

# RICE FIELDS

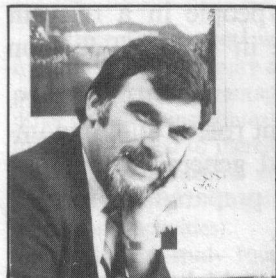
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## Editorial

### *Farewell to Paternalism*



How can the west shake off the colonial mentality which continues to plague many missions endeavours?

In reality so much of our thinking is conditioned toward our giving (training, money, expertise, etc.) and them receiving, that we scarcely recognize it. That is, unless we take

the time to listen carefully and with sensitivity to the pleas — sometimes so gracious and gentle that we fail to take notice — of our brethren from the so-called developing/emerging Two-Thirds World.

It was my privilege to participate in a consultation recently on the subject of Media and Evangelism. Media people from what have traditionally been receiving countries were well represented. Happily the atmosphere was conducive to open sharing and the expression of feelings.

Out of the discussion surfaced feelings about the ugly side of much of western insensitivities. Unfortunately we in media are among the most guilty.

So what are the crimes?

By-passing the accountability of local church leadership is high on the list. Symptomatic of this is the dumping of culturally irrelevant broadcast materials indiscriminately to the detriment of locally based enterprises. Money has frequently been at the root, having been used for buying up airtime. Insensitive fund-raising and the promise of easy prosperity have often brought discredit.

In return local Christians need added encouragement to stimulate their own resources — creatively and financially. Often they already have the trained people, but these need to be given the encouragement and stimulus to express themselves — as well as affirmation from their western counterparts. Rather than complain at the over-zealous excesses of westerners they should take up the challenge of doing things themselves.

This will mean a change in our thinking, and our voca-

bulary. 'Us', 'we', and 'our' need redefining. Instead of meaning 'west' it must come to mean 'global church' 'They' is the opposition/enemy in its various forms.

Adopting this kind of outlook, if it is to succeed, calls for the development of mutual trust combined with a greater appreciation of each other. It means, perhaps more than anything else, that western Christians need to be better informed of developments in the Two-Thirds world. It means that pastors and church members need to visit, to see for themselves, to become acquainted with, to experience.

They might get a surprise.

Parallel transformations of outlook are also taking place in the business world especially with Asian Pacific Rim nations finding new prominence in world markets. Terms like 'Orient' and 'Far East' are *passé*. An increasing confidence in Asian products is revolutionising world markets. In the world of missions receiving countries are becoming sending countries and the Christian decline of the west signals a reversal of roles in the near future.

And are we in media waking up too? As opinion leaders let's take the lead. Let's help paternalism be eclipsed by partnership!

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