



Missio Nexus has partnered with **TruCenter** to offer a motivation-based assessment that helps missionaries, leaders, and organizations better understand how individuals are uniquely wired by God. Unlike personality or skills tools, TruCenter identifies core, enduring motivations—the patterns of joy, energy, and effectiveness that shape how people thrive in ministry. Using a story-based methodology grounded in decades of research, the assessment supports mission agencies in recruitment, placement, team dynamics, leadership development, and missionary care across every stage of the missionary journey. Through this partnership, Missio Nexus members receive preferred access to a practical tool designed to strengthen leaders, reduce burnout and attrition, and foster healthier, more effective mission organizations. **What follows is a Missio Nexus partnership highlight featuring TruCenter, with Michael VanHuis, Executive Director of Missio Nexus, in conversation with Dr. Tim Yee of TruCenter.**

Transcript (Edited by AI for Reading)

Michael VanHuis:

Hi everyone. My name is Michael VanHuis, and I'm the Executive Director at Missio Nexus. Today we're highlighting one of our key partnerships—Mission Access—and a tool that has had a significant impact on my life, our team, and many others in the missions world. To help explain it, I'm joined by Dr. Tim Yee, who will help us explore the TruCenter assessment.

Tim, welcome. Thanks for joining me today.

Dr. Tim Yee:

I'm so glad to be here. Missio Nexus is such an incredible organization, and the opportunity for TruCenter to partner with you—especially over the past couple of years and into the years ahead—is something we're really excited about. I hope this conversation will be helpful to the leaders you serve.

Michael:

Absolutely. We're already starting to roll out this assessment. Our board took it earlier this year, our staff has used it, and it's already been meaningful for us as a team. I'm excited to see it used more broadly.

Before we dive into the assessment itself, tell us a little about your background and the organization you work with.

Dr. Yee:

I was a pastor for 27 years and remain an ordained pastor. For the last three years, I've been working with Motivations Inc., best known for the Motivation Code—often called MCode. During that time, I've been involved in developing, refining, and implementing the tool across a variety of contexts.

At the time of this recording, we're heading into an exciting opportunity with Urbana, where TruCenter will be used with thousands of students and leaders. It's exactly what you described—helping teams grow, helping organizations flourish, and ultimately supporting their impact on the Great Commission.

Michael:

That's great. I know there's a long history behind this tool, including earlier systems like SIMA and its use with executive search and assessment. What problem was TruCenter trying to solve when this motivation-based assessment approach was developed?

Dr. Yee:

That's an important question. The SIMA - System for Identifying Motivated Abilities—has been around for more than 60 years and is built on using personal stories to identify motivated abilities. Motivation Code was built on that intellectual property, and TruCenter is one expression of it.

At its core, we're trying to help people uncover patterns of flourishing, success, and joy—the intersection of what you do well and what you love doing. Those intrinsic motivations are deeply tied to how God has wired and gifted us, not just for effectiveness, but for joy in serving Him.

That kind of self-awareness is powerful for individual leaders, and it dramatically improves how teams work together. I know you've seen that at Missio Nexus.

Michael:

We have. In a moment we'll talk about how motivation assessments differ from personality assessments, but how does a motivation assessment get beneath behavior and personality to something deeper?

Dr. Yee:

We believe motivation sits closer to the root of a person's core being. It reveals what people naturally want to do—part of God's design. I often point to Ephesians 2:10: *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

The word *workmanship* comes from the Greek *poiēma*—God's craftsmanship. We believe God places godly desires in us, as Philippians 2:13 says, and those desires are clues to the good works He's prepared for us.

That's why motivation is different from skill or strength. Someone can be highly skilled at something and still find it draining. Motivation helps explain why. It adds clarity to personality and strengths tools by revealing what actually energizes someone.

Michael:

That resonates. It can be confusing to be told you're good at something and yet feel exhausted by it. Having that clarity is incredibly helpful.

Dr. Yee:

Exactly. TruCenter uses a narrative approach—drawing from positive psychology, narrative psychology, and decades of research—by analyzing your own stories. Because we're storied people created by a storytelling God, stories are one of the most powerful ways to uncover how God has uniquely wired us.

When paired with other assessments, TruCenter gets to those core motivational drivers—the places of energy, joy, and even flow—and becomes a great conversation starter for teams and leaders.

Michael:

I agree. I've used many tools—Working Genius and others—and they all have their place. But for our community, this motivation assessment seems especially relevant across the full missionary lifecycle—from pre-assessment, to field service, to transitions.

Dr. Yee:

One distinctive aspect of TruCenter is its focus on *godly* motivations, not broken or shadow motivations. We all have both, but TruCenter intentionally surfaces the healthy, life-giving patterns—things you do well and genuinely enjoy.

Those stories of success and enjoyment are key clues to how God has designed you.

Michael:

I remember struggling a bit at first to write those stories, but once I did, it felt much more personal than answering multiple-choice questions. It captured experiences from ministry and even college that were deeply formative.

That raises a question: how does this assessment work for someone who's 18 versus someone who's 50 and has many more life experiences?

Dr. Yee:

Great question. The research behind this goes back decades with working professionals, and over the last ten years has been used extensively with college students. What we see is remarkable consistency.

People who took SIMA in the 1970s or 1980s and then take TruCenter today often see the same themes, even though the language has changed. Likewise, college students who took it ten years ago show the same core motivations now as working professionals.

Those motivations endure—they’re lived out differently in different contexts, but the core remains the same.

Michael:

That idea of enduring core motivations really stands out.

Dr. Yee:

Yes—and again, these are godly motivations. TruCenter helps reveal them, while also helping people understand and address shadow motivations so they can live more fully into how God designed them.

Michael:

Let’s pivot to the missions world specifically. How have you seen this tool used on the front end—recruiting, assessment, placement?

Dr. Yee:

We’ve worked with agencies onboarding hundreds of leaders each year. TruCenter fits well alongside existing tools by starting with personal stories and patterns of joy and success.

It helps agencies understand not only who a person is, but what kinds of environments and challenges will energize them. For example, if a project will be particularly difficult, someone with an “overcome and meet the challenge” motivation may thrive there, while someone else may need additional support or complementary teammates.

It’s powerful for onboarding, but also for ongoing care, discipleship, and leadership development.

Michael:

How do motivations relate to roles and skills on the field?

Dr. Yee:

They’re interconnected but distinct. For example, at Urbana we’ve helped organizations identify specific motivations they’re praying for in upcoming projects. Not because all motivations aren’t valuable—but because certain projects require particular strengths.

This allows organizations to be more intentional about fit, support, and team composition, while still trusting the Holy Spirit to guide the process.

Michael:

That's exciting. It helps both organizations and candidates move toward better alignment, which leads to healthier teams and longer-term sustainability.

Dr. Yee:

Exactly. We also see this used in team diagnostics. Many Christian organizations, for instance, lack "optimizer" motivations—people who naturally focus on efficiency and systems. When teams see that gap, it opens strategic conversations about hiring, outsourcing, or developing those capacities.

Michael:

That's incredibly practical. As we think about well-led, well-managed organizations, tools like this give leaders insight they wouldn't otherwise have.

Have you seen this used more effectively at certain stages—pre-application, candidacy, placement, or later?

Dr. Yee:

It varies by agency. Some use it primarily in onboarding, others in missionary care. It's particularly valuable in transitions—when someone is discerning their next step or struggling to understand why they feel stuck.

Because motivations endure, the assessment helps people reconnect with why they were called in the first place and how their gifts can still be expressed, even as the project or season changes.

Michael:

That's huge—especially for missionaries navigating long-term service or transition.

Dr. Yee:

Absolutely. Whether it's soul care, financial stress, team dynamics, or role changes, understanding motivation gives leaders language and insight to support people more effectively.

Michael:

Tim, we've covered a lot of ground. This is clearly a valuable resource with many points of entry—onboarding, home office teams, field teams, soul care, and transitions.

Missio Nexus has a partnership with TruCenter, and members receive significant discounts on the assessment and facilitator training. You can find more information on our website under partnerships. ([Missio Nexus and TruCenter](#))

Any final words?

Dr. Yee:

Thank you, Michael. I encourage everyone to explore TruCenter as a complement to the tools you already use. It often brings clarity, affirmation, and new insight.

And for those who want to go deeper, training is available to help leaders and teams use this language more effectively. We'd love to support the missions community in that way.

Michael:

One of my motivations is realizing vision, and I long to see missionaries flourishing—lower attrition, healthier teams, and people living fully into how God has wired them. This tool can help us move toward that vision.

Tim, thank you for your partnership and friendship.

Dr. Yee:

My pleasure. Anytime.

Michael:

Thank you all for joining us today.