

Research Unit
September 27, 1970

OVERSEAS STRATEGIES - 2

J.W. Matthews

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I do not intend to give a report on anything that had to do with the trip. That's sort of incidental after the report Len Dressler has just given. I want to deal with assignments and strategies that relate to our overseas effort.

The second most frustrating thing that happened to me was when I gathered primarily in three different places--in Hong Kong and in Ootacamund and in Sydney--with your colleagues. Everyone of them wanted to get me off to the side. At first I fell into the trap. I thought, well, they've got problems and this is one of the reasons I am out here. But they didn't want to talk about their problems. They wanted to know how Mary, Jack, and Henry were back here. And finally I had to rather brutally cast them aside because I didn't know who Henry, and Jack, and Mary were. I couldn't help them very much. That's not quite true. They don't know the Henry's I don't know either and the Mary's that I don't know either. And you couldn't sit down and talk with them; we didn't have time for such things. But it was heart-warming to realize how much they think of home. I guess that has brought out a bit of the sentimentality in me. In all of the areas, they wanted to be sure that I knew and remembered to extend and renew their felicitations and their love to you.

The first and most important frustration had to do with something else. One of the senses of virtue that I have, though I've read recently that a virtue uttered out loud is not longer a virtue-- One of the senses of virtue that I possess is that in all of the cluttering that is in our files, they are not cluttered by letters that I have written. Ever since the beginning I have adhered to a policy of writing one letter when I was away. I didn't do it this time. The self-conscious aspect of that was that I couldn't get out of my mind that two trips ago, when I went to India, I sat down and spent a great deal of time writing that one letter. To me it's not a letter; it's sort of an essay to myself. When I got home from India nobody mentioned the fine essay that I wrote. I was not able to contain my humility, so I asked Lyn how the letter was received. She dodged me. So I came back a day or two later and finally with some obvious pain she said to me that they had read the letter. The letter sounded so pessimistic that they dared not read it to the total collegium. Well, my experience with that letter was not one of pessimism at all. My experience was quite the contrary. So, I've been hurt ever since.

But this time, had I written a letter it would have sounded a bit pessimistic to me. So this is precisely where my frustration is. This became aware to me early, but it was dramatized with shocking power when I was suddenly aware that I wanted the airplane I would be taking from Tahiti to arrive in Chicago. This is quite an unusual experience for me these days, because I am literally consumed with the death urge, and the death urge becomes dramatic when there is a confrontation with the means of realizing the death urge. I've never gotten over the fact that once in a while these airplanes go down. Then I began to think that I wouldn't have to face what I have to face when I get back home or when I get to the next stop.

My awareness that I wanted the airplane to arrive demanded that I do a little thinking theologically. You must work backwards in your theology when you come upon that type of experience. I then became aware of the fact that on this trip in the midst of overwhelming possibilities overseas, all I saw on this whole trip was utter impossibility. The experience of utter impossibility was that which produces the life urge. Interesting? Interesting? This was the first time for a long time that I sort of wanted to live a little while. I think that's bad. But I don't quite know how to understand that. For I should have the death urge if I want to get done what needs to be done. The only way I can grasp this at all is to develop a death urge about the life urge.....Anyway, I could almost sit down because that's my report.

I want to talk about assignments in Seapac as a whole. Then I want to talk about assignments in India. Then I particularly want to talk about assignments in Australia. I also want to talk about assignments in Pacifica. Finally, I want to make some recommendations about our duty in the possibility of those assignments. I wonder if I might understand my preceding report by doing this.

The ITI in Hong Kong is going very well. I think it was crucial that we were there. But in terms of executing that ITI, I was very delighted to see that my presence was incidental. A year ago my presence was crucial.

There were 128 people present. An exciting fact was that there were 20 from Japan. There were 20 people from Korea, but the Korean government only allowed 10 to go. That's interesting. There were 19 from the Philippines. That was rather shocking. Even more shocking is that there were 19 from Indonesia. There were 10 from Pacifica, the Pacific Islands. This was an interesting fact. This was a large number considering the total population there.

Our colleagues, the Crockers, had their twins there. Both of them are chubby like their father. He's overly proud, I think. He got started late and he has caught up. Wanda was there. The Morrill's, McClesky's, and Oyler's were also there.

We spent our time working out the assignments and strategies of Southeast Asia and Pacifica. You must get a picture of the 3 spheres of the world to understand that. The last time that a master strategy was laid out was at the end of the Singapore ITI. Our strategy has been altered between now and then. In each one of these areas we have set aside a section.

There are 3 socio-political continents in each of the spheres, making a total of 9. The last one of these we would move on, China, would be ninth in the list of 9. In the South the last are North Africa and the Near East. These would be number 7. In the West it's the U.S.S.R. which would be # 8.

Last year our arrangement in terms of priorities was the North American Continent was #1 in terms of impetus. This is somewhat automatic. Then we move over to the East. #2 was Seapac. #3 was India. #4 was Latin America; #5, Africa; #6, Europe. In terms of the master strategy, all of us are aware that we decided 3 or 4 years ago to hit where our basic power lies outside the continental limits of North America. This would be the East rather than the rest of the West or the South.

It seems to me that on this trip the agreement was that our master strategy was exactly right. We felt this for this reason. The most impossible place that confronts us is in the East. If we could succeed here we then have leverage to try with the rest of the world. I'm more convinced of that than ever before.

Our impetus is the same. The basic alteration is Europe. I think we made some mistakes in Europe. Thank God no one made us make the mistake of going into North Africa or the Near East. Fortunately God uses our mistakes a la Europe to glorify His name. This is a paradox without which men of faith could not live. We have let Europe lure us in such a fashion that now Europe comes in front of Africa and Latin America. This is the basic alteration in our strategy.

Our impetus in the broad sphere is the East. It still seems clear to me that Seapac is #2. In the East Seapac is where you have to strike. We have got to dance India. We must realize that without a hard-headed model we are lost. Our mistake in Europe was exactly that. Without a model you allow the romance in you to take over, or you allow the "easiest thing to do next" to take over. In the long picture this destroys any effective program to be realized.

We have a chance to go into the Marshalls, Carolines, Tonga and Samoa. We have problems in Samoa. Our key man there has returned to the U.S.A. to do advanced study. We may have to pull the Radfords out of Samoa. Curts might be able to stay another year. 2 great men went to Hong Kong. We could send someone with theological training to the Seminary for teaching purposes. This individual's wife (if married) could teach in the Congregational High School there if she is qualified. We must try not to lose ground in Western Samoa which is an independent nation (as opposed to our Territory, American Samoa). The three people will all be there until December.

In Tonga we should send a theologically trained person into their Seminary. A big Samoan from Drew is at the head and is probably the most important figure in Tonga. He has told me that the kind of person he wanted is a Pastoral Counsellor. I told him that Sociological Remedial Therapy was now the trend in the U.S.. That means you go out and build new community structures where the psyche is maintained with some health. This should be a fantastic assignment. There are a lot of secondary schools where a wife could teach.

Secondary school teachers are needed in the Marshalls. This could be somebody like the Bahners or 2 men.

The strategy in Southeast Asia as a whole is (through the outpost approach) to impact every nook and corner of SEAPAC and to do this before 1972 when the first Global Council is to be there. This leaves 7 quarters in which to do it.

The first item is called "Rudimentary Permeation". In this part of the world if you don't win the establishment you may just as well stay home.

Allow me to go off on a tangent at this point. This is especially important for you new people here. You must realize that a lot of the things that have been said about our movement is a bunch of hogwash. If we had not earned through the last 16 years the deep respect of the established Church throughout this country we would not be here. Do you hear this? They may not have liked us. But, by golly, (I'll use myself as an illustration,) when I walk into their presence there is respect!! That's got to be true of everyone in this room. This becomes doubly important when you get your feet outside the United States! You're not talking about whether people like you. Respect is the first step. That will take care of almost every problem and mistake that we have made. This is to win the respect of the establishment.

The second important item is National Leadership Development, in an intensive program. Everyone of our overseas people must get a 'national' in their home immediately. Secondly, they are assigned to find 6 people that are potential leadership giants. If necessary they live with them for the next 7 quarters. They have to groom these people into leadership giants! This means effective personal cultivation.

It is very crucial to realize (especially for you priors) that we must develop giants in the form of leadership during the next few months. We will not long endure if we cannot rapidly develop such leadership.

Oftentimes we feel that because of the overwhelming complexities overseas, our overseas program should take longer to develop than our program here. Exactly the reverse is true! We must produce more quickly over there! This is necessary if you want to stay there. If this development does not take place, we soon find ourselves pigeon-holed as just another traditional missionary to come along, or just one other manifestation of Western Imperialism being forced upon a different part of the world. We must step up

our development and step it up extremely rapidly!

We must also establish an Intern Program. Where we'll find the money for this I don't know, but it has to be done! Every quarter they should have an intern come to the United States for 6 months. The apparent overlap is evident. This means (in principle) 16 of this kind of interns. It may not turn out exactly that way; Australia may not need the intern program in this fashion.

The Intern Program would have to be carefully developed. For example, they would spend 2 months in the academy and one month travelling in this country. Nobody in the world has a program like this relative to training churchmen overseas.

Supposing you have 4 to 6 weeks of travelling by Greyhound. They could see what a 'religious house' is about and each intern would have 4 churches that will be working in one phase or another of the experiment with the renewal of the local congregation. They would talk with pastors and laymen about the program set up by these religious houses. For $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 months they would be assigned to the life at the Ecumenical Institute.

The third item is Continuing Penetration. We must continue to teach and then teach RS-1. The movement is RS-1.

The interns must then use themselves as an experiment. The crucial part of that experiment has to do with polity. We cannot work overseas unless the polity that many of us have talked about for some time is now put into operation.

Seapac will now be operated in the way we operate relative to our religious houses. Once a quarter the priors are going to come together, (the next time will be in January in Hong Kong or Manila), to work out their common format. Our program will not work if everybody is doing their own little thing; we've got to have one common push and we've got to have accountability. Now this same kind of thing must some day exist in India, in Africa, in Europe, in Latin America, and, one day, in China. I should think that one of our aims is before 1972 to have two of you people into Red China-- those of you who have learned to keep your mouths shut, and just look.

One fact is very clear. We can never again allow our people overseas to be gone over a year without face-to-face contact back here. The difference between those out for 6 months and those out for over 12 months is like night and day.

When people are assigned overseas they think life is going to be great. Can you imagine those three young people being assigned to Samoa? That romance lasted only about 2 weeks. There are ways to get around this--you can just become a beach-comber.

There are many ways to become a beach-comber, even in the midst of the Himalaya mountains.

It is crucially important that there be systematic nurture from the centrum. Weekly contact with each other and with the base is imperative, and that they begin to form certain kinds of supporting teaching teams among themselves, and that when anyone is in trouble, immediately one of their neighbours come in there and work through with them their particular problem. This is to me one of the most exciting things that lies ahead.

It is obvious that we have a crucial shortage of troops. Actually you would have to take these 16 areas, with at least 2 people each, and double this number to even begin to be adequate. Minimal adequacy would mean two of our families plus one national in each outpost.. We should send 32 more people than we have in hand to do this. We simply do not have the trained troops to do the job. Because of this, we have been bracketing Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Now, I would like to speak about India. The SEAPAC strategy will not work in India. The "stronghold approach" must take place in India; we will need four strongholds. Ideally, we should have 3 or 4 of our families in each stronghold. The stronghold locations should be: Calcutta in the East, Delhi--North, Bombay--West, and Madras or Bangalore in the South. We knew we didn't have the troops to do all of these this year, so we chose to visit two cities in India.. We misfired on one.. If we could visit India over again we would go to Delhi and Bombay; instead, we visited Bombay and Bangalore.

Bombay is gorgeous in terms of what we want. Bishop Joshi is doing a remarkable job. This emphasizes that we must go out of our way in hospitality for every visitor that comes here!!! They must see us and our program in depth.

He gave me the most creative insight of anybody on the whole trip; he said that he had a name for our Chicago program, that what we have here is an "Urbanized Ashram" in Chicago. As you know, the old ashrams in the rural society of India were placed up in the hills and out of the way. What Joshi saw in Chicago was an ashram sitting in the midst of the city. This, stated Joshi, is what India needs. He spelled this out. I will not go into details here; however, this is what I mean by the term "stronghold:.

Joshi agreed to have two of our couples come to Bombay. He will provide the transportation expenses. He wants to have a 5th City experiment in the midst of Bombay. This is crucial, because India is only going to be reached by a sign!! That sign is complex. I'll not give all the details here. However, there must obviously be a social sign, such as Fifth City. There must be a religious sign----that's the "Urban Ashram" as I like to term it now, "A group of disciplined, religious people geared together for attack." This could be carried on into other areas.

The second task they have is Penetration. The whole stronghold area must be penetrated, and, thirdly, nurtured out of this literal penetration.

I want to emphasize that all the people overseas are in good spirits. These people have to make great sacrifices. Some of the principles they must accept are: A 3 month overseas assignment means that no children can be taken along. Your children can not come over until you receive a one year assignment. This could mean that you are overseas for nine months without your children. This is a high price to pay. So, in spite of reasons for morale being low -- I felt the morale was fantastically good.

I realize when I got up this morning that every one of us here could serve effectively overseas. The need is there. It occurred to me (in the two days or so that I have been back in the local congregation) that every one of us here could be assigned to the local congregations also, now that we would have set things up in that fashion.

