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The Graduate and Post-Graduate Levels*

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Creating and Expanding a Research Culture at Pentecostal and Charismatic Seminaries and Graduate Schools in the Majority World¹

by Dave Johnson

Many have been frustrated by the fact that western books do not totally address the theological, missiological, and pastoral issues in the Majority World. Also, the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement (PC) in the Majority World, as well as other evangelicals, has experienced stupendous growth, but is often lacking in discipleship and maturity. I believe that part of the answer to these issues is to be found in creating and actively maintaining a research culture on our Majority World seminary campuses and online communities that will provide scholars with the atmosphere and resources to engage in research, reflection, writing, and publishing opportunities to address these issues. John Stott, a well-known Anglican pastor and scholar, agreed. In 1969, he created the Langham Partnership Scholarship program to help Majority World scholars, including those from the PC, to get their PhDs, which is at the heart of any research culture, with their commitment to return to the Majority World to teach and develop their own programs.² To date, more than 266 scholars have benefitted from this program. They returned home and have upgraded the quality of the theological institutions in their homelands and elsewhere.³ In the beginning, all scholars went to the West to study. In 2005, however, Langham began to sponsor students at theological institutions in the Majority World, many of which had been started by Langham graduates. Thirty-six percent of Langham scholars have now come from these institutions.⁴

This paper seeks to identify what a research culture is, why it is necessary, and how, through the publication and marketing of research, PC seminaries and graduate schools can make a valuable contribution to

¹The original version of this article was done as a seminar topic at the triannual General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Theological Association in Siem Reap, Cambodia, September 12-15, 2017.

²<https://langham.org/what-we-do/langham-scholars/our-history/> (accessed June 24, 2020).

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

the strength, stability, and maturity of not only the global PC movement, but also the broader Church.

Scope and Limitations

Much of what can be described as a research culture involves post-graduate programs in all of their intricate detail. Since groups like Langham Scholars, and the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE), which has a close relationship with Langham and others, including various regional accreditation associations all over the globe, have well-established standards regarding post-graduate education, less space will be given to that here.⁵

Since ICETE has published excellent literature on how to develop a research culture, I will give more space to publishing and marketing, which are part of the fruit and logical outcome of a research culture. Indeed, these two aspects, which are often not given their proper focus in the Majority World, are essential to contributing to the global academic dialogue. More importantly, publishing manuscripts that contain sound doctrine and practice are critical to the growth and stability of the PC movement in the Majority World and help address the staggering paucity of literature that addresses Majority World issues. But before the issue of a research culture can be considered, we must briefly consider the role of the seminary or graduate school in the PC Movement and the broader Church.

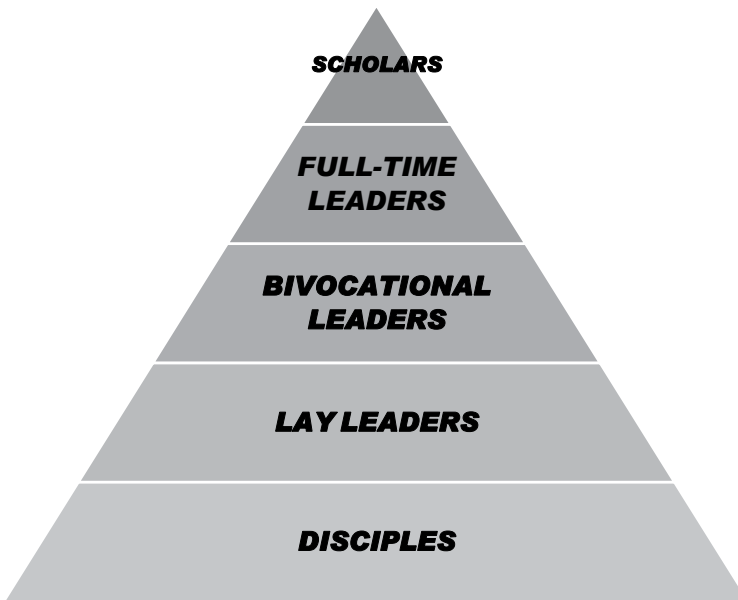
The Role of the Seminary/Graduate School in the Broader Church

Seminaries and the graduates and scholarship they produce must serve the Church. To demonstrate how this can be done, I will use Carl Gibbs's Leadership Training Pyramid as a paradigm, although I will restrict the use of it to issues related to developing and executing a research culture at the scholar's level.⁶

⁵<https://icete.info/resources/the-beirut-benchmarks/> (accessed June 4, 2020). See also, Ian Shaw, *Best Practice Guidelines for Doctoral Programs*, ed. Riad Kassis, ICETE (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2015), and *Handbook for Supervisors of Doctoral Students in Evangelical Theological Institutions*, ed. Riad Kassis, ICETE (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2015).

⁶Carl B. Gibbs, "The Training Pyramid," in *Theological Education in a Cross-Cultural Context: Essays in Honor of John and Bea Carter*, ed. A. Kay Fountain (Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, 2016), 103-104. Kindle. Gibbs credits the original model to Lois McKinney *Course Manual: Educational Planning for Cross-Cultural Ministries* (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton Graduate School, 1989), 64.

Figure 1. Carl Gibbs' Leadership Training Pyramid



The lower two levels, Disciples and Lay Leaders training, are normally done through the ministries of the local church.⁷ The third, Bivocational Leaders, could be done in a variety of contexts, but the top two, Full-Time Leaders and Scholars, normally require formal institutional training.⁸ Gibbs contends that the higher one goes in education, the lesser the need for great numbers of trained personnel and estimates the need of one scholar for every 1,000 disciples.⁹ While this number may be somewhat speculative, it does serve as a good example. It should also be noted that the higher one goes in theological education, the greater the cost.

For my purposes here, however, the main focus to note is that the influence of the scholars greatly outweighs its numbers. Gibbs notes that without biblically based scholarship, revival is not sustainable, and such a movement will lack defense against false teachings and unbiblical practices.¹⁰ Simply stated, scholars can help stop the theological drift which can happen in any movement. Those at this level are trained to

⁷Gibbs, 105.

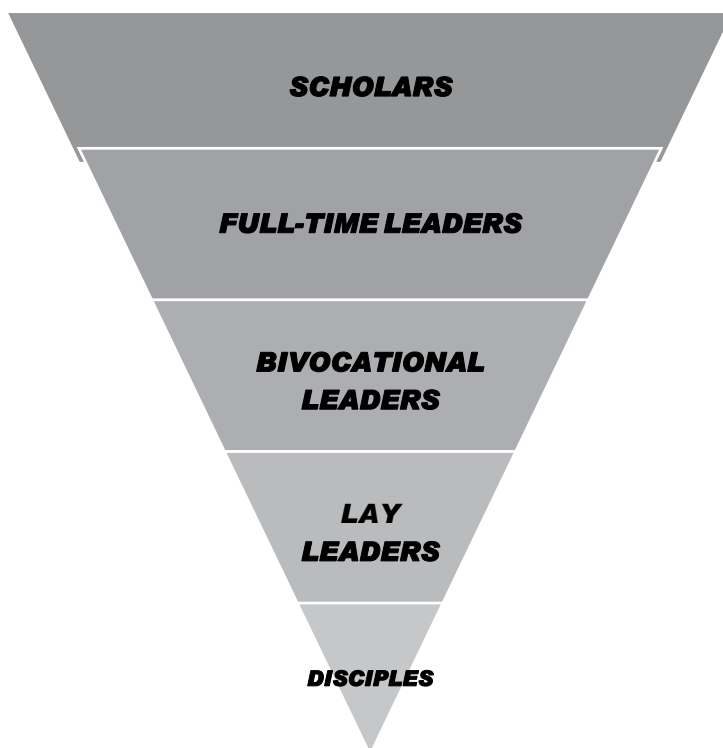
⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., 104.

¹⁰Ibid., 122.

write the books, create the curriculum and train the trainers, most notably for the lower levels of the Training Pyramid.¹¹ One former seminary president noted that almost all of the 101 Bible schools in his part of the world had at least one graduate of their seminary on the faculty, staff, or administration.¹² In other words, in terms of influence, the pyramid is inverted, meaning that the influence of scholars is disproportionate to its numbers and so on.

Figure 2. Inverted Carl Gibbs Leadership Training Pyramid



Writing the needed books, articles, and curriculum justifies and calls for doing thorough research on the issues at hand and the development of a research culture in our institutions to develop authors and to provide them with the content, time and atmosphere for research, writing and

¹¹Ibid., 107.

¹²Dave Johnson, "FEAST/APTS in Retrospect Part II: The Baguio Years," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 17, no.1 (February 2014): 19-42, 39.

reflection. Sponsoring an academic journal or other publishing venture offers an opportunity for new scholars to gain experience in publishing their work and make a small contribution to global scholarship in areas of their interest and expertise.

What Is Research?

Ian Shaw notes that

research has traditionally been understood as original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes the generation of ideas; the development of projects that lead to new or improved insights; and the use of knowledge to produce new or improved materials, processes and designs. At its heart lies scholarship, which involves the creation, development, and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of a subject or discipline.¹³

Indian research expert Jessy Jaison adds that research is about “seeking new dimensions of knowledge, identifying issues, bridging gaps, building theories in the existing knowledge.”¹⁴ For theological institutions, cognitive knowledge alone must never be the final goal, which must be to honor God and serve the Church, both local and global. Research, then, “is a journey of discovery, which will lead to finding out new things and devising new arguments.”¹⁵ Ideally, this is a lifelong adventure for scholars who wish to grow and share their wealth of knowledge with others.

What is the Purpose of Research?

The primary goal of all theological research is to glorify God¹⁶ and meet the needs of the Church. Research that does not serve the Body of Christ in some way, either in the academe or local level, should be avoided at all costs. Among other things, glorifying God calls for the same academic rigor that is practiced in the secular world, and Pentecostal scholars need to be every bit as concerned about orthopraxy

¹³Ian J. Shaw, *Best Practice Guidelines for Doctoral Programs*, ICETE (Carlisle, PA: Langham Global Library, 2015), 9-10, Kindle.

¹⁴Jessy Jaison, *Qualitative Research and Transformative Results: A Primer for Students and Mentors in Theological Education* (Bangalore: SAIACS Press, 2018), 10.

¹⁵Ian Shaw, *Handbook For Supervisors of Doctoral Students in Theological Institutions*, ed. Riad Kassis, ICETE (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2015), 11, Kindle.

¹⁶Shaw, *Best Practice*, 11.

as they are about orthodoxy.¹⁷ In other words, scholars are also called to be servants. Finally, research, to the extent that it is Spirit-guided and empowered, especially in theology and missiology, is an act of worship in and of itself.¹⁸

Why Do Research in the Majority World?

There are multiple reasons for doing research in Asia that cover the spectrum of doctrine, leadership practices, training and sending missionaries, and living the Christian life in each local context. Some of the biggest issues include the de-westernization of the gospel and dealing with practitioners of other world religions as well as those involved in animistic and polytheistic practices that have been imbedded in their cultures for several millennia.

Asians are also confronted by false doctrine and folk Christianity, to which the PC movement is not immune, cults, strange practices of every kind, as well as false messiahs and prophets. All of this calls for intellectual and missional engagement of the highest order.

Developing a Research Culture

For this discussion, the development of a research culture is mainly focused on administrators and faculty. At schools with master of theology and doctoral programs, this would include students in those programs.¹⁹ Ian Shaw explains, “A research culture is a community that thinks that academic research is important, is committed to continually producing research, provides accessibility to research tools, provides facilities and provides or seeks opportunities to publish that research.”²⁰

Shaw goes on to explain that

a research culture is not just a place where research takes place. It is an aspect of a critically reflective learning culture, where the capacity to think fresh thoughts and welcome creative insights, becomes a core value. . . . A research culture is an ideas culture. Fresh approaches and perspectives are a vital resource

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸DeLonn Rance, “Missiological Research as Worship: A Pneumatological Journey of Discovery,” in *Missiological Research: Interdisciplinary Foundations, Methods and Integration*, ed. Marvin Gilbert, Alan R. Johnson, and Paul W. Lewis (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018), 287.

¹⁹For schools with post-grad programs, the works by Ian Shaw listed in the bibliography are excellent resources for developing a research culture in those areas.

²⁰Ian Shaw, lecture at an ATA/ICETE seminar on research, Manila, February 2017.

for the wider church community, helping them to reflect on how to live and think in their own culture, and as a way of evangelical scholars contributing to global academic discourse.²¹

How Can a Research Culture Be Created?

The schools' leadership must be committed to the vision of a research culture and be willing to provide the time and resources necessary to make that dream a reality. For schools that have not yet started their research culture and wish to do so, I recommend that the leadership begin by starting with the resources at hand and building from there.²²

Creating a research culture can be costly. For schools that do not have the resources to do this on their own, forming a network of schools may bring together the resources necessary to do so. Regarding post-graduate education, the Pan-Africa Theological Seminary, a joint project of the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance and the Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM USA) that was formed for the purpose of offering doctoral level education, is an excellent example. It is based on the campus of the West Africa Advanced School of Theology (Assemblies of God) in Lomé, Togo, but has satellite campuses throughout the African continent, making it available to more students who cannot leave their ministries to study in residence and can also use the library facilities at the satellite schools.²³ In Asia, this is accomplished through a consortium of evangelical seminaries, which includes schools within the PC tradition, known as the Asia Graduate School of Theology (AGST). This was formed in 1984 under the auspices of the Asia Theological Association (ATA) and has branches in several Asian countries.²⁴ The Asia Pacific Theological Association (APTA), which is Pentecostal and has eighty-four member schools around the Asia Pacific Rim and in Pacific Oceania,²⁵ sponsors annual theological forums where papers on relevant issues are presented and discussed.²⁶ The ATA, which has 356 member schools in thirty-three

²¹Shaw, *Handbook*, 115-116.

²²The resources by Ian Shaw, Jessy Jaison, and others listed in the bibliography are excellent places to start. Also, Shaw identifies a number of other resources available online that should be reviewed.

²³www.pathseminary.org (accessed August 20, 2019).

²⁴www.ataasia.com (accessed August 20, 2019), including at this time Japan, The Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Thailand.

²⁵Email from Ann Fuentes to the author, August 3, 2020.

²⁶<http://apta-schools.org/> (accessed June 24, 2020).

nations across Asia,²⁷ also has an annual theological forum in which PC scholars participate along with a broad range of other evangelicals. One global platform seeking to promote research in the Majority World is the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education (WAPTE), which holds a consultation every three years.²⁸ As those engaged research cultures produce theses, dissertations, and other monographs, the question should be raised if, how, and where, they might be published.

Should We Publish Our Work?

Ian Shaw makes an excellent case for publishing:

Good research should be shared, discussed, and disseminated widely. The overall readership for academic papers and peer-reviewed monographs may not be large, but they are usually read by the key players in the academic debate. Therefore, having a strategic input into shaping the trajectory of scholarship is a very important activity. To bring a distinctive evangelical perspective into such academic discourse is an aspect of Christian mission.²⁹

Shaw writes in the specific context of research cultures in Europe, which are often a part of a secular university system, and his comments must be understood in that light. PC scholars in the Majority World have, can and should make an excellent contribution to scholarship. However, the primary purpose for research and publication must be to serve the needs of the Church, with which Shaw also agrees. In Asia and Africa, these churches often exist in the places where non-Christian religions are in the majority or are at least followed by a significant minority of the population, meaning that scholars in these contexts do not have the luxury of seeing academic debate and dialogue as an end in itself. This makes the publication of research all the more critical. Finally, if we do not publish, western theological textbooks and theological formulations will continue to dominate the theological landscape in the Majority World.

We've Decided to Publish, Now What?

Once the decision has been made to publish, a number of other questions must be answered, such as what will be published, who the

²⁷Email from Theresa Lua to the author, August 3, 2020.

²⁸<https://wapte.org/> (accessed June 24, 2020).

²⁹Shaw, *Handbook*, 121.

target audience is, what language is preferred by the target audience, etc. The answers to these must be thoroughly weighed.

If a school is producing theses, dissertations, and faculty monographs, it would naturally follow that the school should focus on publishing these things. The target audience would then be identified as pastors, missionaries, and those involved in theological and missionary education. One key thought here is that the school's publishing ministry should reflect the academic level, values, and goals of the school. Publishing good work at the academic level of the school can enhance the reputation, influence, and legacy of the institution.³⁰ Publishing material that is poorly done or written on too low of an academic level can also have a negative effect on the school's reputation. Scholars who wish to rewrite their theses and dissertations for a more popular level through other publishers or by self-publishing should be encouraged to do so.

Careful attention needs to be given to the manuscripts selected and the publishing process, keeping in mind that the reputation of the publishing entity and the school ride on every page. Since most theses and dissertations are written to the standards of the thesis or dissertation mentor, the inside and outside readers, and the thesis or dissertation committee, as well as the institution involved, some rewriting may be required to make the manuscript more appealing to a broader readership. For example, most readers will not need to know, nor will they be interested in, the details of how field research was conducted. This can be moved to an appendix or simply deleted. Tables of data may be able to be condensed, combined with other tables, summarized in the text, or moved to an appendix to make the text of the manuscript flow more easily. For example, my own dissertation had fifty-seven tables of data which reduced to twenty-seven in the published version, with no appreciable amount of data lost.

If manuscripts are accepted from authors not affiliated with the school doing the publishing, a review process, normally by at least one or two experts in the field of the manuscript being considered, should be done to determine if the manuscript meets the academic standards of the school and, if not, what rewrites need to be done to make it acceptable. For example, are there weaknesses in argumentation or are critical sources in the field missing? In this case, the person overseeing the publishing should make appropriate guidelines available to the reviewers. Ideally, those overseeing the publishing would determine the potential marketability of the manuscript before even sending it to the reviewers. However, the main focus of publishing should be on making

³⁰Email from John Carter to the author, May 23, 2020.

a contribution to scholarship and serving the needs of the Church and the academe, regardless of whether the manuscript has the potential of becoming a best-seller—a level of popularity seldom achieved by academic works anyway.

Editorial and formatting guidelines regarding grammar and punctuation should be established. In most cases, the guidelines used for the thesis or dissertation can be followed. Some guidelines, however, allow the author some flexibility, for example, in what types of headings or subheadings are used. In this case, it would be well if the publishing process eliminated this choice in an effort to maintain consistency from one publication to the next. This is particularly important in the case of journals, where readers can easily notice style differences from one article to the next, which detracts from the quality of the work.

Editors should be selected with great care. Ideally, they should be native speakers of the language used in publication and have proven credentials as an author or editor. Two types of editors are normally needed for each manuscript or article. The first would edit the content of the article or manuscript for grammatical errors and flow of thought, etc., while the second would focus on spelling, punctuation, and formatting, etc.

Once the manuscript is ready, the next step is to do the layout and cover design. Because these items are so critical for marketing and selling the book, I recommend that a professional be employed for these tasks. Since technical glitches and other things can happen once the manuscript has been put into publishing format, normally pdf, the manuscript should be sent back to the editorial team for proofreading. Most manuscripts will still have many minor errors at this point, so this step is critical. If possible, the proofreaders should not be the ones who did the editing because one's eyes can easily gloss over mistakes made in an earlier edit. In general, the more qualified eyes that see the manuscript the better, although this is not always possible. With all of this in place, however, no one has ever produced a perfect manuscript, but every effort should be made to pursue excellence.

Where Can We Publish our Work?

In this aspect, as well as nearly every other aspect of a research culture, economics cannot be ignored. While there are good publishers in the West that are publishing the work of Majority World scholars, most cannot sell their books at an affordable price for those outside of the western nations. Developing lower cost publishing ventures in the Majority World is critical to publishing and marketing such research.

In the 1990s, the leadership at our school (Asia Pacific Theological Seminary) made the decision to become a publisher to make the work of scholars more widely available and launched APTS Press.³¹ Some funds were raised for original capital investment, with the understanding that sales of the books produced would allow the school to keep publishing. So far, this arrangement has worked relatively well. From 1995 to now, the school has published twenty-five books, many of them being theses and dissertations written by our own students and faculty members.

In 1998, the school pioneered a new semi-annually published, peer-reviewed journal known as the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* (AJPS), one of the few journals in Asia dedicated to the study of Asian Pentecostalism.³² Along with APTS Press, this provided another avenue for Asian authors, as well as western missionaries working in Asia, for publishing their work and contributing to scholarship. One of the aims of the publishing ministries at APTS is to give new authors a chance to publish their first work. At least two of the contributors, Wonsuk and Julie Ma, have gone on to become noted authors. Another journal, the *Journal of Asian Mission*, also published semi-annually and peer reviewed, was launched at about the same time at APTS under the sponsorship of the Asia Theological Association. The scope of this journal was and continues to be broader than the PC tradition, covering the work that evangelicals are doing in Asia. While the Press has maintained financial viability fairly well, the AJPS has not. While paid subscriptions, both through EBSCO and individual subscriptions, as well as students' fees have helped, the bulk of the AJPS's budget must come from the donations of friends and supporters of APTS.

There are other factors that need to be considered aside from finances. For any publishing enterprise to be successful, the school's top leadership must be committed to the enterprise in both word and deed. Sadly, the task of publishing is often committed to faculty members who already have full teaching and administrative loads, leaving publishing as a lower priority to be done in the remaining time. While the work ethic and productivity of such faculty members is admirable, this is not the best-case situation due to the need to invest time in manuscript selection, developing and executing good editing and production processes, and marketing the end product. The best-case scenario is for the administration to reduce the workload of those in publishing to do their work, although this may lead to the expense of hiring more faculty to pick up the slack. In one case that I am aware of, the administration agreed to give their head of publishing the opportunity of dedicating 75

³¹The more recent books produced by APTS Press can be seen at www.aptspress.org.

³²The journal can be read and downloaded without cost at www.aptspress.org.

percent of their time to the job and the result has been a robust publishing ministry that is slowly gaining recognition from scholars and church leaders around the globe.

Marketing is another huge challenge that is often not adequately addressed by the academic community. Part of the problem is that most academics appear to lack business acumen or are simply more focused on their writing and not concerned about marketing their work. One well respected school with an excellent publishing ministry admitted to me that marketing is their weakest link and their sales reports reflected it.³³

Marketing, like research, writing, and publishing, is a lot of work. But what is the point of doing all the hard work of publishing a book if only a few people are going to read it? What is the point of writing for publication and not trying to get it into the hands of as many people as possible? While it is not normally regarded as such, good marketing is critical to contributing to scholarship. A good rule of thumb for any seminary publishing ministry is to spend as much time, effort, and money in marketing as they do into research, writing, and publishing.

There are good reasons for publishing and marketing well. One, publishing the work of our faculties and students, as well as others, contributes to the global discussion on the issues of the day and can give specific focus on theological and missiological issues in the Majority World that are not adequately addressed by literature from the West. Given that the center of Christianity is now outside the West, making every effort to get books into the hands of those who can benefit from them is critical.

Second, good publishing and marketing adds prestige and credibility to the seminary involved, as well as providing an excellent marketing opportunity for promoting the school. This enhances the research culture as more potential students recognize that if they do their post-graduate work at a school with a publishing ministry, they may be able to publish their work, thus adding more scholars to the various fields of inquiry that are making a contribution to the seminary and, most importantly, to the growth and stability of the Body of Christ in the Majority World.

The third reason is financial. Resources gained from the sale of books can be reinvested in continuing and even expanding the publishing ministry of the school to make an even greater contribution to research and scholarship!

The emergence of digital publishing over the internet through companies such as Amazon has opened vast new opportunities for new publishers to enter the field and make their work available at a reasonable cost. Books can and should be made available in e-book, mobile phone,

³³The name of the organization is intentionally withheld.

and print-on-demand format so that the individual buyer can do what is best for them. Care must be taken to ensure that the internet publisher is active in, or at least ships to, the part of the world where one wishes to market, and there is a lot of demographic research online that will help publishers to make wise decisions.

More media platforms continue to come online. A wise publisher will develop a good relationship with media experts who can advise as to which platforms should be used and which should be avoided. Also, publishers need to identify and know their reading audience. Answering questions like “How does my target audience use the internet?” are critical questions to be answered.³⁴

Individual seminaries should also market their books locally, at least through their campus bookstore and through other events on campus, especially if they rent out their facilities to other Christian groups for conferences or conventions. Local bookstores and national chain stores may also be a viable option, although these stores are normally geared for the popular market. In this situation, most bookstores will only take books on consignment and may require the execution of a legally binding contract. Care must also be taken to have relationships with the booksellers as not even all Christian booksellers conduct business by biblical ethics and even those that do are as prone to human error as anyone.

In all cases, advertising is critical as books do not sell themselves. Since a seminary publisher will likely have limited funds for advertising, pursuing free marketing options is the best way to go. Most social media platforms provide some free advertising space, such as a fan page on Facebook. In this case, the publisher should try to learn which social media their target audiences use most.

An email database should be built, starting with the seminary’s current students, faculty, and alumni association, then branching out to include theological, denominational, and ministerial associations with which the seminary is associated and in which it is most well-known. Once these are in place, other databases from other organizations within the target market of the publisher can be added by simply scouring their websites. There are hundreds of these associations worldwide and most maintain a website where the email addresses of participating institutions and individuals are publicly available. Here, one must take care that in some cases permission must be sought to add names, but this is not usually the case. Using mass mailing companies like MailChimp gives the receiver the opportunity to remove themselves from the database without undue hassle if they desire. The downside of this approach is that

³⁴One example of a good site to research for this kind of information is www.wearesocial.com.

considerable time and effort is required to build even a modest size database. But for new publishers with no name recognition in the wider market, this may be the best way to gain a niche. Marketing can also be done by having books reviewed in journals and by paid advertising.

Another option is to pursue licensing arrangements with other publishers, normally in other parts of the world. For several years now, APTS Press has enjoyed a good relationship with Wipf & Stock Publishers in Eugene, OR. We publish our work jointly with them, meaning that they accept any manuscript that we send them for publication and pay us a per copy royalty based on their retail price of the book. Aside from the financial considerations, there are two advantages for us. One, Wipf & Stock is well known and respected in Asia and elsewhere. Linking our name to theirs gives us additional visibility, credibility, and name recognition that we might not have otherwise. The other advantage is that our books then become available to their customer base, which is likely much larger and somewhat different than ours. As the current director of the APTS Press, I am continually on the lookout for others.

If a school cannot or does not wish to publish their work themselves, another option may be to partner with an existing publisher. The Asian Theological Seminary in Manila, for example, has partnered with OMF Lit., the largest evangelical publisher in the Philippines, to publish a number of fine books relevant to their Filipino audience. The Asia Theological Association is another case in point. They now publish their work, which includes their fine Asia Bible Commentary series, through a partnership with Langham Scholars, giving them access to the global market. If necessity is the mother of invention, there is ample room for creative ideas and partnerships to flourish among those with similar interests.

Final Thoughts

In the beginning, I spoke about the need for resources dealing with Asian issues. I hope that these suggestions have helped us to see that we can and should address these issues through the development of a research culture, including publication. This takes a lot of time and hard work, but the needs of the Church in the Majority World demand that we do so.

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