EXPLANATION AND REFLECTIONS

Enoch Wan

Paul & Fran Hiebert,
Brisbane, 1988
Credit: Paul E. Grant

Though hard to believe,
Paul is really gone;
Reunited with Fran,
And beloved parents he joined.

On this side, we remember his sharing,
Giving his best, without sparing;
Yonder, rings the supreme compliment:
"Welcome home, my faithful servant!"

Special Issue of Global Missiology
This special issue is occasioned by Paul’s departure thus the rush in preparation/production, all within about two weeks. Yet part of this period I was in the Philippines STM with limited internet access.\(^1\) Thus errors/omissions are inevitable and would require the understanding of readers of *Global Missiology* and their input for correction. On this score, Paul’s daughter Barbara is to be credited. (If Paul can read this opening statement, he would immediately point out that the Asian side of me is showing. Sorry! Paul.)

The objective reason for the inclusion of Fran in this issue is due to the fact that the two worked best as a team so tributes should be given to both together. And the subjective reason is my friendship with both. Therefore in the “Featured Article” section, tributes to Paul are followed by those for Fran. For more information about Fran’s life and ministries, please visit the “Hiebert Family Website” at http://www.hiebertweb.net/fran/fran.html

For tributes to Fran, credits are due Georgia R. Grimes Shaw who regards Fran as: “a dear friend” and Paul as “a gentle giant.”

But I respect both being God’s faithful servants.

**Paul’s Trademark - Sharing**

Paul’s departure has been anticipated because he had prepared those around him well. For instance, last month he sent me by snail mail items such as contact info of family members and since my sabbatical at OMSC we stayed connected only by cell phone when he found it hard to use e-mail.

With hardship (as evidenced by many typing errors), he typed out two separate pages authorizing my use of his publications and telephone conversations -- thus the MP3 pieces in the “Legacy of Paul G. Hiebert” section. That is the spirit of Paul’s sharing; in spite of his health being ravaged by cancer.

**Sharing through *Global Missiology***

\(^1\) Teaching a module and speaking at the commencement of Alliance Graduate School to launch IDS-Asia (Institute of Diaspora Studies – the Asian branch).
He tried to show his support for *Global Missiology* (GM) by submitting articles and authorized the posting of his out-of-print book at GM. (Please see the “Legacy of Paul G. Hiebert” section of this special issue). He even typed out “the light-hearted piece” from his death bed and sent the hard copy to me by post which had typing errors. (Very atypical of Paul, indicative of his poor health); but showed his eager efforts to “participate in this electronic way of sharing - low cost but high efficiency” (Paul’s own word).

**Sharing his Residence — “Hosting Students as Fran Would Do”**

Years ago, I served with Fran at CHEPSIS (“Christian Higher Education Professional Serving International Students” - now defunct) and one time Paul came from TEDS with her to share with participants from member schools (e.g. Reformed Theological Seminary, Wheaton, Moody, etc.).

Both Paul and Fran were ready to generously share with others in many ways; especially foreign students. Paul often said that “I was once a guest in other people’s country so I know what it is like to be a foreign student.” He spoke from his experience as a MK in India.

Tite Tienou, my wife and I were foreign students at Nyack College in the early seventies and all of us are from C&MA background. Our lives intersected with Paul & Fran; different eras and dynamics. Yet we all enjoyed their friendship and ministry partnership for decades. Coincident? Hardly. Consistent life style and Christian hospitality? Surely!

Fran partnered with Paul in the ministry of hospitality to students both at Fuller and TEDS. They worked as a team, more than a couple. Paul did the same, since 1999 when he was single, by opening his residence to house students from TEDS. He wanted to “create a community and enjoy fellowship, that’s the type of thing that Fran would have me do” were Paul’s own words. Many doctoral students from TEDS came to his house to stay and studied with him for days and weeks. Not a few enjoyed Paul’s hospitality, personal mentoring and dissertation coaching. In recent months he hosted a doctoral student (of NT Studies) from China, just based on my recommendation. He felt bad for the half-a-dozen residents when he had to start the process of putting up his house for sale and moving away from TEDS to be hosted and cared for by Barbara and her husband for health reason.

**Sharing Even towards the End of his Life**

In the spirit of sharing, Paul was willing to let me tape our conversation on March 3 when breathing was hard due to cancer in the lungs. He could not talk smoothly without a supply of oxygen; but insisted on doing so. Days before his departure on March 11, he spent time sharing with my doctoral students his experiences in research, again sitting up
from his bed with help from his daughter and the aid of oxygen supply by way of his cell phone. Yet he proceeded to accomplish the task – Paul’s way of sharing with others. After my sabbatical at OMSC and when Paul was severely weakened by cancer, weekly we talked and prayed by phone, increased in frequency when he no longer could go out.

One Sunday evening, before being limited in mobility, he excitingly shared with me the major points of his talk at a local congregation on “glorifying Christ in dying – the practical way” (wording from my personal recollection). I complained that he should have alerted me of such an occasion for taping so that boomers like me can learn from him. He just chuckled and said, “I want to prepare others in case they happen to follow my path.” That is Paul’s Christian trademark – sharing.

It was providential that his “light-hearted piece” happened to be in line with the annual theme of EMS so it was shared at several regional meetings. Weeks before he was confined to stay indoors, he authorized me to give out his cell phone number so that he could continue enjoying Christian fellowship with others. Though I have no way to gauge how many took his offer; a week later several callers told me how much they had enjoyed Paul’s encouragement and prayers for them from his death bed.

“A photo of the last Styrofoam cup Paul doodled on at a faculty meeting for School of World Mission 3/13/90. He was famous for drawing on coffee cups during meetings. Marilyn Clinton kept this “last” one done at Fuller to remember Paul by because he was the one who taught her so much of what she needed to know in her academic advising role at the School of World Mission.”
(Photo and explanation by Georgia R. Grimes Shaw)

Friend and Fellow Anthropologist/Missiologist

My friendship with Paul began in 1982 when he wrote me a two-page letter in response to my 2-part series “critique of functional anthropology” – an unknown Chinese anthropologist on the faculty in Canada. He spoke for his colleague Chuck Kraft; yet
cheered me for exposing the problem of reductionistic approach of functionalist orientation.

In the long letter, he explained that he embraced “holistic concept of culture” and declared, “I am not a functionalist.” Since then we found a kindred spirit in many things.

There were many happy occasions we worked together. Here I would just mention two examples. In 1998 when I served as the regional VP of EMS-SE and the theme was on the contributions of anthropology to Christian missions and the methodology missiological research methodology, Paul came to joint me at the ETS/EMS Regional Meeting, Columbia International University, S.C., March 20-21, 1998. Unfortunately Darrell Whiteman had to have a last-minute cancellation for unexpected causes; but Paul and I had excellent collaboration and we enjoyed Christian fellowship together.

Another time was that we worked together to plan and implement the program for EMS/IFMA Annual Conference 2002. Afterwards, due to his other obligations and urgent matters, he had to opt out of co-editing with me the annual monograph - Christian Witness in Pluralistic Contexts in the 21st Century!. Evangelical Missiological Society Series: Number 11. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library. 2003. Yet he managed to write the “Forward” for the volume.

Theoretical/methodological/missiological dimensions

Theoretically, as fellow anthropologists we agree on the importance of “holism” – beginning from the perspective of “culture” to areas beyond, such as interdisciplinary integration and integrative methodology, multi-dimension of reality and complexity of human understanding (e.g. worldview). The missiological implications are manifold

2 Paul Hiebert:

  See the theoretical section of Hiebert’s Incarnational Ministry. 1995, Baker.
  Most clearly are the figures dealing with reductionism, compartmentalization and integration through complimentarity.
- A Conversation with Doctoral Students at Western Seminary on Research Methodology” (MP3, 27 minutes) Paul G. Hiebert via telephone on March 6, 2007
  http://www.westernseminary.edu/Media/DIS/DrHiebert.mp3
- “Reflections on a Life-time of Research and Publication in 5 stages” (MP3, 26 minutes)
  By Paul Hiebert via telephone on March 3, 2007
  http://www.westernseminary.edu/Media/DIS/DrHiebert2.mp3

Enoch Wan

- “A Critique of Charles Kraft’s Use/Misuse of Communication and Social Sciences in Biblical
including integration of theology and missiology, \(^4\) incarnational approach and the importance of contextualization.\(^5\)

- Interpretation and Missiological Formulation,” Published in Global Missiology, Research Methodology, October 2004, www.globalmissiology.net
- “Evangelical Theology, Postmodernity, and the Promise of Interdisciplinarity,” (with Mabiala Kenzo) Published in Global Missiology, Featured Articles, January 2006, www.globalmissiology.org

\(^3\)Paul taught a doctoral course on “worldview” the summer of 2004 at Western Seminary with the manuscript soon to be released by Baker, Transforming Worldviews, in 2007. Also Paul’s articles:
- “Anthropology, Missions and Epistemological Shifts.” (to be published in 2007).


For works dealing with multi-level, multi-dimensional, multi-contextual matters in Missiology, see http://missiology.org/missionchina/missionchina.htm

\(^4\) Paul Hiebert’s upcoming title on “missional theology” due to be released by Baker.

See also his article, “Missional Theology,” (with Tite Tiénou) Published in Global Missiology, Featured Article, April 2005, Enoch Wan
Theologically, Paul is Mennonite/Armenian and I am Reformed; but we have no problem getting along. Epistemologically, we are both “realist” but disagree on the details: “critical realism” for Paul but “relational realism” for Enoch. Ontologically we agree on the primary importance of relationship in life and service (over function and success, structure and phenomenon), fellowship of the faithful (in spite of theoretical and

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See also Paul’s articles:
- “Critical Contextualization” in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries.*

Enoch Wan:
- “Critiquing the Method of Traditional Western Theology and Calling for Sino-theology,” Published in Global Missiology, Contextualization, Oct. 2003, [www.globalmissiology.net](http://www.globalmissiology.net)

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theological differences) and partnership for the Kingdom (though with ecclesiastical, ethnic and cultural diversity).

Practical matters

We both seek to contribute to Western learning and ministry style by bringing in the positive elements of Asian culture (i.e. Indian and Chinese) for enrichment and integration, such as “both-and” instead of “the excluded middle” paradigm and emphasis on relationship 7 (over pragmatism and managerial missions), teamwork and communal approach (over individualism and obsession with quantifiable efficiency/productivity), partnership (instead of denominationalism and parochialism), and spiritual warfare. 8


8 Paul G. Hiebert:  
- “Spiritual Warfare and Worldviews” Published in Global Missiology, January 2004.

Enoch Wan:
- 1988 “Spiritual Warfare: Understanding Demonization.” Alliance Family (Manila,
We both are aware of the negative elements of Asian culture and how Western influences could be helpful, e.g. religious syncretism (as exemplified by folk religion), social nepotism, Asian ethnocentrism (boasting of millennial heritages of the Indian and the Chinese), pessimistic attitude (fatalistic and escapist orientations), etc.  

In musing, we called ourselves: “cultural brokers,” “interdisciplinary muddling” and “in-betweeners.” Paul encouraged me to maximize the use of new media of communication for networking, coaching and sharing. He kept saying that he had been limited to WordPerfect and e-mail; but I should be more daring since I am younger. The burden to do so is on me; but Paul is my cheer leader to launch the free e-journal www.globalmissiology.org. We used e-mail to communicate and we are probably the only two anthropologists/missiologists using “juno” for our personal e-mail (phiebert@juno.com and e.wan@juno.com)

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Philippines: CAMACOP), Summer, 6-18.

- 1989 “Deliverance from Demonization” *Alliance Family* (Manila, Philippines: CAMACOP), Spring, 8-12.

9 See Paul’s articles:

See Enoch Wan’s articles”

Paul & Fran, we appreciate and miss you. Lord, for giving us these two, we thank you!