

intentionally bring these into partnering roles. Perhaps the most difficult stage for the missionary is when he relinquishes all leadership, and should he remain on the mission field, submits to work under the leaders he has trained.

**Stewardship**

1. Who owns the school's properties?
2. Where do the resourcecs come from to pay bills?
3. Who pays the professors' salaries? Yes, even the missionary professor!
3. What is the source for scholarships?
4. How much of the school's budget comes from naitonal sources?

If the answer to any one of these questions is the mission or the missionary, you know what comes next! Perhaps stewardship is the most difficult part of the nationalization process, because it involves finances. It is natural for the missionary to bring funds from his support base. When this happens, the institution becomes dependent on foreign funds right from the starting gate. Ideally, national stewardship is built into the school's plan from the beginning. Programs and buildings are designed to be affordable to the national church. National churches are given the opportunity to invest in the training of their students. And in some cases, national leaders are entrusted with investments to subsidize the school's operations. Long-term survival is most likely to happen when the school is financially maintained by the nationals.

Theological schools, whether they be seminaries, Bible colleges, or institutes, are not the only model to train pastors, evangelists, and missionaries. But the simple fact that this model has been successful for centuries is an indicator that it will continue being used of God in the future. In order for these schools to continue in their intended mission, they must survive the impact when the last missionary leaves the field.

When God led us to the Cariri Baptist Seminary in Northeast Brazil, the school was approaching 50 years and was partially nationalized. Because of political circumstances, the ownership had been nationalized years earlier -- at least on paper. The faculty and staff were 50/50 BMM missionaries and nationals. Approximately 70% of the budget came from the United States; that did not even count the support of the missionaries who were on staff. Even though no one at that time imagined there would come a day when the last missionary would leave that field, we began taking intentional steps towards nationalizing all areas of the school. Over the next thirty years God allowed us to fully nationalize the ownership, leadership, and stewardship. By God's grace we are almost there.

# STEP



## Strategic Theological Education Partnerships

### Where Are We Going?

by Dr. Bruce Burkholder

Lisa and I started deputation before the commercialization of GPS. So like many of you, we would receive specific directions from the pastor of each church we visited and then chart the best course for the trip on our Rand McNally Road Atlas. (By the way, I still have a file with the written directions to each church that supports us. You may also). The point is that knowing where we were going was not enough. We needed to know how to get there.

As a mission agency, Baptist Mid-Missions follows the Pauline model of missions (Acts 14:21-23; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5). This means that our goal is to develop indigenous, nationalized ministries that will faithfully serve the national church around the world until Christ returns. The Baptist Mid-Mission's Policy Manual describes nationalization as "the transfer of administrative authority from the foreign founders of a mission church or institution to capable national leaders." The key concept is control. Who is really in charge? An institution is nationalized when its decision-making nucleus is directed by nationals who are not controlled by the mission.

Nationalization is the intended destination. It is the "where" for each institution, but the bigger question is "how"? How does one move from a missionary led institution to one that is firmly in the hands of national leadership?

In this issue we will explore the subject of nationalization. First, we will highlight Dr. Bill Smallman's book *Able to Teach Others Also*. In so doing, we wish to honor Dr. Smallman and his efforts to promote the theological education in BMM ministries. Second, we will hear the story of the Baptist Seminary of South India, which nationalized in 2010. Their history identifies necessary steps toward the successful nationalization of a theological education ministry. Finally, Jim Leonard will suggest a series of questions to help an institution determine where they are in the nationalization process.

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# Able to Teach Others Also: Nationalizing Global Ministry Training

by Dr. William H. Smallman

A Book Review by Mark Swedberg

A number of years ago several key missionaries and I were in a strategy meeting together. It was a significant meeting and extended over several days. A colleague and I had been disagreeing about something, which I no longer remember. During a break we talked, and the issue of nationalization came up. “Well,” said he, “our goal is to nationalize everything, right? And work ourselves out of a job, right?” “No,” I replied, “I don’t think we should nationalize everything.” “Mark, you don’t think that is our goal?” “No, I don’t.” That pretty much ended the conversation.

As I reflected on that conversation later, I could hardly believe what came out of my mouth. I am a second-generation missionary and know better than many how capable our Brazilian brethren are. I’m frequently chagrined with how American many of our ministries and missionaries are, and I’m frequently irritated with how suspicious some of our missionaries are toward Brazilians.

However, nationalization is complex and difficult—especially when it has to do with strategic ministries such as seminaries and publishing houses, ministries that set the direction for an entire association of churches. Missions and missionaries typically invest heavily in these ministries over a

considerable period. So we are concerned about the direction the ministry will take after we turn it over and the sustainability of the ministry, among other things. At times nationalization can seem ill-advised or even impossible.

Dr. Bill Smallman faced this precise situation in 1976 in Manaus, Brazil. By default, he was made the director of the Baptist Seminary of the Amazon, but he knew he wasn’t a Paul, so he decided to be a Barnabas. He states that his “reflex was to read three books on the subject of nationalization. In 1976 there were none” (p. vii). *Able to Teach Others Also: Nationalizing Global Ministry Training* (2001) is the book he wishes he could have read then and is the fruit of the process he went through and the challenges he faced.

In some ways, this is a pioneering book, the first of its kind. In other ways, it is built on what was cutting edge missiological theory in the late 1990s. Despite its age, it is still a very valuable book. It deals with the subject in a very comprehensive and well-organized way. Part One begins with the problem to solve, progressing through the definition of essential terms, continuing with different solutions, New Testament models, case studies and a precise statement and comparison of the issues.

Part Two is practical, dealing with objectives, resources, and procedures for nationalization. It concludes with a chapter on evaluation of nationalization and an idea for eliminating the need for nationalization.

Strange as it may seem, I approached the book as a layman. In college and through two master’s degrees, I took a total of two Missions courses although I was headed to Brazil as a missionary church-planter. Partially this was because the classes seemed irrelevant compared to theology, church history and homiletics. *Able to Teach Others Also* made missiology relevant to me. Section after section expanded my horizons and provided valuable ideas and practical suggestions. Having read the book, I wish I had read it earlier when dealing with the nationalization of my previous ministry. In my current role as a missionary instructor at an already nationalized seminary, I see much value in several of his suggestions and principles. The large section on the question of accreditation was worth the entire book.

To take an example from the beginning of the book, the distinction he makes between nationalization, indigenization and contextualization is an important one. A mission can think they have completed the task when the levers of

# The Nationalization of Theological Schools

by Jim Leonard

I have often stated that theological training is the one ministry where the foreign missionary can make a significant impact without retarding national leadership. However, the day does come when the last missionary leaves the field. Yes, even the seminary, Bible college, or institute must become completely indigenous if it is going to continue training God’s servants after the missionaries are gone.

Few theological schools on the foreign fields were started from the beginning with a plan for nationalization. Most were born out of a real need for trained national workers to help the missionaries in the work of the Gospel. The missionaries simply did what needed to be done to meet that need. Little thought was given to the end game when the missionary would no longer be present. But, the successful transition of a school to full nationalization does not automatically happen when the last missionary retires. It requires an understanding of the nationalization processes, and a clear vision of how the school should look when fully nationalized.

Nationalization does not have to be a complicated process. But the longer a school is under the care of the mission, the more difficult it is to fully nationalize. The nationalization process can be divided into three areas: Ownership, Leadership, and Stewardship. Because of cultural, historical, political, and economic variables, the order in which these three categories are sorted out may vary. However, all three are key to successful nationalization. Ideally, national ownership, leadership, and stewardship will be built into the school’s DNA from the outset.

As we consider these three areas of nationalization, a few questions might help us determine where our schools are in the nationalization process:

## Ownership

1. Who is ultimately responsible for the school?
2. Who chooses the school’s faculty and staff?
3. Who decides which students will be enrolled?
4. Who decides which classes will be on the program?
5. Who owns the buildings and the furnishings?
6. Who defends the school’s mission?

If the answer to any one of these questions is the mission or the missionary, the school still has work to be done towards nationalization. When the last missionary leaves the field, national leadership must be efficiently carrying out these responsibilities. Ideally, the national leadership would be involved in the ownership from the very beginning. The second point of the Nevius mission plan states that the foreign mission should only begin programs and institutions that the national church desires and is able to support. What often happens is that the missionaries are so excited to “get the job done”, that they create their school with no thought to what might happen when they’re gone. Making a plan to nationalize the school’s ownership may seem like a distraction, but it’s well worth investing in such a plan.

## Leadership

1. Who leads the daily operations of the school?
2. Who represents the school before the churches, community, and government?
3. Who are the teachers, and who appoints them?
4. Who mentors and invests time into the students?

Again, if the answer to any one of these questions is the mission or the missionary, the school is still not fully nationalized. It is quite natural for the missionary to be the leader during the early days of a seminary, Bible college or institute. Most schools are started in the pioneer or paternal stages of a mission field. But as national leaders are trained and begin to show themselves faithful, it is important for the missionary to



# South India

by John Doe

## Baptist Seminary of South India



Left Photo:



Right Photo:

“What steps do we need to take to ensure the successful continuation of the seminary in case the missionaries have to leave?” This was the question before the administration of the Baptist Seminary of South India (BSSI). The seminary had started as an extension program of Northwest Baptist Seminary (NBS) in 1982, with the goal of providing national pastors with a solid master’s degree. In 1998, sixteen years later, the seminary had enough full-time residential faculty to become a full-fledged seminary on its own, and the Baptist Seminary of South India (BSSI) was born. The seminary offered a quality Master of Divinity degree and had a good mix of national and missionary faculty. However, trouble was brewing on the horizon.

In the early 2000’s, Kenneth Waldock, the president of the seminary, noticed that the government of India was becoming more and more hostile toward missionary workers. When he returned from furlough in 2006, he began taking steps to nationalize the seminary in order to ensure its continuation in case the missionaries had to leave.

The first step was to place the seminary under a trustworthy Indian Trust who would be able to oversee the seminary, hold it financially accountable, and represent it to the government. A graduate of the extension seminary, who was pastoring a church, had set up a trust that had a reputation for integrity. BSSI approached the pastor and the trust, and they agreed to take BSSI under their trust.

The next step was handing over the administration of the seminary to the national leaders. Right from the beginning, the seminary was set up with an Administrative Committee (AdCo) made up of the President, Vice-President, Academic Dean, and Business Manager, who oversaw the day-to-day running of the seminary. The existence of the AdCo helped to ensure that the seminary would not become the empire of one man. In 2008, Kenneth Waldock stepped down as president and a national president was chosen by the faculty and AdCo of the seminary.

The transition to nationalization seemed to be going smoothly. Under the new president, attempts were made to try and raise support

for the seminary from churches within India. A plot of land was purchased, with plans to build their own building. But then trouble reared its ugly head.

The plot of land turned out to be a scam, and the seminary lost the money it had paid for it. A couple of years later, the AdCo had to ask the national president to resign (an enormous step in non-western countries). A few years later all the missionaries had to leave the country, and the seminary found itself short-handed.

However, the Lord was faithful to the national men who had committed themselves to serving in the seminary despite these growing pains. A few years after losing money in a land scam, the seminary was able to recover around 2/3 of the money and purchase a smaller plot of land from a Christian businessman. They then began construction of their own building. The seminary operated without a president for about 5 years before they selected a new national president, but things still operated smoothly during the interim period because of the quality of the men on the AdCo. The seminary was also able to hire godly, well

qualified national faculty to replace the missionaries who had to leave. Furthermore, with the departure of the missionaries, national churches realized that they had to step up and support the seminary if it was going to survive, with the result that today, 56% of the running expenses come from within India, while the remaining 44% come from the States.

Today BSSI offers an accredited M.Div degree, and are working toward accrediting their M.Th (Th.M) degree. Their faculty all hold at least an M.Th, with the Academic Dean holding a Ph.D in systematic theology from the US, and another faculty member holding a D.Min from another seminary in India. They want to keep their student to faculty ratio under 10:1, and currently have it at about 6:1.

The President, Simeon Sundar, explained that the seminary has a 3-fold objective: 1) Spiritual Formation of the students, 2) Expository Preaching, and 3) Local Church ministry. With these objectives in mind, care has been taken in the selection of faculty to make sure they have a heart for local church ministry. Of the current faculty, three are currently pastoring churches,

and the remaining three are heavily involved in their local churches. BSSI also requires all students to become watch-care members of local churches in the area while they are students and be actively involved in those local churches. During the summers, students are required to spend 2 months interning in a local church of their choice. The result of this intentional focus on local church ministry has been that around 85-90% of the graduates return to their hometown to do ministry after graduation, with 75% of all graduates over the years involved in local church ministry.

When asked about the positives and negatives of nationalization, President Sundar said that one of the hidden benefits of having a President who has never set foot outside of India is that he is better able to present the seminary ministry to Indian churches and raise support from within India. If he had traveled abroad, the expectation would be that the seminary did not need help from Indian churches, because he was raising support abroad.

When asked about future plans, President Simeon Sundar said that their first goal is finishing their building. They have enough of it completed to hold classes in it this year, but the majority of the building still needs to be finished, including the library, chapel, dorms, and kitchen. While churches in India have given generously to the building project, President Simeon was clear that they still needed financial help from the States to finish the building. Their second goal is to continue raising support for daily operating expenses from within India to where at least 65% of their support is from churches and individuals in India. Third, he said they want to start holding summer programs to train pastors who do not have good theological training.

When asked about praises and prayer requests, President Sundar praised the Lord for a godly faculty team, for being able to meet in their own building, and for the fact that Indian churches and individuals are supporting the seminary. He asked that people pray that the building be finished quickly, that they would be able to hire a godly faculty member with a Ph.D, and that they would be able to raise more financial support for regular running expenses from within India.



power are in the hands of nationals, but still have an institution that looks, smells, sounds, and feels American. When this happens, many nationals will go elsewhere or start other institutions that are more like them.

I found it refreshing that the author gives no quarter to the cultural relativists. After noting that the “duplex processes of nationalization and indigenization may burst the very mold in which the institution was cast. The old categories may no longer fit contemporary reality,” he continues: “Our plea is that the ‘fit’ be governed by Scripture rather than culture, or by a Scripture-in-culture principle” (p. 18).

The weakness of Dr. Smallman’s approach is his use of missiology jargon in certain parts of the book. In Chapter 3, “Toward and Incarnational Theology of Nationalization,” he examines the ministry of Jesus for clues on how to nationalize and disciple. I have two critiques of the chapter. First, “incarnational” has become a buzzword the meaning of which is so vague that just about any preconceived notion can be placed into it.

Smallman explains that he means we should have a kenotic ministry, a reference to Christ’s self-emptying, or kenosis (Philippians 2:5-11). That, of course, is an essential point: we do need to put others first, and Christ leads the way as an example. But Christ also disciplined 12 men, including the one who would eventually betray him. Surely a study of his methods and approaches would help build a biblical foundation

for training those who are able to teach others also. And that is my second critique of the chapter: he went into the study of Christ’s ministry with what appears to be a preconceived framework and came out with only one idea.

The contrast with Chapter 4 is great. In it he examines the ministries of Paul and Barnabas and their respective approaches. When Barnabas disciplined Paul on Paul’s first missionary journey, “Barnabas and Saul” soon became “Paul and his party.” The author notes that there was no hint of jealousy on the part of Barnabas. He then makes an astute observation: “The moment of truth for the true discipler is to know when to remove restraint from the growing disciple. He must give freedom to attempt greater things for God, or even to fail. The mentor will step aside, but not too far, not too soon” (p. 58, italics mine). Chapter 4 is full of such keen insights.

Chapter 6 is a transitional chapter. In this chapter he isolates four major issues that accompany nationalization.

1. *Adequate training for national faculty members*
2. *The accreditation debate*
3. *Initiative for nationalization: national or foreign?*
4. *Personal relations in transition*

Each of these issues comes from the principles and case studies he had discussed before. My experience of thirty years on the foreign field attests to the fact that these issues are indeed major, and they accompany all attempts

at nationalization—whether of churches, seminaries, or other institutions. And Dr. Smallman discusses them with sensitivity and thoroughness. This chapter is one of the reasons I wish I had read it earlier.

The last chapters are practical. They deal with objectives, resources, and procedures. All of them have helpful suggestions, checklists and important considerations. As he states up front, “This book is a tenuous map and compass, not intending to give answers so much as to help ministry trainers ask all the right questions” (p. 18). That is what makes the book so valuable.

I highly recommend this book. Although there are surely more up-to-date books, this is a very helpful introduction to the whole concept of nationalization. It is useful even to those not directly involved in cross-cultural seminaries. I would make it required reading for all first-term cross-cultural missionaries. In fact, there are parts of the book I would like to translate for the benefit of our Brazilian brethren.

\*This book is available for free download on the resources page of the STEP website: [www.bmmstep.org](http://www.bmmstep.org).