

Bauer: Editorial
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From September 15–17, 2016, the International Fellowship of Adventist Mission Studies (the parent organization of the *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*) and the Swallen Mission Lectureships combined to sponsor “Discipleship in Context: Being All in for Christ in the Era of Social Media.” Most of the articles in this issue of *JAMS* were presented at that conference.

An emphasis on discipleship within the Adventist Church has often lagged behind the emphasis on evangelism and outreach. In recent years there has been a growing awareness that even though hundreds of thousands of people were joining the church each year, a large percentage were also slipping out the back door. In response to membership audits that quantified the problem (see Doss’ article), Adventist leaders have placed a higher emphasis and importance on retention and discipleship.

Traditionally the Adventist Church has won most of its adherents from other Christian denominations. Perhaps that is why little emphasis was placed on discipleship. Instead, stress was placed on teaching distinctive Adventist doctrinal beliefs. In recent years as the church increasingly reached out to Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, traditional religionists, and secular and postmodern peoples, the need for discipling materials and programs became more and more apparent.

Several articles in this issue share challenges of discipling people from one of the world’s religions. Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus come out of worldviews that are vastly different from people who have been shaped by biblical principles. Methods and approaches that were effective in discipling people with a Christian background are less effective in helping people from a non-Christian background grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. This realization again reinforces the mission principle that one size does not fit every situation. Discipleship approaches and programs need to be tailor made for the various people and worldviews in our world.

I encourage you to read carefully Greg Whitsett’s article on discipling Buddhists. Many are finding that helping people from a Buddhist background commit their lives to Jesus Christ is the most difficult type of Christian work. Oscar Osindo’s article should also challenge us again to realize that a variety of approaches is needed even among people who share belief in a particular religion.

Bruce L. Bauer, editor