

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

What have we been learning?

June, 2007

AWWP

- 1. A MEANS NOT AN END:** Technology was identified by the group as a means, not an end. It is easy to become dazzled by the technologies that swirl around us and forget that technology is a tool for gospel proclamation and kingdom transformation. In the use of technology, the importance of personal relationships and the role of the local church in transformation must not be lost.
- 2. CULTURE SPECIFIC:** Media/technology must be employed in ways that are specific to societies and cultures. Different technologies will be effective in different settings, depending upon the level of technological development and cultural mores. There is no reason to think that the kingdom is advanced merely by bringing the 'latest and greatest' to every corner of the world. Text-messaging in many countries will be a more effective means of communication than e-mail. Shortwave radio—a form of transmission that offers a second-rate signal compared to medium wave—still remains an effective outreach tool in many parts of the world and will remain so for years to come. The effectiveness of technology remains culture-specific.
- 3. THE NEED FOR TRAINERS:** There is a need to deploy those who can offer training in technology and media. This need was affirmed by participants in the group from both Cambodia and Hungary. The Back to God Hour is offering such technical training throughout Latin America. More can be done to utilize those with specialized training in technology to equip Christians globally. Those skilled in technology must come to see themselves as having great skills to bring to the world-wide church.
- 4. DEVELOPING SYNERGY WITH THOSE INVOLVED IN MISSION:** There is a need for those who are involved in church planting, Christian education, community transformation and the like to think in terms of what appropriate technologies might empower their work. Since not everyone involved in mission is technologically gifted or even interested in technology/media, there is a tendency to ignore the way technology can multiple impact and increase effectiveness. It will be necessary for those who are skilled in technology to help mission personnel come to awareness of, and help think through, technologies that might benefit their work.
- 5. TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION:** There is the need to develop formal education programs that prepare Christians to better claim the realm of media/communication/technology for the Kingdom of Christ. Discussion was held as to ways in which Calvin Seminary/Calvin College/The Back to God Hour could collaborate in a degree program (Masters level) that would equip students

for effective gospel communication through media. Could Calvin College and Seminary offer graduate level courses, and such organizations as The Back to God Hour offer training/internships? Could Calvin College offer a “Festival of Christian Films” that celebrates the way in which Christians bring a kingdom vision to mass media?