down from the Deputy International Director role, a farewell evening was held for him and his wife, at which a video of the founding of SIM East Asia, and the strategic role Andrew and Belinda played in the birthing of SIM in Asia, was shown.³⁶ The praise given to Ng indicates his reputation in SIM, and the respect held for his contribution to SIM’s development in East Asia during his long mission career. In an article paying tribute to the Ngs, published on SIM’s website, John Stuart described them as ‘SIM East Asia’s first missionaries [who] laid the groundwork for numerous other Asians and majority world Christians to serve in overseas ministry, a legacy that lives on today’.³⁷

³⁶ *Intercom*, Issue 205, August – October 2011, 3.

³⁷ John Stuart, ‘SIM Missionary Forerunner called Home’, https://www.sim.org/-/east_asia_office?Ministry_ID=&countries=East_Asia_Office. Accessed 25 May 2019.

A number of the SIM leaders interviewed during my research highlighted the significance of the development of SIM's work in East Asia, particularly attributing its growth to the role played by Andrew Ng. Bremner observed that 'Plueddemann's leadership team understood and worked towards greater international diversity in a number of very tangible ways, opening the whole South East Asia sending structures under the leadership of Andrew Ng'.³⁸ Dr Stanley Ling, the current SIM East Asia Regional Director, wrote of the Ngs: 'The growth of SIM East Asia in the early years can be seen in God's call and preparation of [the Ngs] ...and the wisdom of SIM leaders to encourage, guide and mentor them on their journey to serving God'.³⁹ Keith Walker observed that Ng had enabled SIM to 'move forward in Asia in ways that wouldn't have happened [without him]' due to his personality, his Singaporean nationality, and his connections.⁴⁰ Ng's background and nationality opened doors for SIM in East Asia that a westerner may not have been able to open. As will be discussed later in the chapter, this is paralleled in some ways in Bogunjoko's story in the way in which his background and Nigerian nationality enabled him to challenge assumptions in a way a western missionary could not have done.⁴¹ At the same time, one senior SIM leader raised a concern that what Ng had developed in Asia may have been over-dependent upon the Chinese diaspora, and questioned a potential 'kind of Chinese version of cultural colonialism' which could become an issue in the future. In spite of this concern, he acknowledged the increased diversity the growth of SIM East Asia had brought to the mission, and the opportunity for progress it offered. Phillips raised a similar concern over the possible growth of an Asian

³⁸ Bremner, email, 2 November 2017.

³⁹ John Stuart, 'SIM Missionary Forerunner called Home'.

⁴⁰ Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

⁴¹ See page 328.

colonialism, partly as a result of the dynamism and ‘can do’ attitudes of leaders in Asia, determined to make things happen and with a tendency to want to be in control.⁴² It may be suggested that this generalisation applies particularly to Singaporean Chinese. Such characteristics were observed by Terence Chong in his examination of the rapid growth of megachurches in Singapore. He highlighted the ‘achievement-oriented’ culture, and the ‘can-do spirit of individuals’ of Singapore’s emergent middle class.⁴³ It is too soon to assess whether the development of an Asian colonialism in SIM will prove to be the case, but the possibility that a formerly western organisation may move so far away from its western roots in its goal to embrace diversity, and in doing so replace one dominant influence with another, should be recognised.

Diane Marshall took over from Ng as the Deputy International Director for SIM’s Asia-Pacific Region. She described her arrival in Singapore in 2012 ‘with the daunting task’ of following the ‘famous’ Dr Andrew: ‘I quickly deepened my respect for this humble man with boundless energy who seemed to know everyone and especially knew God. He was a man of action famous for saying “Just do it and God will take care of the details”’.⁴⁴

Describing his experience with SIM, Ng wrote of a ‘very smooth career’ that could not ‘have been perfected under realistic circumstances’. He described older-

⁴² Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

⁴³ Terence Chong, ‘Megachurches in Singapore: The Faith of an Emergent Middle Class’. *Pacific Affairs*, Volume 88, No. 2 (June 2015), 225.

⁴⁴ John Stuart, ‘SIM Missionary Forerunner called Home’.

generation missionaries who ‘went out of their way to enable me to thrive’, and felt that SIM’s leaders had prepared the mission family for increasing cultural diversity through its publications and mission magazines from the mid-1970s onwards. Notably, as discussed in chapter 6,⁴⁵ Ng was conscious that misunderstandings were often simply human misunderstandings, rather than a result of purely cultural causes. This awareness and the fact of SIM’s common institutional logic⁴⁶ based on evangelical values had, he believed, helped to minimise differences of national or ethnic culture, and resulted in a shared goal of unity.⁴⁷ His own humility and character also appear to have been important in his success as a leader and pioneer in SIM. Ng described his commitment to diversity as a biblical value which ‘reflects God’s love for all mankind’. He argued that missions had to diversify or face stagnation or decline.⁴⁸ He was aware of apprehensions and anxieties about increased diversity within SIM, particularly expressed during the ‘Seize the Day’ review, and he recalled some field leaders who shared hesitations about the speed of increasing diversity in SIM, concerned about the added time and patience that was necessary to work well with fellow missionaries of other cultures. Ng reflected that the ‘Seize the Day’ review had normalised diversity in SIM; it had helped people ‘get used to the idea and get on with it. With time, I think it succeeded’, he wrote. He was a great supporter of a diverse organisation. He wrote of the benefits of greater diversity which increased the scope of SIM’s ministry, ‘de-linking’ the association of Christianity with the West, demonstrating the universality of the Christian faith and giving credibility and greater effectiveness of missionaries’ ministry. He argued that

⁴⁵ See chapter 6, page 255.

⁴⁶ See chapter 5, page 183, footnote 15.

⁴⁷ Ng, email, 22 October 2017.

⁴⁸ Ng, email, 14 December 2017.

increased diversity also resulted in a more sensitive attitude towards indigenous people and church leaders, as it took away the unconscious ‘us and them’ attitude. Missionaries became more intentional about avoiding mistakes, and working with nationals as equals or under them in humility.

As he responded to questions on diversity in SIM, Ng commented on the difference between Asia and Africa referenced in the introduction to this chapter. He suggested that missionaries in SIM’s Asia-Pacific region were somehow more used than their counterparts in Africa to the idea of diversity, perhaps reflecting the large number of Chinese diaspora living in Australia and the many ethnic Chinese living in Singapore where the SIM East Asia office was established. Susan Leong’s discussion of the significant influence of Singapore’s multiracialism and multiculturalism on its population supports this observation; she highlighted the ‘lived reality of multi-ethnic co-existence’ experienced as a resident in Singapore.⁴⁹ Ng also observed that ‘since Asians are the cause of the diversity in SIM,⁵⁰ we were naturally delighted that the rest of the western missionaries are welcoming us and working in an integrated way with us, in spite of our cultural differences and Asian way of looking at missions and doing missions’. For the East Asia sending churches, Ng suggested that there was less concern of being ‘absorbed’ by the dominant culture in SIM. He observed that churches and supporters in the SIM East Asia region viewed SIM’s intentional

⁴⁹ Susan Leong, ‘No longer Singaporean’. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 25:4 (2011), 560, 569. DOI: 10.1080/10304312.2011.575215.

⁵⁰ This was mainly East Asians at first, but missionaries from South Asia increased during the period of this research project. Statistics by nationality for 1995 show 30 from South Korea, 9 from Singapore, 8 from Malaysia and 4 from India. By 2015, these had risen to 90 from South Korea, 29 from Singapore, 12 from Malaysia and 32 from India. International Personnel Statistics supplied by email, International Personnel Director, November 2016.

approach to diversity and the doors it opened for missionaries from the region favourably.⁵¹ Ng's observations seem to support the suggestion that SIM's Asia fields embraced diversity more easily than some of SIM's historic fields in Africa.⁵² The complexity of the relationship between church and mission in SIM's historic fields seems to have been a factor in the contrast between the ways diversity was accepted in these different regions. The concept of taking on a 'sending' role, in addition to functioning as an SIM field, also met with resistance in Nigeria. The reasons for this will be discussed further in the section below examining Bogunjoko's story.⁵³

During the Seize the Day review, mission members were asked to list issues they felt SIM must understand. Ng's response reflected his character and vision. He wrote that SIM must understand 'the need of a pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit that is usually expected of a young and vigorous mission, but forgotten by the older ones due to fear of failures based on past realities, rather than present realities'.⁵⁴ That pioneer spirit drove Ng, and enabled him to develop SIM's work in East Asia. McGregor paid tribute to that spirit, and to the patience which balanced it. 'One of the great attributes we saw in Andrew was his ability to take the long view in birthing new ventures for the gospel. He was always passionate and persistent... Yet he was patient enough to allow others to catch up with him so that together we could

⁵¹ Ng, email, 14 December 2017.

⁵² See discussion in chapter 4, pages 150-1 and chapter 6, page 268.

⁵³ See especially page 319.

⁵⁴ Andrew Ng, observations made during 'Seize the Day' review in 'East Asia Ministry Review', August 2004, McGregor personal papers.

go forward'.⁵⁵ When asked to suggest any specific examples of the benefits of SIM's commitment to diversity he had experienced, Ng identified SIM 'receiving the fruit of the labour of our forefathers: having a Nigerian to serve us as our International Director' as the most clear benefit. For him the fruit of increased diversity was the mission's wholehearted acceptance of a Nigerian as International Director when Bogunjoko was appointed in 2013. For Ng, that appointment represented the fact that the leadership issue was no longer based on majority culture or whoever held the power or provided the resources in the mission. His observation echoes McGregor's vision for the changes in governance structure to move away from a shareholder model to a stakeholder one.⁵⁶ The path which led Bogunjoko to the position of SIM's International Director will be explored as the second case study in this chapter.

Joshua Bogunjoko's Story

When Joshua Bogunjoko tells his story, he often begins with the founding of SIM in 1893 to take the message of the gospel to the 'unreached' in the interior of Africa. At that time, Bogunjoko explained, his family were 'the unreached'.⁵⁷ The first three attempts made by SIM missionaries to reach the interior failed, but the fourth group succeeded and established the organisation's first mission station in 1901 in the state from which Joshua and Joanna Bogunjoko come. Bogunjoko continued to explain that, in 1911, a Canadian young man arrived in south-western Nigeria wanting to

⁵⁵ John Stuart, 'SIM Missionary Forerunner called Home'.

⁵⁶ See chapter 5, especially pages 194-204.

⁵⁷ Joshua Bogunjoko shared his story during a sermon preached at First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, US. 1 March 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MUMOmGGIvM>. See also a video interview in which Bogunjoko discussed with Graham Hill what it means to join with God in local and global mission, <https://www.theglobalchurchproject.com>, 14 August 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTxVNInk2zA>. Accessed 5 September 2019.

work amongst the Yoruba people. His name was Guy Playfair and he was sent to begin a new work in Oro Ago, a town where the gospel had not previously been preached.⁵⁸ Through his ministry, and those who joined him, a church was planted in the town and SIM missionaries went from there to preach the gospel in surrounding villages. In 1913, they took the gospel to Owa Orioke, the village where Joshua Bogunjoko's family lived.⁵⁹ In his study of the Yoruba, John Peel observed that West African Islam had for centuries 'existed in practice as a complex mix of Islamic and indigenous cultural traits'; Yoruba Islam had, he explained, 'presupposed or adopted features of local culture'.⁶⁰ Bogunjoko described the village as 'steeped in syncretic Islam, where idol worship was mixed with Islam'. It was recorded as the place which was the centre of worship of the Yoruba people's God of war, Ogun.⁶¹ He stressed that the name *Bogunjoko* is derived from that deity.⁶² Some of the villagers accepted Christianity but opposition from traditionalists split the village, and the Christian believers moved away to start a new village. Families were split, including the Bogunjokos. Joshua's father rejected Christianity and remained in the original village, now named Owa Onire; his uncle was one of those who accepted Christianity and moved away to the new village, Owa Kajola.

Through encounters with the missionaries and new believers, one of the villagers who had rejected the Christian message later became a Christian. Through his

⁵⁸ Playfair later became SIM's second General Director (1944-1957) following the death of Bingham. See Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 156.

⁵⁹ Bogunjoko explained that the name of the original site was Owa Orioke; it is now Owa-Onire. Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019.

⁶⁰ J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003), 189, 193.

⁶¹ Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 417.

⁶² Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019.

testimony, Bogunjoko's parents began to attend church. He explained that at this time his parents moved 'from folk Islam to folk Christianity'; in other words, they went to church but remained committed to traditional religious practices. In Bogunjoko's words, they 'continued to worship idols, unsure of their faith'. Bogunjoko described his experience of growing up, attending an ECWA church, watching his parents attend church, and then seeing them return home and continue with indigenous religious practices. He explained, 'I witnessed what the power of darkness could do in a life that did not know Jesus'. This was a powerful experience for him and was to be a strong motivating force in Bogunjoko's life and ministry. He attended ECWA Secondary School Igbaja, in Kwara State in Igboland,⁶³ founded as an SIM Teacher Training College, where he was taught by SIM missionaries from Canada, including Beth Webb.⁶⁴ Aged 18, he explained that he 'fully understood the message of the gospel for the first time' when he heard the testimony of a believer who described a personal relationship with God. This led to a new understanding for Bogunjoko and he committed his own life to God. His background drove a passion for 'the unreached' that he would bring to the role of International Director, and a renewed vision that SIM must focus on communities where Christ is least known.⁶⁵

In a parallel with Ng's experience, Bogunjoko recounted that he felt that he was clearly directed to medical school by God. He studied at the University of Port Harcourt, and then completed his residency in Family Medicine at an SIM-

⁶³ See also page 327.

⁶⁴ Bogunjoko recalled another English teacher, Miss Mitchell, possibly from Ireland who was at the school during his first year there.

⁶⁵ See for example, www.sim.org/what-we-do. Accessed 27 May 2019.

established medical school, Evangel Hospital in Jos, through the College of Physicians of the West Africa Postgraduate College.⁶⁶ He described his reaction when he felt God was calling him to be a missionary during his first year at medical school: ‘I can’t be a missionary. I’m an African. We don’t do that. We receive missionaries, we don’t send missionaries’. With the sense that God was directing him, in 1982 Bogunjoko made the difficult decision to complete his medical internship at the Evangel Hospital even though it was a sacrificial decision financially.⁶⁷ In 1991, Bogunjoko applied to SIM to serve as a short-term medical missionary. He recalled: ‘I was going from Nigeria; there was no sending office to send me at that time. I had to apply through the SIM-UK office’. He went to Galmi Hospital in Niger from May to August 1992 as a ‘special short-termer’.⁶⁸ Bogunjoko identified this period as the time during which SIM became aware of churches from the majority world beginning to send missionaries and began to wrestle as an organisation with the question of how SIM could respond. His own experience of applying to SIM demonstrates some of the challenges and issues which were faced by the organisation and those from Africa applying to serve with the mission during this period.

Bogunjoko explained that after he had been accepted to go to Niger in 1992, someone in SIM told him that because he was from Nigeria he was also required to join EMS, the mission body of ECWA.⁶⁹ He later found out that this was not

⁶⁶ Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019.

⁶⁷ Bogunjoko, interview with Hill, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTxVNInk2zA>.

⁶⁸ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

⁶⁹ He could not recall who told him this. On EMS, see chapter 2, pages 87-8.

necessary because he had already been accepted by SIM. As EMS was the mission board of Bogunjoko's ECWA church, he was happy to join. However, he discovered that EMS did not send out short-termers or professionals, and as he was going out as a doctor, rather than a Bible school graduate to work in church planting, they did not know what to do with him, a professional and someone going to serve short-term. He was told, 'we accept you but we don't know what to do with you'. Bogunjoko therefore applied first to SIM, through the UK office, and went through the SIM process, and then applied to EMS and went through the EMS process. Accepted by EMS, he went out as a short-termer with SIM through SIM UK for four months serving at Galmi Hospital.

The following year, in 1993, in celebration of SIM's centenary to mark the start of the church's commitment to global mission, Bogunjoko's church in Nigeria dedicated three couples to serve God cross-culturally. One of those couples was Joshua and Joanna Bogunjoko, who felt that God was directing them to work amongst Muslims at Galmi Hospital in Niger. The question they faced was a practical one: 'how do we go from Nigeria, long term to Niger?' Joshua explained the challenges they experienced. As the only SIM office in Africa was in South Africa, and it was only sending white South Africans at that time, 'there was nowhere we could join SIM'.

SIM's South Africa Council was established in Cape Town in 1952. By 1985 it had decided that South Africa should take on the function of a field as well as a sending

office. This was consolidated when Life Challenge, a South African mission to Muslims, merged with SIM in January 1986. However the shift from ‘sending’ to ‘field’ functions resulted in tensions between the sending office and Muslim outreach field team, so a decision was taken to change the administrative structure to ‘a field office with a sending function’.⁷⁰ Dianne Guta, from Kensington Baptist Church in Cape Town who self-described as ‘Cape-coloured’ on her application form to SIM, was accepted as the first long-term non-white missionary sent from South Africa. She served with SIM in Bolivia from 1 July 1984 until her retirement on 26 January 2007.⁷¹ However, the mission took a ‘long-held position of political neutrality, not taking political positions in the countries where it works’. As a result, as Geysbeek has argued, SIM ‘often [did] not adequately explore how ministries are connected to politics’. The SIM Manual 1991, in the section, ‘Relationships with Governments in SIM Areas’, began by stating: ‘In no circumstances must a missionary interfere in political or administrative affairs’.⁷² It appears that in adopting such an ostensibly ‘neutral’ position and not challenging apartheid, SIM’s leadership was disinclined to look favourably on an application for membership through the South Africa office from two Nigerians such as the Bogunjokos. McGregor suggested that finance may also have presented a barrier to applications from African candidates, as western missionaries were concerned about the ability of missionaries from poorer contexts, such as Nigeria, to raise the required support levels to become members of SIM.⁷³

⁷⁰ See Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 132-133. See page 319 for issues regarding change from ‘field’ to ‘sending’ functions in Nigeria.

⁷¹ ‘New in SIM’, *SIM Now*, #16, July-August 1984, 13, available at <http://archives.sim.org/pdfs/SIM%201893%20-%20Present/1982%20-%202002%20SIM%20Now/SIM%20Now%2016%201984%20July%20Aug.pdf>, and Dianne Guta, Biographical File Folder (1984-2007), SIM Archives.

⁷² Geysbeek in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 238, and 408, note 192.

⁷³ See also discussion in chapter 5, page 217.

Bogunjoko explained that the only option that was offered to them was to be seconded to SIM Niger by EMS. In 1993, neither SIM Niger, nor any other SIM field office, had any experience of missionaries being seconded from another mission or church directly to them. Secondment had worked successfully between sending offices, particularly between the Deutsche Missionsgemeinschaft (DMG) in Germany and the SIM UK office,⁷⁴ but Bogunjoko found that those in SIM Niger did not know what to do with people who went directly to them, just as EMS did not have any experience of seconding missionaries to SIM in that way. The Bogunjokos found themselves ‘floating between two organisations, neither knew what to do with us, and I think it was a very difficult experience, but God was there’.

They joined the Galmi team in 1995, categorised as SIM Associates, later called ‘Field Associates’.⁷⁵ Bogunjoko explained that this was ‘because there was no other way to categorise us according to SIM’s policy at that time’.⁷⁶ He recounted attempts made by SIM three years later, to try to ‘find a seamless way where people from the majority world can work alongside other missionaries without taking away the responsibility for missionary sending from their churches, but at the same time creating opportunity for them to be part of SIM’. He recalled a meeting in April 1998 in Galmi attended by a Deputy International Director from the SIM International Office, the SIM Nigeria Director, the Director of EMS in Nigeria, the SIM Niger Director and Deputy Director, the Director in Galmi, and Joshua and Joanna

⁷⁴ A ‘partner mission agreement’ between SIM and DMG was formulated in 1982. Missionaries seconded from DMG to SIM were full members of SIM in the countries where they were serving. In Germany they were members of and supported by DMG. The partnership continues to the present day. See Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 170 and 303-4.

⁷⁵ See chapter 5, page 225.

⁷⁶ Bogunjoko, email, 11 June 2019.

Bogunjoko themselves, to ‘try and figure out what was the best pathway for someone like us to become part of SIM’.⁷⁷ The SIM Directors brought a document to outline a solution, but the Bogunjokos felt it was inadequate and something they could not sign because it would have ‘created two tiers of missionaries: those who are real missionaries, and those who are second class missionaries’. This was because it outlined a recommendation that missionaries from Africa should become part of SIM as affiliates, and not members. ‘Affiliate’ status would mean that the Bogunjokos’ financial arrangement with the mission was kept separate from that of other SIM missionaries, and therefore avoid the possibility of any need to subsidise them through the financial support pool system.⁷⁸ Bogunjoko felt that he and his wife were ‘long term missionaries who were considered affiliates, because we were not the real thing’. The problem lay in the fact that only members could vote, hold leadership positions, or function as a full member of the mission. He explained that they felt that this was ‘not right for people who were committing their lives to long-term missionary service’. Those looking at the situation with them agreed and the paper was withdrawn.⁷⁹ Bogunjoko was grateful, and commented, ‘for me, that is credit to those who didn’t say that we know what we are doing, we developed this’; they listened to the Bogunjokos’ decision that they could not sign the document and it was never used. The proposal of ‘affiliate’ status indicates one of the reasons for the resistance to Nigerians being welcomed into membership of SIM; there was concern that they would not be able to raise the required financial support in the way that

⁷⁷ Joshua and Joanna Bogunjoko, personal interview, 7 February 2017.

⁷⁸ Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019. See chapter 5, pages 209-10 on the financial support system.

⁷⁹ Bogunjoko has not been able to find a copy of the paper, and suggested that it was probably not kept as it was withdrawn.

missionaries from the West were able to do.⁸⁰ The perceived affluence of applicants from Singapore, such as the Ngs, appears to have smoothed the way in their application for membership of the organisation.

As Joshua Bogunjoko reflected on this uncomfortable experience, he described a sense that there was a gap between SIM's international leadership, wrestling over the best way for the mission to grow in light of the diversity they were seeing in the Church globally, and the local leadership whose focus was more immediate. He perceived a macro and micro perspective on the same issue, but with no policy that tied the two together. Bogunjoko was grateful for local leaders, such as country directors, who recognised individuals with gifts and skills which would fit well with their team's ministry and were trying to work out how they could become a part of that team. This was what had prompted the meeting in 1998, the goal of which had been not only to find a resolution to the Bogunjokos' situation, but to open the way for others like them who applied to serve with SIM.

In 1999, at the end of their first four-year term serving with SIM at Galmi Hospital, the Bogunjokos took study leave and went to Canada to pursue theological study at Briercrest Biblical Seminary, Carleton Place, Saskatchewan, where Joshua completed a Master's degree in Leadership and Management.⁸¹ While they were there, the SIM

⁸⁰ Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019.

⁸¹ Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019. Briercrest seminary is a private evangelical college, describing itself as 'an innovative centre for graduate level ministry training, leadership development, and theological education in Canada'. Briercrest Bible Institute opened in October 1935. The seminary

Niger Director and his deputy went to Nigeria to find a resolution to ‘the issue of the status of Joshua and Joanna’ because the ‘existing arrangement [was] not working for anybody, for the Bogunjokos, for SIM Niger, for EMS’. At that meeting in Nigeria, while the Bogunjokos were in Canada, it was resolved that the best solution was for them to become full members rather than associates of SIM. As there was no sending office in Nigeria, the option was to become full members either in Canada, where they were studying, or in the UK, the office through which Bogunjoko had served as a short-term missionary back in 1991. Because they were currently in Canada, the Bogunjokos chose to complete the full membership process there rather than travelling to the UK. They were accepted by the SIM Canada Council as SIM members and became full members of SIM in 2001, eight years after they were dedicated to global mission at their home church.⁸²

The length of this process is a notable contrast to the Ngs’ experience of joining SIM; they made a formal application to SIM Australia in 1975 and were accepted as members the following year. It seems puzzling that seemingly similar situations of applications from two non-western couples to join SIM were handled so differently in different parts of the SIM world, and in a way which presented so many more obstacles for applicants from Nigeria, the country in which SIM was founded, than for applicants from Singapore. The historic relationship between the mission and the church it had planted in Nigeria would seem to be a factor in the more complicated

began in 1983, accredited by the Association for Biblical Higher Education. See <https://www.briercrest.ca/about/history/>. Accessed 5 September 2019.

⁸² Steve Roy, Letter to SIM Community announcing appointment of Dr Joshua Bogunjoko as the next International Director, 1 August 2012, SIM Archives.

process the Bogunjokos experienced. Attitudes that are echoed in Joshua Bogunjoko's own reaction to his call to mission, that Africans receive missionaries rather than send them, perhaps also made it more difficult for SIM in Niger and Nigeria to find a solution. The change in perception and perspective that was necessary in order to accept Nigerians as missionaries in SIM was evidently a harder transition for some in SIM's leadership in a historic field context to make than it was for those in SIM Australia, a sending office, who welcomed Andrew and Belinda Ng, and others from East Asia. McGregor explained that SIM Nigeria was resistant to taking on a 'sending' role and 'could not see beyond the old sending and receiving structures', the traditional 'west to the rest' model of mission. He suggested that the existence of EMS, ECWA's mission society, was also a factor causing some in SIM to resist Nigerians joining the mission, when they could become missionaries with EMS.⁸³ Bogunjoko recalled that EMS and ECWA were 'happy to work with whatever SIM thought was the best way to go', and that there was no resistance from the church or church leaders to the Bogunjokos becoming SIM missionaries. Both McGregor and Bogunjoko himself highlighted the issue of required financial support and the perception that Nigerians would not be able to raise enough to join the mission, resulting in a concern among some richer western countries that they would have to subsidise Nigerian missionaries, suggesting this was a key issue in the resistance to welcoming Nigerians as full mission members.⁸⁴

⁸³ McGregor, email, 4 June 2019.

⁸⁴ Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019 and McGregor, 4 June 2019. See also chapter 5, page 218.

It is possible to interpret such attitudes and resistance in racial terms and the Bogunjokos' difficult experience in eventually becoming members has been interpreted by some in that way.⁸⁵ However, even though Bogunjoko remembered a 'broadly copied' email from one of SIM's leaders (not identified), to other leaders in Niger 'simply saying "The Bogunjokos should never become SIM missionaries"', he did not interpret this as racial discrimination. Instead he viewed it as 'paternalistic thinking', that if SIM accepted people like them from ECWA, the mission 'would be taking ECWA's best away from ECWA'. This echoes the sentiment described by Hay and Corwin noted in chapter 2 that the mission should not be taking leaders away from the church it had planted.⁸⁶ As Bogunjoko observed, at the same time as he and his wife were trying to become mission members, SIM was accepting missionaries from countries such as France and Belgium, countries with 'a fraction of the evangelical believers in Nigeria and compared to the size of ECWA'. For this reason, he acknowledged that the resistance he experienced could be interpreted as racist, but he felt it was in fact paternalistic.⁸⁷ Perhaps a western interpretation of the Bogunjokos' experience as racial discrimination reflects something of 'colonial guilt'. However, Bogunjoko displayed a strong desire to explain and interpret his experience, with all its challenges and frustrations, in a way other than as the result of racism. McGregor reflected on different attitudes towards the discussion of racial issues within SIM, noting that he experienced some resistance to the findings of the Justice Task Force report of 2010 which honestly examined negative or racist attitudes in SIM's past, and policies derived from racist attitudes.⁸⁸ While the authors

⁸⁵ See pages 330-1.

⁸⁶ See chapter 2, page 90.

⁸⁷ Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019.

⁸⁸ 'Justice Task Force, Report to Board of Governors', June 2010, 37, McGregor personal papers.

of the report advocated an open and direct consideration of any reports of attitudes which appeared to be driven by racism, McGregor received some feedback from Americans who were upset by the suggestion that racism and racial attitudes were or had been an issue in the mission.⁸⁹ However, Tim Geysbeek's chapter on 'Issues of Race and Diversity' in Corwin's recent short history of SIM, *By Prayer to the Nations*, demonstrated his determination that the issue of race must be discussed honestly and openly if the mission is indeed to be 'strengthened through diversity'.⁹⁰

Regarding mission membership, change did come to SIM's membership process eventually when the means for granting membership was modified in 2008. The new system went some way to resolve the issues the Bogunjokos had faced as it widened access for missionaries applying from non-traditional SIM sending countries.⁹¹ The Bogunjokos returned to Niger as full members in 2002, after completing theological and French language studies. Joshua was appointed as Chief Medical Officer and later became the Director of Galmi Hospital. McGregor explained that he became aware of Bogunjoko's leadership skills during this time, as he played a vital role in resolving management and labour issues the Galmi team were dealing with, as well as skilfully leading the rest of a foreign team. McGregor attributed his success to a combination of his qualities as a gifted leader, and the fact that he was African and able to face up to other Africans to work through issues and reach good conclusions, without facing the same criticisms that had been directed at western leaders: 'you

⁸⁹ McGregor, interview, 4 June 2019.

⁹⁰ Tim Geysbeek, 'Issues of Race and Diversity', in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 202-239.

⁹¹ See chapter 5, page 226-7.

don't understand us, we're this and you are that'.⁹² Geysbeek commented that the Bogunjokos 'were instrumental in encouraging the SIM and African staff [at Galmi] to break long-held "attitudes of paternalism" by forging closer relationships'.⁹³ Having recognised his leadership gifts, McGregor invited Bogunjoko to be a member of the 'Seize the Day' Board of Reference which met in January 2005 to finalise the concluding report of the review. Later in the same year, McGregor invited Bogunjoko to become the SIM Deputy International Director for West Africa, and serve on the International Leadership Team. Bogunjoko outlined two things which were really important to him as he considered whether or not to take on the role: SIM's commitment to discipleship, and its commitment to growing diversity. He told me, 'We just felt that perhaps God might use us in the process of enabling others like us to become part of SIM, because we knew there were so many others who are gifted, who are called, who would like to be part of what God is doing through SIM'.⁹⁴ McGregor recalled that the Board of Governors was unanimously supportive of his desire to diversify the International Leadership Team, though there was some resistance to Bogunjoko's appointment from Niger. Both Joshua and Joanna Bogunjoko were doctors working at an already overstretched hospital; some of the resistance came from a desire from their colleagues not to lose them from the staff team. McGregor also described one American missionary couple who questioned Bogunjoko's capability to handle the role.⁹⁵ Bogunjoko was aware that his colleagues in Niger did not want him to leave his role at Galmi Hospital. He was also conscious of some apparent resistance from another country (which he did not

⁹² McGregor, interview, 26 September 2016.

⁹³ Geysbeek, 'Issues of Race and Diversity' in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 223-4.

⁹⁴ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

⁹⁵ McGregor, email, 4 June 2019.

identify), but suggested the fact that missionaries there did not know him personally may have been behind it. ‘We were an unknown quantity’, he explained. When Bogunjoko was reappointed for a second five-year term as Deputy International Director, there was no resistance to the appointment.⁹⁶

Bogunjoko served on the International Leadership Team until 2013, also serving on the Governance Task Force during that time.⁹⁷ In 2013 he was appointed as McGregor’s successor in the role of International Director. He explained that it was not a position he would have applied for, but when a few people asked him if they could put his name forward for consideration, he said ‘do as the Lord leads you’. In an article in SIM’s internal publication, *Intercom*, Bogunjoko spoke of the inadequacy and weakness he felt for the role, as someone still ‘growing in his walk with God and still learning’ about leadership and ministry. He also described his feeling that ‘we are coming from the “wrong” part of the world for this type of role with no history of such responsibilities and limited resources to bring’.⁹⁸ Although the Bogunjokos had planned to return to Niger to serve at Galmi when the new International Director was appointed, after discussion and prayer they were willing to be considered for the role, and ‘open to how God was going to lead them’. Joshua described three things that motivated him as he considered the role. His primary focus was to ‘ensure that SIM’s gospel emphasis was kept central’. Following his appointment as International Director, Bogunjoko brought a renewed focus on ‘bringing Christ to situations where He is not known’, seeking to emulate the passion

⁹⁶ Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019.

⁹⁷ Hornal, interview, 4 October 2016.

⁹⁸ Joshua Bogunjoko, ‘As We Think and Pray’, *Intercom*, Issue 209, August – October 2012, 1.

and pioneer spirit of SIM's founders to take the gospel to places where it had not been heard. He continued the emphasis on discipleship through a focus on enabling SIM missionaries to flourish and grow even if they were living in very difficult places. He also emphasised the need to have 'leaders that are flourishing, courageous in what God has called them to do and serving their teams well, resulting in joyful and effective teams'. For these things to happen, he continued, 'we have to continue to grow in diversity; we have to continue to grow in discipleship'.⁹⁹ It is clear that Bogunjoko's own background had a strong influence on his vision, motivation and the direction in which he steered SIM. Walker highlighted Bogunjoko's 'commitment to refocus SIM towards contexts where people live and die without hearing of Jesus'. He noted that, 'in bringing this emphasis on the lost, Joshua has drawn on his personal heritage and on Scripture. ... [His] home context is one where in 1893 people lived and died without hearing of Jesus. He has a sense of indebtedness which echoes that of the Apostle Paul (Romans 1:8-15)'.¹⁰⁰

Bogunjoko's appointment as the first non-western International Director of the organisation was significant. McGregor's appointment as the first non-North American International Director in some ways bridged the gap between a North American and Nigerian leader of SIM, and perhaps led to an easier transition for those in the mission who found such change difficult. It is clear from discussions on the Board of Governors that there was an openness at top leadership level to the appointment of a non-western person to succeed McGregor. Perhaps influenced by

⁹⁹ Joshua and Joanna Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Keith Walker, 'SIM – A ten year missiological trajectory', September 2014, Walker personal papers.

the strong ethos of diversity which had developed under McGregor's leadership, it was noted that the selection committee should 'be open to the possibility of this person being a non-white and non-western person, able to work with and motivate a very diverse group of people'.¹⁰¹ Phillips was a member of the selection committee for the position of International Director when Bogunjoko was appointed. She emphasised that there were a number of 'really good candidates, but it was very clear' that Bogunjoko was the right person for the role; the fact that he was an African was 'not the biggest thing'. She reflected that McGregor's appointment as the first non-North American had in some ways 'blazed a trail'. The fact that the selection considered candidates from different ethnicities on an equal footing was representative of 'genuine diversity' for Phillips.¹⁰² Brant described Bogunjoko's appointment as 'an enormous step forward in understanding that God gifts individuals from whatever race or nationality. It marks an end to the tradition that missions like SIM must always remain western or even be western led'.¹⁰³ Ann Christian commented on the reaction of colleagues in other mission organisations when they heard about Bogunjoko's appointment. There was a sense of positive surprise that SIM had 'a black African leading' the organisation, which she felt prompted a source of pride, not in SIM itself, but in 'how God had led, and that people had been humble enough to listen' to that leading, and not to say 'You can't possibly have an African'.¹⁰⁴ Evans was also keen to stress that McGregor and Bogunjoko were both appointed because they were the best person for the job, not because of their nationality. The fact that Bogunjoko was African then 'helped to

¹⁰¹ Extract from Minutes of AGM, SIM Board of Governors, June 2011, Phillips personal papers.

¹⁰² Phillips, interview, 6 October 2016.

¹⁰³ Quote included in Steve Roy's letter to SIM Community. See page 318, footnote 82.

¹⁰⁴ Christian, interview, 7 September 2016.

move the mission on’, she said.¹⁰⁵ Bogunjoko told me that he had not experienced any resistance as International Director, only ‘support, encouragement, acceptance and respect’ from across SIM.¹⁰⁶

Missionaries of different nationalities interviewed for this research project spoke positively about Bogunjoko’s appointment. One respondent from Latin America described one of the benefits of SIM’s commitment to diversity as ‘having our International Director who is African, a man who has won that place, the affection and respect of all. This gives us an advantage as an organisation to have been able to cross multicultural barriers’.¹⁰⁷ A western missionary working in Asia felt that having an African International Director ‘makes a very big statement for the mission’. An Asian missionary reflected on the benefit of an International Director whose background gave him a strong understanding of ministry and the work of a missionary. As a non-westerner, he was very relational and people-focused which was appreciated when he visited SIM’s work in an Asian country where the national staff were also very relational.¹⁰⁸

Two of those interviewed raised questions regarding how ‘African’ Bogunjoko was in approach and leadership style. In the interview I conducted with him, we discussed whether he had felt any subtle or more direct pressure to behave in a particular way, either in a more North American or in a supposedly more Nigerian manner. He

¹⁰⁵ Evans, interview, 25 October 2016.

¹⁰⁶ Bogunjoko, email, 10 June 2019.

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous email, 24 November 2017.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous Skype interview, 20 December 2017.

explained that he had not experienced that, perhaps because he had lived in very diverse contexts, so was already ‘more international’. Bogunjoko had lived in different cultures in Nigeria. ‘I’m Yoruba, but went to school in the southeast among the Ibo people, who are totally different’, he explained. He was taught by SIM missionaries (notably ‘Miss Webb’ who disciplined him when he decided to become a Christian) in high school¹⁰⁹ and worked alongside and was mentored by missionaries at Evangel Hospital during his residency. He worked for seven years in the north of Nigeria, then for 11 years at Galmi Hospital in Niger, and then lived in Canada for three years. He was very conscious of the way these experiences had shaped him: ‘You keep adjusting your ways as you interact with people. That’s part of cultural learning’. He told me no-one has ever said, ‘You are just doing this in a Nigerian way... I think partly because we had adjusted as international people already to some degree’.¹¹⁰ Bogunjoko considered this experience as an advantage in his role as International Director as it enabled him to challenge expectations that certain things would be done in a western way or in a way particular to one country. He felt able to challenge assumptions by explaining that something was not necessarily done the same way in other countries.

Bogunjoko brought an understanding of African styles of leadership and culture to his role, and sought to use that understanding to help SIM’s leaders grow and develop. In an article entitled ‘Rethinking leadership – How African village

¹⁰⁹ Canadian SIM missionary, Beth Webb who taught at ECWA Secondary School Igbaja, see page 311.

¹¹⁰ Bogunjoko, interview, 7 February 2017.

traditions and the Bible point toward renewed leadership’,¹¹¹ he highlighted the different approach to succession in leadership between African and western contexts, and noted that the democratic rotation of leaders favoured in western contexts is ‘foreign to Africa’s traditional contexts... In a system where individuals campaign and get votes as independent persons and decision-makers, the age-old communal accountability structure no longer holds sway’. He also discussed the impact of what he described as shame and honour culture and how that influenced an approach to leadership.¹¹² Bogunjoko argued that understanding ‘the influence of his own origins on his leadership values and practice’ was an important step through which God could ‘both use and transform my rich heritage as well as that of others’. Bogunjoko called for ‘leadership development that intentionally investigates and invites the story of the individual to be part of the development process’. In so doing, he was applying his own cultural understanding to benefit other leaders, and seeking to make the most of the diverse backgrounds and experience new leaders brought to their role. A senior leader in SIM reflected that ‘this cultural perspective of leadership is deeply impacting SIM’s leadership style’.¹¹³

Three of those interviewed for this research commented positively on the way in which Bogunjoko’s Nigerian nationality enabled him to say things that a western leader could not have done. Plueddemann recalled a discussion at an SIM West

¹¹¹ Joshua Bogunjoko, ‘Rethinking leadership - How African village traditions and the Bible point toward renewed leadership’, IFES Word and World website, 7 December 2018.

<https://en.ifesjournal.org/rethinking-leadership-joshua-bogunjoko-41943e95bcfd>.

¹¹² The honour and shame concept is now considered outmoded in contemporary anthropology. Anthropologists Brian Howell and Naomi Haynes observed that mission circles have tended to lag behind current anthropological thinking. Brian Howell, conversation, 17 February 2016, Naomi Haynes, email, 3 June 2019.

¹¹³ Anonymous email, 14 June 2019.

Africa-European leadership consultation at which Bogunjoko had invited him to speak. When Ghanaian church leaders expressed that they wanted SIM to pay their salaries, Bogunjoko asked them, ‘if you plant churches in Egypt (they were thinking of doing that), will you pay the salaries of the Egyptian pastors?’ ‘No, they need to come from Egypt’, they responded. Plueddemann described Bogunjoko’s reply, ‘OK why is it different in Ghana?’ as brilliant and something only he could have said.¹¹⁴ Walker expressed a view that SIM was ‘now heard in the missions world in a way that we weren’t before. I think that it’s possible for Joshua to say things to other Africans that I wouldn’t try to say and couldn’t say’.¹¹⁵ This was balanced by some West Africans who questioned whether Bogunjoko had become too Americanised when addressing issues of dependency and church-mission relationships. A senior leader in SIM suggested that this conclusion was ‘understandable given the need for other West Africans to interpret why a West African leader might not always adopt the position they would have hoped he would take’, and instead took a more global position in his role as International Director.¹¹⁶ Attitudes to such issues of diversity are delicate, and viewed differently by those from different backgrounds. One British respondent remarked on the way in which Bogunjoko could present images from SIM’s early history, and talk about the sacrifices made by the missionaries who took the message of the gospel to his family’s village, in a way which ‘in a sense overrides the colonial embarrassment’ that she would have felt if a white person had shown the same presentation. His background, along with a ‘deep appreciation of

¹¹⁴ Plueddemann, interview, 18 February 2017.

¹¹⁵ Walker, interview, 8 September 2016.

¹¹⁶ Anonymous interview, 3 June 2019.

history and respect for SIM's founders',¹¹⁷ was a powerful influence and motivation for his priorities as a leader in SIM.

The same respondent raised a question about how westernised Bogunjoko was, asking how culturally diverse his leadership was and how much had changed at the top level of SIM's leadership. 'Was it more African? Should it become more African?' For the diversity to be real, she argued, it needed to alter thinking.¹¹⁸ There is a danger of over-simplifying approaches to leadership in this way, and in expecting Bogunjoko to introduce an essentialist 'African model' of leadership and operation. As the previous chapter suggested, the strength of diversity lies in greater insight and understanding from a number of different perspectives, and through increasing cultural intelligence within the organisation.¹¹⁹ Too simplistic an approach to cultural difference ignores the complexities at play. Bogunjoko's background and heritage help to bring balance and a different perspective to a previously western-dominated organisation. His personal experience of the challenges faced as a missionary from the majority world seeking to join SIM, and of racial attitudes, have given him an integrity and authority to address some sensitive issues from a different perspective. Dryer recalled a moment during the 'Seize the Day' consultation meetings held in London in January 2005 when conference delegates were in breakout groups. Dryer described going into one of the breakout rooms to call the group back to the main conference hall. As he did so, Bogunjoko was 'talking about being on the wrong end of racial discrimination in SIM'. One of the American

¹¹⁷ Anonymous email, 14 June 2019.

¹¹⁸ Anonymous interview, 6 October 2016.

¹¹⁹ See chapter 6, especially pages 276-8 and 281.

delegates asked Dryer to wait, saying ‘we’ve got to listen to what he’s saying’.

Bogunjoko was ‘speaking from the heart and everybody was just listening... amazed at what was coming out’.¹²⁰ Bogunjoko does not recall ‘the details of this conversation’ and was ‘quite certain that I would not have used the language of racial discrimination’. As discussed above, he did not interpret his experience that way, although he recognised that others who have heard his story may have done.¹²¹

Conclusion

Bogunjoko reflected on his appointment as SIM’s International Director in a mission sermon preached in March 2019. Highlighting that it was exactly 120 years after SIM’s founders first set foot in Nigeria, and 100 years after Guy Playfair entered his family’s village, he was appointed as SIM’s International Director, he asked, ‘Who could ever have written a story like that? Only God. Only God could call a bush boy from such a tiny village.’¹²² Both Andrew Ng and Joshua Bogunjoko played significant roles in the growth of cultural diversity in SIM. Neither Ng nor the SIM Australia Director to whom he wrote in 1965 were aware of where his application would lead. It proved to be a catalyst for the development of SIM in East Asia which in turn heralded a significant increase in the different nationalities represented within the mission workforce, and the development of a new SIM sending office in Korea. While Joshua and Joanna Bogunjoko experienced a much more difficult path in order to join SIM as members, their persistence caused SIM leaders to find a solution, and

¹²⁰ Dryer, interview, 5 October 2016.

¹²¹ Bogunjoko, email, 11 June 2019.

¹²² Joshua Bogunjoko in a sermon preached at First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, US. 1 March 2019.

ultimately their story perhaps contributed to the changes agreed by the Board of Governors in 2008, which granted the International Director authority to confer membership and paved the way for more missionaries from the majority world to become members of SIM.¹²³

The appointment of Ng, a Singaporean, and Bogunjoko, a Nigerian, to McGregor's International Leadership Team in 2006, and Bogunjoko's appointment as SIM's International Director in 2013 put the mission at the forefront of similar evangelical organisations appointing non-westerners to senior leadership roles. IFES (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students) elected Singaporean Chua Wee Hian as General Secretary as early as 1971,¹²⁴ perhaps significantly Hian was Singaporean Chinese and again at the forefront of internationalisation; West African Daniel Bourdagné was appointed as General Secretary in 2007. OMF appointed Hong Kong-born Patrick Fung as General Director in 2006, but it was 2013 before other organisations followed this trend. Operation Mobilisation appointed a Singaporean, Laurence Tong, and Interserve appointed an Indian, Bijoy Koshy, as their International Directors in 2013. The Navigators appointed a Kenyan, Mutua Mahiaini, and InterVarsity in the US appointed Taiwanese American Tom Lin as their first non-western Presidents in 2015 and 2016 respectively. SIM's story appears to be indicative of a growing trend.

¹²³ See chapter 5, page 226.

¹²⁴ Peter Lineham, *Students Reaching Students: A History of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students* 2017, 40.

https://www.academia.edu/31608310/Students_Reaching_Students_a_History_of_the_International_Fellowship_of_Evangelical_Students.

Both Ng and Bogunjoko strengthened the ethos of diversity within SIM through their influence as leaders from the majority world. The fact that others in leadership in the organisation recognised the leadership qualities and experience that Ng and later Bogunjoko could bring to the mission, and were willing to entrust significant responsibilities to them, demonstrates their commitment to embrace diversity and the benefits they believed it could bring to SIM. McGregor's decision to invite Ng and Bogunjoko on to his International Leadership Team is particularly notable. He reflected on the passion both men shared with him to increase the diversity in SIM and on their determination to break down structural barriers in SIM in order that non-westerners could join the mission. The International Leadership Team took part in a 'multicultural teams training workshop' of its own, and McGregor described the way Ng and Bogunjoko would 'wrestle at understanding one another's cultural uniqueness'. The language breadth that Ng and Bogunjoko brought to the leadership team was a great advantage to the team's effectiveness, and their understanding of church leaders in their own contexts resulted in church leaders' acceptance of them as leaders which 'bridged a cultural gap' and made clear the message that 'the mission was not just westerners'.¹²⁵ Another respondent observed the 'natural rapport' Bogunjoko had with non-western church leaders.¹²⁶ Other senior leaders who worked closely with Ng and Bogunjoko identified particular contributions which they made to the organisation, highlighting the willingness of both men to challenge assumptions and long-established practices. One leader described the way in which Ng 'spoke constantly of the need to indigenise mission', seeking to enable locals within all SIM countries to become mission members and leaders in local SIM

¹²⁵ McGregor, interview and email, 4 June 2019.

¹²⁶ Anonymous email, 5 June 2019.

offices. He stressed the need for decision-making processes and fund-raising done in ‘Asian ways’, and with Belinda, his wife, highlighted ‘the different pastoral care needs’ of Asian missionaries, including the education needs of missionary children, and responsibilities to ageing parents. Ng was committed to finding contextual solutions to issues such as conflict management, and to building ‘multi-skilled, multi ethnic teams’, an approach which continues to be reflected in SIM’s ethos today.¹²⁷

Bogunjoko’s background, so closely linked to the early pioneer missionaries of SIM through whom his family first heard the Christian message, has, since his appointment as International Director, resulted in a renewed focus on ‘bringing the gospel to communities where Christ is least known’.¹²⁸ This emphasis, observes one respondent, ‘is driven by gratitude to the Lord for what he did for Joshua and his family’. He has also brought a fresh emphasis on the actions and sacrifices of SIM’s founders, yet at the same time, as one of SIM’s senior leaders described it ‘relocating SIM in a postcolonial world’.¹²⁹ Another respondent describes Bogunjoko as someone with the ability to interpret from a ‘new vantage point’ how the organisation is perceived by others, something he was said to do as a ‘respected non-westerner... with particular insight and clarity’. His awareness and acknowledgement of discriminatory practices which were tolerated in SIM’s past was highlighted to me by more than one senior leader. At an SIM leadership gathering in 2014, he offered an apology on behalf of the mission ‘to women and those from non-western cultures whose voice had been squashed or ignored through

¹²⁷ Anonymous email, 14 June 2019. See also www.sim.org. Accessed 5 September 2019.

¹²⁸ www.sim.org. Accessed 5 September 2019.

¹²⁹ Anonymous email, 5 June 2019.

SIM's history'. His ongoing commitment to women in leadership made it possible for women to hold senior roles in the mission.¹³⁰

The contributions of Ng and Bogunjoko during this period of SIM's history were extremely significant. They demonstrated that mission and mission leadership was no longer automatically 'western', and the distinctive cultural insights and perspectives that they brought to the mission challenged some of SIM's long-held traditions, and helped to bring about the significant structural change discussed in chapter 5. Their commitment to increasing diversity in SIM, to widening the opportunities for non-westerners to join the mission, and to challenging long-established assumptions and structures in order to achieve this, reflects something of the passion and pioneer spirit of SIM's founders.

¹³⁰ Anonymous emails 5 and 14 June 2019.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the origins and extent of the increase of cultural diversity within SIM, and provided a case study of how one Christian mission agency has responded to the issues and challenges that have arisen as a result of the diversification which has taken place. The thesis researched the extent of the increased cultural diversity achieved in the organisation between 1975 and 2015, and how far the increase in cultural diversity proved the source of strength to SIM that the organisation's leadership hoped. The study offers a number of insights for similar organisations, such as OMF, AIM and Wycliffe, as SIM's experience provides both a model and a caution for other missions seeking to increase in diversity and to be more relevant to mission in the twenty-first century.

Responding to the Growth of the Indigenous Church

By the start of my research period, SIM already had a substantial indigenous community.¹ The growth of the churches planted by SIM in Ethiopia and in Nigeria was such that, by 1975, these churches had become self-propagating.² This study has examined SIM's response to the implications of this development, which had come about more rapidly than SIM had anticipated. SIM General Director, Ray Davis, observed in 1971 that the church in Africa 'has blossomed before our eyes; this living, vibrant reality has surprised us'.³ The growing vision for mission of SIM's African churches, particularly evident in the early years of my research period

¹ See introduction, page 17.

² See chapter 4, page 134.

³ R J Davis, 'Funnel Fillers – Rejoice', *Africa Now*, September-October 1971, Issue 58, 13.

through the establishment and rapid growth of EMS,⁴ furthered the need for SIM to respond to the changing shape of relations between the church and the mission. Events in Nigeria when SIM turned over responsibility for its work in the country to ECWA in 1976⁵ suggest an awareness within SIM's leaders of the need to adapt to a changing relationship with the church, as well as adjust to political changes taking place in Africa, and the changing postcolonial context in which SIM was operating. Signs of such awareness were reflected as early as 1964 in the April-June issue of the mission periodical *Africa Now* which focused on 'Evangelism and Imperialism', and included an article titled 'Missionaries aren't Imperialist Agents' by the distinguished Ghanaian Christian geneticist, Dr F.I.D. Konotey-Ahulu,⁶ in which he argued that 'to confuse imperialism with Christianity was Satan's greatest weapon in Africa today'. A second article, by Rae Gourlay, printed beside Konotey-Ahulu's article, asked a series of questions under the heading 'How about you? Are you an Imperialist?' to challenge the reader. It went on to 'test the heart motives' of those reading, asking 'In multi-racial company do you gravitate to those of your own race?' and 'Can you name people of other cultures among your close friends?'⁷ These articles provide evidence that even in the early years of decolonisation in Africa SIM was not indifferent to the changing political context of the period, and was not afraid to address sensitive issues and include challenge or criticism of missionaries' attitudes.⁸ This approach was also evident in the growing recognition of past attitudes of white superiority and racism within SIM, often associated with

⁴ See chapter 2, page 90.

⁵ See chapter 2, pages 80-1.

⁶ See <https://creation.com/dr-felix-konotey-ahulu> for a summary of Konotey-Ahulu's background and career. Accessed 23 August 2019.

⁷ *Africa Now*, April-June 1964, Issue 21, 8-9, 13.

⁸ See also Geysbeek in Corwin, *By Prayer to the Nations*, 217-8.

accusations of imperialism, a recognition which led eventually to SIM missionaries apologising to church leaders in Ghana and Ethiopia in 1998.⁹ This willingness to admit past wrongs and confront difficult issues was an important part of SIM's recent history.

As discussed in chapter 2, it appears that SIM may have been ahead of other evangelical missions in the changing nature of its relationship with ECWA. AIM was working out its relationship with the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Kenya during the same period: a relationship that had, according to Young, been 'unresolved' since the AIC was established in the 1940s.¹⁰ In 1980 Harold Fuller identified 'indigenous responsibility' as the pattern adopted by SIM with its related churches in Nigeria, a pattern which developed from a phase of partnership between church and mission, during which the national church gained experience until it was able to take over responsibility for the work.¹¹ There are parallels between the stories of AIM and AIC in Kenya, and SIM and ECWA in Nigeria, involving years of negotiation and discussion as the balance of the relationship between church and mission was worked out. There seem to be some significant differences, however. Young described an ultimatum in 1970 from the African church leaders to AIM, pressing for the fusion of church and mission, and 'calling AIM to come to terms with the new conditions in Africa'.¹² The circumstances in Nigeria differed as the turnover of 1976 was instigated by SIM. Was SIM perhaps more far-sighted as an organisation than AIM

⁹ See chapter 4, page 169.

¹⁰ Young, 'The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, 1939-1975', and email correspondence, 12 October 2017. See also chapter 4, pages 173.

¹¹ See chapter 4, page 171.

¹² Young, 'The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya', 197.

and more aware of the potential dangers of the missionaries holding onto control rather than encouraging indigenous leadership in ECWA? In contrast to AIM's story, the debates between SIM and ECWA focused on a partnership relationship, rather than on 'merger', the situation Young described which preceded the signing of any agreement between AIC and AIM in Kenya.¹³ Although not without difficulty, SIM's pursuit of a partnership relationship appeared to be ultimately of benefit to both mission and church, and perhaps served as a model for similar organisations.

The cultural diversification of SIM which took place from the end of the twentieth century reflects something of the new dynamics in church and mission policy heralded by the decolonisation that characterised the period just prior to the dates of this research project. In his discussion of nationalism and universalism within twentieth-century missionary Christianity, Adrian Hastings discussed an American 'rehash of the traditional Christian imperialism of western European countries' which persisted well beyond 1960, 'the year of Africa', and which he provocatively identified as 'the gravest nationalist threat to Christianity by the late twentieth century'.¹⁴ SIM's history during this period provides an example of a mission agency strongly rooted in North America becoming gradually aware of such a threat and working out its place in the modern post-colonial world.

¹³ See chapter 4, page 173.

¹⁴ Adrian Hastings, 'The Clash of Nationalism and Universalism within Twentieth-Century Missionary Christianity' in Brian Stanley and Elaine M. Low, *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*. Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003), 32-3.

Debate and Discussion surrounding Internationalisation

The growth of Christianity across the non-western world, and with it an increasing vision for mission amongst non-traditional missionary sending nations, created a new situation to which mission organisations such as SIM needed to adapt. This was identified by SIM's leaders, Hay and McGregor, who sought to respond to it.¹⁵

Central to their response was the tension for traditional western mission organisations between choosing to internationalise as an organisation, by integrating missionaries from non-western countries into the missionary workforce, or encouraging and supporting the national churches to develop new national mission agencies of their own. Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL experienced a similar debate, discussed by Aldridge in *For the Gospel's Sake*.¹⁶ He described discussions in the 1970s over how to include nationals in SIL's work 'as a means of lowering its western-oriented profile'. He noted that, particularly in Latin America, it was 'too costly and too technologically advanced for most non-western peoples to participate on anything resembling an equal footing'. The emphasis on equal status was stressed by Wycliffe's founder Cameron Townsend who nevertheless resisted the idea that nationals should be incorporated into the organisation because he felt this would make them 'subject to the control and disciplinary procedures' of the western membership in their own countries, which would be a form of imperialism. He feared too that they would not be treated as equals. Townsend's proposed solution was to assist nationals in forming their own separate translation organisations which would not be subject to control from outside. In contrast, British Wycliffe-SIL member, John Bendor-Samuel, established the work of SIL in Africa in the early 1960s and

¹⁵ See introduction, page 7 and chapter 4, page 146-7.

¹⁶ Aldridge, *For the Gospel's Sake*, 201-4.

pushed for ‘a vigorous approach to national involvement’. Aldridge records that ‘history proved Bendor-Samuel correct when, in the 1970s, he argued that future partnerships with churches and non-western Christians would play an increasingly large role in Bible translation’.¹⁷

Warren Beattie described a similar discussion which took place in OMF during the 1960s. He reported that ‘OMF thought that it would be better to encourage existing Asian missionary societies, rather than start an Asian wide missionary society, as this latter concept was thought to be too unwieldy... The leadership of OMF had become aware of the need to think in terms of training national leaders rather than doing work themselves and this was seen as a rethinking of strategy.’¹⁸ Beattie also highlighted OMF’s ‘long-term policy of so-called “Indigenous Principles”, a device to protect the churches in Asia from foreign interference and funding’ as a stumbling block to the internationalisation of the organisation itself,¹⁹ echoing something of Townsend’s conviction described above.

The discussion in chapter 4 of this thesis highlighted the debate taking place within SIM around this issue.²⁰ When Brant successfully led a small team of Ethiopian missionaries to India in 1998, this precipitated a change in attitude in SIM towards sending missionaries from non-western countries. However, the range of opinions

¹⁷ Aldridge, *For the Gospel's Sake*, 239.

¹⁸ Beattie, ‘OMF International: An Assessment of Internationalism’, 42-3.

¹⁹ Warren R. Beattie, ‘Models of Missional Engagement in Asia: A Case Study of OMF International’, *Encounters* 30, September 2009.

²⁰ See chapter 4, page 146-55.

shared within the context of the ‘Seize the Day’ strategic review²¹ regarding the choice between sending missionaries from the majority world through SIM, and encouraging them to build their own national agencies, suggests that there may have been some in SIM who would have supported Townsend’s view on this issue. The ‘Seize the Day’ final report in 2005 adopted a combined approach: encouraging and facilitating missionaries from majority world churches in situations where SIM was not their sending agency, as well as recruiting and deploying people from the majority-world church who would serve with SIM.²²

The openness to increasing internationalisation that existed in SIM owed much to the vision and role of key leaders and individuals in the organisation, crucially founded on their own mission experience, which drove the diversity agenda forward.²³ Key figures in this process were International Directors Hay, Plueddemann and McGregor, and Deputy International Director, Brant. Hay, Plueddemann and McGregor were all influenced by their experience in Nigeria, and for McGregor also in Ethiopia, which fuelled their vision for the internationalisation of SIM. Nigeria was particularly significant for developments within the mission. It was the place where SIM began, and during the 1970s and 1980s was by far the largest field in the mission, and the one with the most mature African leaders.²⁴ Events and decisions surrounding the SIM turnover to ECWA in 1976 perhaps took on even greater significance across the mission because of the prominence of the work in Nigeria,

²¹ See chapter 4, page 148-51.

²² See chapter 4, page 155-56.

²³ See chapter 2, page 87-99.

²⁴ See chapter 2, page 89.

and its influential role in SIM. Hay and Plueddemann's involvement in those events was significant in their vision for increased diversity in the mission. Brant's vision for SIM to become 'a Highway for all Nations' was a further important contribution to the vision and debate surrounding diversity in the mission, and owed much to his own missionary experience in Ethiopia.²⁵ Wycliffe, OMF and SIM were wrestling with similar tensions surrounding the issues of internationalisation; however, the vision of SIM leaders to enable non-western candidates to serve with SIM if they wished to do so was central to the progress of internationalisation in the organisation during the period of my research.

Governance and Structural Change

The governance review and fundamental changes which were implemented in SIM in 2015 were critical to the organisation's pursuit of cultural diversity at every level.²⁶ The shareholder governance model in operation at the start of my research period was essentially one in which the wealthy nations, perceived as 'owners' of the mission, determined policy. The new structure, a stakeholder governance model, gave voice and 'ownership' to all SIM entities. This was a radical and important change, notably in the way SIM USA relinquished control it had previously held on the basis of financial contribution, and the number of US missionaries. SIM's governance review team were influenced by the review and change Wycliffe Bible Translators had gone through, resulting in the creation of the Wycliffe Global

²⁵ See chapter 2, page 92.

²⁶ See chapter 5, particularly pages 202-5.

Alliance in 2011.²⁷ The emphasis they had placed on seeking a truly global organisational structure was echoed by McGregor's determination that SIM's new sending offices in West and East Africa, North East India and Latin America should have a voice and an opportunity to speak into the governance of the organisation. In his address to the first meeting of the SIM Global Assembly, which embodied this vision, Bogunjoko spoke of six other organisations having consulted SIM regarding their own desire 'to internationalise their membership and decision-making structures'.²⁸ This suggests that SIM and Wycliffe were leading the way in organisational change driven by increased diversity and more global vision. Warren Beattie described a 'grasp of the need for organisational change within OMF to reflect the international character' of the mission.²⁹ However Peter Rowan, who was on the International Executive Council of OMF which commissioned the restructuring of the organisation implemented in 2015, observed that the restructure was not driven by a process of diversification, although it was hoped that it would facilitate greater diversity.³⁰ He expressed concern that some of OMF's structures may impede diversity and perpetuate a paternalist approach to mission. Concerns that western structures, attitudes and expectations persisted even in a new governance model were discussed within SIM, Wycliffe and OMF.³¹ Bogunjoko reflected openly on the tension between 'international' and 'local' approaches, and the adjustments to be made from both sides in order to work effectively as an organisation. The

²⁷ See chapter 5, page 196.

²⁸ See chapter 5, page 204.

²⁹ Beattie, 'OMF International: An Assessment of Internationalism', 74.

³⁰ Peter Rowan, email, 6 January 2020.

³¹ See chapter 5, page 207 and 231, Beattie, 'OMF International: An Assessment of Internationalism', 82, and Koyuki Sami, 'How Indigenous Are the OMF Asian Home Councils? Tracing the History of their Establishment', in *Mission Round Table* 14:3 (September – December 2019), 4-11.

awareness of these challenges and tensions serves as a model to leaders of similar organisations seeking to embrace increased cultural diversity.

Alongside these governance and structural changes, SIM adopted a more flexible approach to its personnel processes and financial support structure. This flexibility and willingness to adapt to a new dynamic was necessary in order to facilitate the internationalisation of the mission. The introduction of more flexibility in the candidate application process echoed the changes in the SIM governance model by widening access to mission membership for candidates from non-traditional sending countries.³² The work of the Support Task Force on the structure of the missionary financial support system recognised the need for change in order to accommodate missionaries from the majority world. The eventual implementation of ‘Support 2006’, a modular and more flexible system, to allow ‘accessibility and diversity’³³ lowered the financial barrier to mission membership of SIM. In an article from 2017, Andrea Roldan stated that finance was the greatest challenge for someone from a low income country seeking to join OMF.³⁴ SIM’s willingness to make significant changes to personnel and financial processes in order to facilitate a more culturally diverse missionary workforce perhaps serves as an example for similar agencies seeking to adapt to the changed dynamics of mission in the twenty-first century.

³² See chapter 5, page 224-7.

³³ See chapter 5, page 214 and 218-9.

³⁴ Andrea Roldan, ‘Swimming Upstream’.

Organisational Culture

As Peter Rowan, Co-National Director of OMF (UK),³⁵ observed to the author, greater diversity ‘is not simply a matter of changing the organisational structure – real change begins to happen when there is a transformation in organisational culture’.³⁶ EunSun Hong observed that ‘organisational culture heavily influenced the way leadership and followership played out in SIL’ in her research on the subject.³⁷ In his examination of Wycliffe Bible Translators in its North American setting, Aldridge commented on the tensions between the more conservative IFMA and more progressive EFMA. SIM was in the IFMA,³⁸ perhaps implying that being situated towards the more fundamentalist end of the American theological spectrum, SIM might have been expected to be slower to engage with the diversification this thesis has described. This is perhaps evident in some signs I have noted of US resistance to the changes commended by the leadership of the mission;³⁹ however, by 1975 onwards, SIM was becoming increasingly international and its organisational culture was changing. It is important to note the significance of SIM’s leadership in this change, and also of the steps taken to facilitate change at every level of the organisation. The vision and role of key leaders in SIM has been highlighted above.⁴⁰ The contributions of non-western leaders Andrew Ng and Joshua Bogunjoko, described in chapter 7, were significant in the way they were willing to challenge existing systems in order to find workable solutions to facilitate diversity. Along with

³⁵ Co-Director with his wife, Christine.

³⁶ Rowan, email, 6 January 2020.

³⁷ Hong, *A Grounded Theory of Leadership and Followership*, 253.

³⁸ See chapter 2, page 65.

³⁹ See for example, chapter 2, page 69-74.

⁴⁰ See page 343.

IFES and OMF, SIM was one of only a few similar organisations to appoint non-westerners to senior leadership roles before 2013.⁴¹

My research also suggests that SIM became much more sensitive to gender issues over the period studied. A notable commitment to include women at leadership level was evident specifically from 1984 onwards when Clifford Edwards, first chair of the International Board of Governors, insisted on keeping gender balance as an issue to be addressed by the Board.⁴² International Directors Plueddemann, McGregor and Bogunjoko all promoted women in leadership roles and emphasised their commitment to do so when interviewed. These men, and one of the women appointed to a senior leadership role, expressed awareness that there were those in SIM who were not in agreement with this position, culturally and theologically, and acknowledged that there may be some contexts in which cultural sensitivities would make it very difficult for a woman to lead.⁴³ However, in spite of some resistance, these leaders were clear in their position, and the number of women in leadership increased during this period such that SIM today is no longer dominated by white western males as it was in 1975. At senior leadership level, in 1975, the small senior leadership team were all North American men. In October 2018, Bogunjoko restructured his senior leadership team. The International Leadership team of twelve included four women, one of whom is non-white. The all-male team of nine Regional Directors (who report to a female Global Director of Regional Development) included four non-whites. In 2014, Walker studied the diversification which had

⁴¹ See chapter 7, page 332.

⁴² See chapter 3, page 121.

⁴³ See chapter 3, page 124, and chapter 7, page 334-5.

taken place at country director level: of 36 country directors in 2004, only two were women and two were non-western. This had increased to nine women and 21 non-western out of 54 country leaders in 2014.⁴⁴ While the diversification that has taken place since 1975 at the most senior level in SIM is still relatively modest, it is significant and has played an important part in the ethos of diversity the organisation has sought to pursue. Reflecting on this theme in OMF, Rowan expressed concern that the organisation had been slow to embrace gender diversity at leadership level.⁴⁵

The level of discussion and debate within SIM regarding its commitment to cultural diversity, and the outworking of that commitment within the organisation, is striking. This is most notable from the publication in 2002 of Brant's 'Highway to the Nations' paper,⁴⁶ and the strong debate evident during the 'Seize the Day' strategic review which took place in 2004-5.⁴⁷ The 'Seize the Day' review provided an opportunity for the views of missionaries at grass roots level, as well as those in leadership, to be heard. This openness to discussion assisted the acceptance of the growing diversity of the mission, and revealed issues that had to be acknowledged and addressed in order to facilitate change. In addition to the governance and systems changes outlined above, the need to provide training for the increasing number of multi-cultural teams in SIM was highlighted by the review.⁴⁸ In spite of the absence of any formal assessment of the effectiveness of the multicultural teams training workshops, the response from those interviewed for my research suggested that the

⁴⁴ See chapter 3, page 127.

⁴⁵ Rowan, email, 6 January 2020.

⁴⁶ See chapter 2, page 93.

⁴⁷ See chapter 4.

⁴⁸ See chapter 6, page 248.

training was valued by the majority of those who received it.⁴⁹ This observation is perhaps endorsed by Hong's recommendation, following her research on SIL, of the need for specific training on multicultural issues. Writing in 2014, she commented on the lack of available resources to 'help non-westerners adjust to a field culture, or to help cross-cultural workers adjust to their colleague's cultures when the environment is multicultural'.⁵⁰ Perhaps SIM's programme of multicultural training workshops may offer an example of training which would be beneficial to similar organisations seeking to develop effective multicultural teams.

It is important to heed the warning offered by the range of responses to the diversification agenda that were evident within the mission. While the benefits and richness of genuinely diverse teams were identified by a number of those interviewed for this research,⁵¹ one respondent described 'lip service' paid to different cultures within their team, beneath which a desire to 'do things the American way' persisted.⁵² This example demonstrates that while some at grass roots level in SIM appreciate the subtleties of culture, and value the diversity it has brought to their team, for others there appears to be less understanding or willingness to adjust to the changed dynamics genuine cultural diversity requires. For organisations similar to SIM, this is a reminder of the potential resistance to change they may encounter.

⁴⁹ See chapter 6, page 255.

⁵⁰ Hong, *A Grounded Theory of Leadership and Followership*, 268.

⁵¹ See chapter 6, page 276.

⁵² Anonymous email, 16 December 2017.

The Extent of Increased Cultural Diversity in SIM

The nationality statistics included in the introduction⁵³ to this thesis measured the significant increase in cultural diversity in the organisation by the changes that had taken place in SIM's missionary workforce up to 2014. Personnel membership statistics for the years since 2014 indicate that the trajectory has continued in the same direction beyond the period of my research:⁵⁴ the number of members from the US has continued to drop to 41%, and the number of missionaries from new sending offices in West and East Africa, Latin America, and SIM entities in Bangladesh, Thailand and Malawi, has risen to make up 5.5% of the total missionary workforce in 2019. However, these numbers are overshadowed by the 1,200 Nigerian missionaries serving with EMS by 2009.⁵⁵ Figures for the East Asia office continued to rise slowly to 8%, with percentage numbers for missionaries from Korea, Canada, and the UK remaining generally static since 2014. Missionaries from the US remain the largest single block of the missionary workforce but since 2010 have no longer been the majority. However, North American missionaries still made up 56% of the total missionary workforce in 2015. This has continued to drop in the years following the period of this research, but still made up 51% of the total in 2019, a figure which highlights the fact that the degree of cultural diversification in SIM is still relatively modest, even though the progress has been significant. This serves as a reminder to similar organisations that, even when an ethos of diversity is actively and intentionally pursued as it was by SIM's senior leaders, the process of diversification and change may be long and slow.

⁵³ See introduction, page 5-6.

⁵⁴ SIM Membership statistics 2009-2019 supplied by SIM International Personnel Director by email, 1 August 2019.

⁵⁵ See chapter 2, page 88, footnote 76 and page 100.

Strengthened through Diversity?

To what extent SIM has been strengthened through its increased diversity is an extraordinarily difficult question to answer definitively. It was evident from the missionary respondents whose contributions were discussed in chapter 6 that the diversity they experienced in a multicultural team was an enriching experience through the different perspectives, qualities and insights members brought to the team and its ministry. The unity of a diverse team was emphasised as a powerful testimony of the multinational, multi-ethnic kingdom of God, and a demonstration that Christianity was not a western religion.

Views expressed during those debates highlighted a recognition that SIM had to change in order to be an organisation relevant to the changing shape of mission in the twenty-first century. Its willingness to address the challenges of pursuing greater cultural diversity at every level of the organisation, and its awareness of the changing world, enabled SIM to take significant steps towards becoming an organisation more relevant to the twenty-first century, and less vulnerable to potential reaction against western colonialism in its broadest sense. In that sense the diversification that has taken place in SIM has strengthened the organisation for the future.

It was clear that achieving success as a culturally diverse team was not always straightforward, and the investment of time and resources required was significant. For some missionary respondents, this was an unwelcome distraction from their primary ministry. Although only a small minority of respondents expressed this

feeling, for them the increased diversity of a team appeared as a potential source of weakness rather than one of strength. Where the appreciation of the layers and subtleties of culture was apparent, such as in the SIM Ghana team, it appeared to bear fruit in achieving an effective multicultural team.⁵⁶ Where deeper reflection and understanding of the complexity of culture was present, at leadership level and within culturally diverse teams, the potential for strength through diversity was increased.

Conclusion

This thesis has researched SIM's history between 1975 and 2015 and provided a case study of a Christian mission organisation which has intentionally pursued a commitment to increased cultural diversity. Similar organisations may benefit from SIM's example of an organisation willing in recent years to adopt a new financial support system, and a radical new governance structure, in order to encourage increasing diversity within the missionary workforce. This willingness offers evidence of the strength of vision at leadership level and of a determination to face the challenges and, at times resistance, which the internationalisation of the organisation created. SIM's story reveals an organisation which acknowledged the barriers to increased cultural diversity within its existing structures and procedures, and a leadership with a determination to find workable solutions in order to bring about change. The investment of time and resources to offer multicultural teams training acknowledged the potential misunderstanding and conflict that could result

⁵⁶ See chapter 6, page 268-9.

in an increasingly culturally diverse missionary workforce, and an awareness of the effort required to make such teams work well. For a minority in SIM, that effort was perceived as an unwelcome distraction from ministry; such attitudes serve as a warning of the potential challenges multicultural teams may face.

SIM's story is that of a large, traditional 'faith mission' which has been willing to face the challenges of change, and has responded to the growing vision for mission increasingly evident in churches in the majority world by intentionally pursuing cultural diversity. This study has charted the progress made by the organisation towards that goal. Whether consciously or not, SIM's pursuit of an ethos of diversity recaptured something of the vision of its founders, and has taken the mission closer to becoming truly representative of the diversity found within global conservative evangelicalism. In order to remain a mission organisation which is relevant in the modern, 'post-colonial' world, SIM, and mission agencies like it, must continue to progress along that path.

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