

# Unfinished

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## Signs of the Kingdom

Ushering in God's future through acts of mercy and justice

UNFINISHED

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**Cover photo:**

Mission Society missionaries in Malaysia, homeland of this little boy, work in community development to help meet the needs of local people and share the love of Christ.

## Join us in The Mission

When you partner with The Mission Society, not only do you join us in The Mission to offer Christ to the world, but you join us in embracing our core values.

### Our vision

The Kingdom of God advancing among all peoples bringing about redemption and reconciliation through Jesus Christ

### Our mission

The Mission Society exists to mobilize and deploy the body of Christ globally to join Jesus in His mission, especially among the least reached peoples.

## Our core values

### INCARNATION

The Mission Society seeks to minister to others by following the example of Jesus, who fully entered the human experience. In our cross-cultural ministry, we are committed to learning the local language, living among the people, ministering in culturally appropriate ways, demonstrating love for God and neighbor, and disciple-making among the nations.

### INTEGRITY

The Mission Society desires to reflect the holiness of God in all we do. Personally and corporately we endeavor to make the character of Christ manifest in our lives and our ministry.

### PASSION

We are not complacent about the One who matters supremely or the work God has given us to do; nor is our ministry prompted simply by duty, or even obedience. Our life together and our ministry are marked and motivated by passion for God and God's mission. We are passionate about Jesus, our mission, and all those involved in the journey with us.

### PEOPLE

The Mission Society believes that people are of primary value. Because people matter to God, people matter to us. Our cross-cultural workers, staff, donors, volunteers, prayer partners, and those we seek to reach are of greatest worth to us. Because "relationships" and not "formulas" are our method, The Mission Society exudes an entrepreneurial culture where every member is encouraged to discern and pursue God's unique direction for his or her ministry.

### PARTNERSHIP

Since it is the Kingdom of God that we are called to express and extend throughout the world, our ministry is about more than ourselves and our organization. We believe that working together enhances our witness and strengthens our ability to make disciples of all nations. The Mission Society therefore pursues partnership in ministry endeavors – with churches, nationals, Christian organizations, and individuals.

### PRAYER

It is only through the power and presence of the Spirit of Christ that we can live up to the high and holy intentions embodied in these values. We acknowledge our absolute dependence on God and seek both His guidance and His strength each day. Therefore, The Mission Society is a praying community.

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To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”  
–Micah 6:8, NIV*



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# Kingdom living now

Engaging in the life-transforming, world-changing work Jesus intends to accomplish here on earth



“Because things like clean water and good nutrition for expectant mothers and healthy diets for newborn babies matter to the King, our work addresses these issues and many others,” writes President McClain. Ed Baker (left), who with his wife, Linda, now serve as The Mission Society’s water specialists and as co-directors of the Global Resource Team, served previously in Paraguay and Nicaragua, digging fresh water wells in rural areas that previously had no access to clean water.

Recently I’ve been intrigued by the question, “Why did Jesus come?”

I put that question to a group of mission interns who were with us recently for a week of training. “To be our substitute,” replied one. “To be an example,” said another. After several others gave similar responses, I noted that Jesus Himself stated very explicitly the reason for His coming to earth.

*“I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also,”* He said, *“because that is why I was sent.”* (Luke 4:43, NIV, emphasis added)

Those words from Jesus inform the “Statement of Vision” adopted by our board of directors in February, 2010:

*“The kingdom of God advancing among all peoples, bringing redemption and reconciliation through Jesus Christ.”*

Sadly, in much of the evangelical church, the kingdom of God has hardly been mentioned. And when it is, the kingdom is often either equated with “heaven” or “the church,” neither of which captures its depth or breadth. But for the most part, the kingdom just doesn’t get much press.

### A vital thing missing

This isn’t a new problem. In a 1970 interview in *Good News* magazine, missionary legend E. Stanley Jones stated, “By the time the creeds were written in the 3rd century, what had happened to the conception of the kingdom of God? The Nicene Creed mentions it once, but only in reference to our life beyond the borders of this life, in heaven: ‘Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.’ The Apostle’s Creed and the Athanasian Creed don’t mention it at all. The three great historic creeds summing up Christian doctrine, mention once what Jesus mentioned a hundred

times. Something had dropped out. A vital, vital thing had dropped out. A crippled Christianity went across Europe, leaving a crippled result. . . . A vacuum was left in the soul of Western civilization.”

Crippled indeed! When we forget the kingdom of God, the gospel message is all too easily reduced to the promise of a salvation that guarantees believers a place in heaven while neglecting the world-changing, life transforming work that Jesus intends to accomplish here and now.

The Old Testament prophets understood the kingdom, and as a result were very attentive to issues of justice and mercy and compassion. Their writings are replete with scores of statements like these:

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17, NIV)



## Leaving a Legacy: Remembering The Mission Society in Your Will

Psalm 24:1 tells us that “the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” Throughout scripture, God calls on us as His followers to be good stewards of all the resources He has created and gives us. He blesses us not to increase our standard of living, but to increase our standard of giving.

By including The Mission Society in your will, you can leave a legacy of giving toward Kingdom ministry around the world. Through your generosity, countless lives and communities will receive the transforming love and grace of our Lord Jesus for years to come.

Thank you for prayerfully considering The Mission Society in your will and estate plan.

If you’d like to discuss more details about including The Mission Society in your will, please email us at [dbrown@themissionsociety.org](mailto:dbrown@themissionsociety.org) or call 1-800-478-8963 ext. 9037.



“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”  
(Amos 5:24, NIV)

“Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute.”  
(Psalm 82:3, NASB)

### Aligning our strategies to Jesus’ purpose

About three years ago, a team of missionaries, staff, and board members from The Mission Society hammered out five key strategies that would mark our work:

*Mobilize the body of Christ* so that it will live and share the gospel incarnation-ally in order to reach the least reached with the goal that we make disciple makers who lead communities that do and proclaim God’s mercy and justice.

It’s easy to neglect or distort one or more of these vital elements. We can take the “Lone Ranger” approach to mission,

failing to invite others to join us on mission with God. Or we can disregard issues of culture in our witness, with the result that our ministry isn’t incarnational. At times it’s easy to go where we’ve gone before rather than engage in the hard work of taking the good news to those who have not heard it before. And all too often, we’ve been guilty of winning converts rather than making disciples.

But even if we succeed in all four, unless we embrace the final strategy, ours is an anemic, stunted caricature of the mission of God. You see, communities of disciples should make a difference in the world in which they live, precisely because they have entered the kingdom of God.

Where Jesus reigns, the hungry are fed (Luke 9:10-17) and orphans are cared for (James 1:27). In the kingdom, children are not trafficked for sexual exploitation (Mark 9:42). Because things like clean water and good nutrition for ex-

pectant mothers and healthy diets for newborn babies matter to the King, our work addresses all of these issues and many others like them (Luke 4:18-19).

In this issue of *Unfinished*, we highlight The Mission Society’s efforts to take very seriously the last of our five key strategies: doing and proclaiming God’s mercy and justice. We’re committed to ministries of mercy and justice because we believe in the kingdom of God, because we are serious about announcing the kingdom of God, and because we seek to live in the kingdom of God. ✝

*Dick McClain is the president and CEO of The Mission Society and is an elder in the North Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.*



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



MEXICO



NICARAGUA



COSTA RICA



ECUADOR



BRAZIL

PARAGUAY



## The key to doing the work of Christ's kingdom

"There's always more to do and plenty of reasons to do it. So we press on, reach down deep, and try to give a little more. Good people have died doing this. I've seen it with my own eyes. But we do not have to despair. One of the most important lessons I've learned from liturgical prayer is that, by God's grace, we have all the time in the world to do the work of Christ's Kingdom. We pause for prayer morning, noon, and evening as a confession that our work depends not on our efforts, but on the faithfulness of a God who has already redeemed the whole creation."

—Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove in *Christianity Today*



Shown here are some of the places around the world where Mission Society missionaries ministries are focused on ministries of mercy and justice. For more information, please visit our website at [www.themissionsociety.org](http://www.themissionsociety.org)

- Brazil** – orphanage ministry
- Costa Rica** – orphanage ministry
- Ecuador** – agricultural ministry, community development
- Egypt** – orphanage ministry
- Ghana** – community health evangelism, literacy training, medical ministries, orphanage ministry, water sanitation and treatment

- Kazakhstan** – micro-loan development
- Kenya** – community development, orphanage ministry
- Malaysia** – community development
- Mexico** – community development
- Nicaragua** – community development, water sanitation and treatment
- Paraguay** – medical ministries

- Russia** – orphanage ministry
- South Africa** – agricultural ministry, micro-loan development
- Thailand** – refugee ministry
- Ukraine** – orphanage ministry
- United States** – community development, community health evangelism, refugee ministry, urban ministry

# Who is my neighbor?

Helps for being agents of mercy and justice in a Googlized world

With broadband internet access and mobile technology, the injustices and sufferings of the world are front and center for us every waking hour. How can we decipher which of the world's agonies are our responsibility – who is our 'neighbor'? In his new book, Steve Moore, president and CEO of The Mission Exchange, offers help in finding our way through the tsunami of human need.

By Steve Moore

Who is my neighbor? These four words served as a catalyst for a story, told by Jesus and recorded in the Gospel of Luke. In asking, "Who is my neighbor?" a religious expert was really asking Jesus, "When does God expect me to take responsibility for the needs of others?" Jesus, as he often did, answered the man's question with a question of His own, prefaced by the now-familiar parable, the Good Samaritan.

At the time of Jesus' telling this story, it really wasn't possible to be a neighbor to others, on the order of the Good Samaritan, unless you were physically near them. If you weren't near them, you wouldn't even know about their need, at least not soon enough to do anything meaningful to help.

Times have changed. We live in a wireless wonderland, an ocean of information with tweets, status updates, text message news alerts, customized home pages and 24/7 news cycles that wash over our lives like the waves of the sea. The accelerating impact of globalization driven by broadband Internet, WiFi hot spots, web-enabled mobile phones and search engines like Google, has powerful ramifications on the way we intuitively calibrate our responsibility for the needs of others. The adoption of mobile technology is happening faster than that of color TV in the middle of the 20th Century. According to *Fast Company* magazine<sup>1</sup>, mobile-phone subscribers reached the five billion mark in 2010 with as many as two billion of them in developing countries. Mobile broadband is projected to surpass access from desktop computers by 2015.

Now that you have access to the needs of the whole world in the palm of your hand by way of a netbook, iPad, or mobile phone, who really is your neighbor? How do we assign a meaningful page rank to the virtual tsunami of human needs that flood into our lives from every corner of the world? How do we keep from being swept away in the tidal wave of shame and guilt that result from paralyzing inaction? How do I know when God expects me to be a neighbor to the wounded and hurting people on the side of the road in this global village?

When answering questions such as these, it is helpful to examine Good Samaritan situations of our day.

## Eutisha

I want to introduce you to Eutisha Rennix, an African American from Brooklyn, whose story is a painful reminder of how proximity impacts responsibility.

One could easily imagine the thoughts racing through the mind of 25-year-old Eutisha as she got ready for work on December 9, 2009. *Just 16 days until Christmas and 90 days before my due date. How will I get everything done?*

She was employed at the Au Bon Pain coffee shop in Brooklyn. Her day would soon unfold with challenges bigger than Christmas shopping or final preparations for a new baby.

The first symptoms were shortness of breath, followed by intense pain in her abdomen. Since she was six months pregnant, it's easy to understand why her condition generated both





With technology at our fingertips, we must discover new ways of calibrating how we will engage with the world's needs, says Steve Moore. In his new book, he identifies "four domains of passionate engagement": service, focusing on meeting a need; justice, focusing on righting a wrong; discovery, focusing on solving a problem; and advocacy, focusing on promoting a cause. For more, see [www.whoismyneighborbook.com](http://www.whoismyneighborbook.com).

urgency and uncertainty. Before long the pain became severe enough to warrant emergency action.

As luck would have it, the coffee shop in which Eutisha worked was about 600 feet from the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) headquarters. The proximity of the FDNY headquarters provided the coffee shop with a regular base of customers. It was quite often filled with FDNY employees in their government-issued blue sweaters, along with EMS personnel and their top brass.

Shortly after 9:00 a.m., as Eutisha's symptoms escalated, colleagues raced to the front of the store, looking for help. They discovered that two trained EMTs with six years of experience respectively, were standing at the counter in uniform buying bagels. Eutisha's co-worker frantically explained that her pregnant friend was in need of medical attention. The two EMTs said they were on break and coldly suggested someone call 911. They did. Coincidentally, the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) dispatch center that handles 911 calls is located in the same building as Au Bon Pain, several floors above where Eutisha collapsed. Shouts from other employees warned that Eutisha was turning blue, but the EMTs appeared unfazed and left the coffee shop, bagels in hand.

By now the Au Bon Pain manager was involved, again asking for help from anyone in the store. Eutisha, still collapsed on the floor, had begun foaming at the nose and mouth. Two other "good Samaritans," as described by the New York Post, both

FDNY employees, ran to the back office in an effort to provide assistance. By now several 911 calls had been placed, and paramedics arrived at 9:28 a.m., nearly 30 minutes after her initial symptoms. Eutisha, already in cardiac arrest, was transported to Long Island College Hospital, where she was pronounced dead at 10:17 a.m. Her six-month-old unborn daughter was too premature to survive, outliving her mother by just over two hours. She was posthumously named Jahniya Renne Woodson.

The story struck a chord with the national media, and people around the country responded with disgust and disbelief. How could a 25-year-old pregnant woman die just 600 feet from the FDNY headquarters, in the back office of a coffee shop bustling with EMTs, a few floors below the very 911 dispatchers handling the emergency calls?

One's level of responsibility is determined, though none of us would consciously try to calculate it in these terms, by proximity, how close are we to what happened; urgency, how serious the need; and capacity, how qualified or capable we are to offer assistance or add value.

**Proximity + urgency + capacity = responsibility**

This combination of proximity, urgency, and capacity translates into extremely high level of responsibility, but what happens when the needs of others are not only tragic, but also chronic and epidemic? In these cases, urgency is sustained; proximity



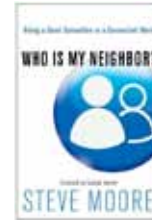
**Steve Moore** serves as the president and CEO of The Mission Exchange, formerly Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies. His personal life

mission is to inspire and equip others to live a focused life, finish well and join with God in blessing the nations. Steve pursued graduate studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, where he earned a Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies with a leadership concentration. Prior to accepting his current role with The Mission Exchange, Steve served as

pastor, as vice president of International Ministries for Kingdom Building Ministries and Emerging Youth Leaders, and as a leadership coach and director of International Ministries for Atlanta based Growing Leaders.

Steve is also the founder of Keep Growing Inc., which provides a platform for engaging leaders in both the non-profit and corporate arena.

Steve's ministry has taken him around the world, and he has authored several other books including, *The Dream Cycle: Leveraging the Power of Personal Growth*, and *While You Were Micro-Sleeping: The Changing Face of North American Missions*.



"In a globalized world where your neighbor can be anyone, anywhere, it's hard to know how to be a Good Samaritan. A few hours with this book

will reveal a simple path to discovering what God is inviting you to do with your life," writes Michelle Rickett, founder and president of Sisters in Service, coauthor of *Forgotten Girls*. *Who is my Neighbor?* is ideal for small-group study. Links to videos supplementing the content of each chapter are available online.

becomes less relevant, and responsibility for action is much more difficult to assign.

### Where to engage?

Thomas Friedman, in his bestselling book, *The World is Flat*, explains how the combination of desktop computers and broadband Internet have flattened the world by giving more people access to more information more quickly than ever before. Proximity is no longer the primary variable in ascribing the level of responsibility we have for others. I don't have to be near someone in order to know about her need and even if I can't travel to where she lives, there are likely others with whom I could partner who have both the proximity and capacity to make a difference.

Needy people are everywhere. Finding a worthy cause, here or around the world, is not the problem. The challenge most of us face is sorting out where God wants us to engage without getting overwhelmed. Organizing and prioritizing opportunities to live a Good Samaritan lifestyle begins with God-inspired passion. God uses life-shaping experiences to focus our interests and kindle a desire to meet specific needs, as was true for Amy.

### Amy

In the spring of 1884, a 17-year-old Irish girl named Amy went to a Belfast tea shop with her mother. While sipping tea and nibbling sweet delicacies, Amy noticed a young girl standing

outside with her face pressed against the window of the tea shop. Amy found it charming and amusing to observe the little girl's perusal of tantalizing sweets on display in the window. But the innocence of that moment was about to be interrupted.

As she walked out the door with her mother, Amy's gaze playfully returned to the little girl. There she stood, barefoot, dirty, wearing a thin and ragged dress in the light rain. Without a word being spoken, in a matter of seconds, Amy's perspective on the situation changed. The eyes of her heart were opened. In the words of the Good Samaritan, she "saw her." The little girl's poverty was anything but charming. Compassion was aroused in Amy's spirit.

Later that evening, in the warmth and comfort of her own bedroom, Amy reflected on this experience and wrote, "When I grow up and money have, I know what I will do. I'll build a big, lovely place for little girls like you." Then in a moment of honest self-reflection, Amy continued writing, "And yet at present I do nothing 'for little girls like you.' Please, God, tell me what to do."

Seventeen-year-old Amy Carmichael had a Good Samaritan experience on the side of the road by a tea shop in Belfast. All this would eventually help refine Amy's passion for the marginalized, exploited, and underserved. What if this is how you find your neighbor?

### Connect with your passions

There are two streams of passion potential in all of us. The first

## Passion Pyramid



**At the base of the passion pyramid** is self-directed motivation to learn more about an interest or issue through formal or informal training opportunities. This quest for information can be almost insatiable. In the second level, we continue our learning by some form of doing to meet a need, right a wrong, solve a problem, or promote a cause. The third level is influencing others, enlisting them to join us. At the top of the passion pyramid is a willingness to learn, participate, and influence even when it requires us to sacrifice time, energy, money, or personal convenience.

stream is your interest-based passions, things you do for enjoyment. The second stream is your issue-based passions, things that bring a sense of fulfillment. Finding your passion will help you find your neighbor.

A hallmark of passion, whether interest- or issue-based, is an inner source of motivation and self-directed initiative. If you are truly passionate you will not need to be cajoled or corralled into action. Passion is evidenced by self-directed initiative to learn more about, engage in, and influence others toward interests and issues even when sacrifice is required.

Once you understand the passion pyramid, you will start to recognize the inklings of interest and issue-based passions in yourself and in others. I believe everyone has the potential for a passion-filled life. Identifying your passions and pursuing them will enable you to begin to prioritize opportunities for service, which in turn will help protect you from information overload and compassion fatigue.

### Blessings of globalization

In our global village, answering this once straightforward question, "Who is my neighbor?" has never been more complicated. But I believe there are answers to this question that empower each of us to leverage our giftedness and resources in areas of God-ordained passion and live in the sweet spot of a fulfilling and fully engaged life. This liberating lifestyle is free from the guilt of inaction and the messiah complex of over

commitment. It is not limited to missionaries or aid workers or professional spiritual first responders. It is for ordinary people like me and you.

The reality of a shrinking globe and the growing availability of smaller, faster technology does not make information overload inevitable. On the contrary the curses of globalization can become blessings of increased opportunity to serve others. God is at work in this Googlized world, and technological advances in the hands of Spirit empowered Good Samaritans can set the stage for the "even greater things" Jesus said his followers would do. (John 14:12) †

Excerpted and adapted from, *Who Is My Neighbor? Being a Good Samaritan in a Connected World*, by Steve Moore. Copyright 2011, by NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO. All scripture quotations in this article are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version.

To explore passion and how to go to the next level visit MyPassionProfile.com. This online assessment is free with the purchase of *Who Is My Neighbor?*

*Who is my neighbor?* can be read online for free at [www.whoismyneighborbook.com](http://www.whoismyneighborbook.com)

<sup>i</sup> *Fast Company* magazine April 2010, A is for App, page 68.



A man fleeing Burma carries his mother, too old to walk, through orange orchards along the Thai-Burma border. The journey is too arduous for many elderly whose bodies are too frail to flee Burma, causing the split of families who have no communication once inside Thailand. *CS Stanley/Genesis Photos*

# Mercy for the exiles

This Thailand-based ministry is helping resurrect hope among one of the most oppressed ethnic groups on earth

In a matter of hours, they hardly even know themselves any more. Every step takes them closer to an identity they never wanted. No longer will they be known as shop owners, or farmers, or lawyers, or teachers, or neighbors, or homeowners. Suddenly these Karen people of Burma have become refugees – victims of what has been called one of the most brutal military regimes in the world. Among these exiles, one Mission Society missionary family serves with a remarkable ministry that offers hope and new life to the Karen people, who are living in a land not their own.

By Rich Lively

Nam is 14 years old. She was born in Burma (Myanmar) in Southeast Asia, but at age 10, she and her family fled their home over the border into Thailand. It all started the day the Burmese army came near their village. If Nam's family were found, they would face certain death or imprisonment. Her father had been in the Karen National Union (army), which seeks independence for the Karen people from the central government of Burma. Consequently, Nam's family had become targets of the military. So in the middle of the night, her family escaped. For seven days they traveled through dense jungle before finally reaching Thailand.

## **Burmese: the largest refugee group**

Stories like Nam's are common. In the past 10 years, more



Burma's military junta has systematically attempted to subdue and exterminate its own people for more than 60 years, resulting in mass exodus from Burma. Refugees, like this man, work as migrant workers along the Thai-Burma border. They are often hired by local orchard owners and are routinely exploited. *CS Stanley / Genesis Photos*

Nam was born in Burma, but at age 10, she and her family fled their home over the border into Thailand. She misses her homeland and wants people to know about the problems there. "They hate us," she says, speaking of the Burmese soldiers.

refugees to the United States have come from Burma than from any other nation (source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement). Although there have been spikes in certain years for refugees from Iraq, Iran, and other countries, the fact remains that, for a decade, more refugees from Burma have entered the United States than from any other refugee group. The reason for this mass exodus is simple and devastating – Burma's military junta has systematically attempted to subdue and exterminate its own people for more than 60 years. Ethnic cleansing, forced labor, torture, rape, murder, destruction of crops and villages, and using captives as human landmine detectors are the regular atrocities committed by this regime. In March of 2010, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma recommended in a report that the United Nations should consider establishing a Commission of Inquiry into war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Burmese government (Irawaddy, Mar 11, 2010).

In Thailand alone, there are more than two million

refugees from Burma. Refugee camps and settlements dot the landscape in northwestern Thailand. Often these people arrive with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Exhausted from days of travel through the jungle, they arrive to an uncertain future, hoping not to be sent back to imprisonment or worse at the hands of the Burmese.

Although they are not the only people displaced, many of the refugees are from the Karen tribe of Burma. Numerous NGOs and mission agencies work with refugees, particularly in Northwest Thailand, and yet there is still a significant number who have attempted to start over further south. This is where Connect3e (C3e) has stepped in to respond to the crisis and do whatever is possible to help reach out to these precious people.

Situated about 200 kilometers south of Bangkok on the western side of the Bay of Thailand in the city of Hua Hin, C3e is strategically placed to interact with the thousands of Karen who now have crossed over for the past four decades to this region of Thailand. Begun in 2008 by Ruth and Colin Harrison and their children, C3e exists to engage injustice and extend compassion so that people

# Wounded healer

## Former refugee now serves among refugees



Samson Siprasur fled Burma into Thailand as a young boy. Soon thereafter, still forging a new life, Samson began doing what many refugees do in Thailand. He picked pineapples. And as he did, he began dreaming of one day having a home for refugee children, so that they could have a better life than him.

Samson attended Bible school as a young adult, learned English, then began cleaning pools in the seaside town of Hua Hin, so that he could earn an income and then travel to villages on the weekends to reach out and teach Karen children about God. In 2007, while in one of these villages, he met Colin and Ruth Harrison and their family, who shared their dream to help refugee children.

The following year, Samson became the director of Baan Pak Dek Nakrien (Christian Home for Students) where now, four years later, 50-75 refugee children from dangerous or abusive homes are accepted, loved, and nurtured to become strong and empowered leaders for their own people. Samson says, "My dream all those years ago is now becoming reality for these children."

may experience hope. The three e's of Connect3e stand for embracing, educating, and empowering Karen people to lead and stand for themselves in their new land.

Currently, C3e operates two homes where refugee children are given love, safety, shelter, food, schooling, and opportunities to continue their education through university. Approximately 75 children from dangerous or abusive homes are housed here. This year, 10 students are receiving scholarships to attend university, so that they can return to their Thai villages to lead their own people. Additionally, C3e is partnering with a new preschool in a remote village where 30 children are cared for so that their parents can work and in turn afford the school fees for older siblings. C3e also provides support for a teaching team in another remote village where the children are taught on the weekends in addition to regular schooling. Amidst all of this, C3e conducts monthly medical clinics in remote villages where people cannot access health care services, and it runs English clinics to help students better prepare for their futures.

Today, Nam is among those who live at Connect3e's first Home for Students. She says, "Now I can learn the



After previous terms overseas in theological education and JESUS Film training, as well as pastoral ministry stateside, Rich and Kathy Lively, along with their three children, Richie (15), Danny (12), and Emma (9), now serve with Connect3e to help Karen refugees fleeing Myanmar (Burma). If you are interested in learning more about C3e, please visit [www.connect3e.org](http://www.connect3e.org). To support the ministry of the Livelys through the "Relief for Refugees" project, please make a donation to The Mission Society project number #634. Visit [www.themissionsociety.org/rcpm/projects/27/](http://www.themissionsociety.org/rcpm/projects/27/) for information.

Thai language. I have Samson (the director) and Norris (the house mother) who love me. I have lots of brothers and sisters who are my friends. I can go to school, and I feel safe." †

Two other villages have sought partnerships with C3e to build community centers, and C3e is currently seeking to purchase land so that their second Children's Home can expand and provide for more children. All staff who work on the various projects are Karen leaders, and any foreign staff with C3e are volunteers who raise their own support to live in Thailand and assist in the work.

**The Lively family** will be in the States from Nov. 5 – March 1 and will be available to share in your church, small group, or civic organization about the ministry of C3e and The Mission Society among the Karen refugees in Thailand. To schedule, please contact the Livelys directly at [rpively@gmail.com](mailto:rpively@gmail.com) or write Beverly Mancuso at The Mission Society at [bmancuso@themissionsociety.org](mailto:bmancuso@themissionsociety.org).



## The Burmese next door

Mission Society missionaries serving in a U.S. city tell of their Burmese refugee neighbors and friends.

*Bridgeport\* is one of the many cities in the United States that is growing because it receives refugees from around the world. Every year, the U.S. State Department invites to these cities more than 100,000 immigrants who have been chased out of their countries by ethnic cleansing, war, religious persecution, and the like. Among the residents of Bridgeport are Mission Society missionaries Alex and Mandy Davidson\*, who have an apartment-based ministry among the refugees in this small city. Here, Mandy tells of their Karen refugee neighbors.*

Violence exploded into Ka Yo Paw's life at the age of 10 when her father was murdered by the Burmese army. For the next 20 years, this genocidal violence followed her from the village to the city, through the jungle, up into the mountains, and across the Thai border. She constantly feared for her life and lost an untold number of friends and relatives along the way.

In a refugee camp in Thailand, a Norwegian missionary shared the hope of Jesus with Ka Yo Paw and her family in their bamboo house, and over time, her whole family embraced Jesus with passion. Although life in Thailand was peaceful within the confines of the camp,

"I pray my children will always walk closely with Jesus, have good jobs, and give back to America for all this country has given us."

the refugees lived like prisoners without freedom to work, study, or build a future.

In 2006, Ka Yo Paw's family received long-awaited permission to come to the United States and moved three doors down from me in my apartment building. We have shared meals and holidays, and our children play together often. After much encouragement, Ka Yo Paw and

her two youngest children enrolled in our Mommy & Me ESL Family Literacy program, and although not yet fluent, she is certainly functional in English and has the confidence to shop for her family, take her children to the doctor, and communicate with her neighbors.

When I recently asked her what her hopes are for her children, she replied (with some translation assistance from her eldest son), "I pray they will always walk closely with Jesus, have good jobs, and give back to America for all this country has given us." Truly, this family is a gift from God to me, and I'm confident her six godly children will more than "give back" in the years to come. †

*\*The missionaries' and city's names have been changed in honor and sensitivity to the relationships the Davidsons have with their refugee neighbors. For information about partnering with the Davidsons' ministry, call us at 1.800.478.8963.*



Photo by Genesis Photos



# Caring for Egypt's littlest ones

Casualties of poverty in a nation of rapid change, many of Egypt's children are left wandering streets alone. This is a story about kids whose prayers and deepest heart cries are being answered.

Today in Egypt, food prices and unemployment are high. Early 2011 reports indicated “Nearly half of all Egyptians live under or just above the poverty line, which the World Bank sets at \$2 a day.”<sup>1</sup> According to *The Economist* (Feb. 3, 2011, online), Egypt's youth-unemployment rate is currently about 25%.

In the midst of such economic distress, children suffer most. Countless little ones, left completely without adult supervision, are forced to grow up on the streets. Because Egypt's law forbids adoption, many of these, its youngest citizens, are left with no hope of ever being part of a home and family.

Serving among Egypt's children are Mission Society missionaries, Aquila and Priscilla\* who are natives of Egypt. In 1992, after having served for seven years in an Egyptian orphanage, Aquila founded a ministry to provide a home for Cairo's orphan children, and to offer facilities which could be enjoyed by the needy children of poverty-stricken areas. “We specifically serve those living in the most neglected areas across Egypt,” writes Aquila, “by offering medical care and skill training to the children and young adults who live in these filthy and disease-ridden areas.”

In the year 2000, a new facility for the ministry was built in a different location near Cairo. It contains an orphanage that accommodates 70 children; a daycare center for 200 children, a retreat center for 80 adults, and a meeting hall that seats more than 500 people. This was a dream come true for Aquila and Priscilla – and for the children for whom this would become home.

## Answered prayers

Paperwork about each child not only tracks his or her family situation and health condition, but also makes note of the particular prayer requests and spiritual development of these little ones. The records for one 12-year-old boy, for example, reveal that he regularly attends church and Sunday school, “is learning how to respect people, and loves Jesus with all his heart and mind.” A 12-year-old girl, who also regularly attends church and Sunday school, “loves to apply new spiritual truth to her life. The Lord has answered her prayer to be able to forgive.” A 10-year-old boy's records indicate, “He wants most to be faithful and to love his friends.”



“Our mission is to restore the lives of orphans by sharing the message of Christ’s love by word and action,” Aquila and Priscilla write. “Because of God’s tremendous grace on the cross and his unconditional love for us all as orphans, we are now His children with a hope and a future.”

Besides being a place of care for children, the orphanage is being used by God as a gathering place, bringing together Christians and Muslims in a country that is presently fraught with crisis and uncertainty. In March, for example, at a special gathering, hundreds of Christians and Muslims, imams from neighboring mosques, the head of the police and other officers from Cairo, Orthodox and Catholic priests, and pastors of Evangelical churches met at the orphanage “to spend time of sharing kindness together.” The facility is also where the gospel message is being proclaimed, not only to Egypt’s children, but also to 200 impoverished Sudanese refugee children, to whom Aquila and Priscilla have reached out.

#### **Expanding to four countries**

The ministry launched by Aquila and Priscilla is focused in the Middle East and Africa. It partners with local believers and churches to help bring the gospel to that region through orphan homes and to impact other vulnerable children in nearby villages with the message of Christ. The ministry helps support local churches, believers, and ministers who help these children and their families.

“The challenge that the Lord has put on our hearts to weekly reach about 1,000 people in 10 different poor areas in Egypt is becoming a reality – and is now expanding through our ministry team in four different countries in Africa and the Middle East!” write Aquila and Priscilla. “It is amazing to read all the stories in the monthly reports about each family. God is

at work, and we are blessed to be a part of this ministry.

“Loving orphans is a true testimony of the love of Christ, and we pray that God would continue to use this work to help others experience His sacrificial love.”

\*Real missionaries’ names and the name of their ministry are not used by missionaries’ request.

*’From “Egypt’s Poverty, Unemployment, Push Youths to Breaking Point,” by Henry J. Reske, Jan. 31, 2011, NewsMax.com*

## How you can help

Your monthly gift of \$50 for an orphan or a child in mercy ministry program will provide health care, meals, and a loving Christian community, where children have the opportunity to hear about Jesus and be disciplined in the faith. To give, make your check payable to The Mission Society, and refer to account #326. You can also donate online at [www.themissionsociety.org/missionaries/](http://www.themissionsociety.org/missionaries/) undisclosed. Specify your gift for missionary account code #326. All gifts are tax-deductible.

“This ministry has been enormously fruitful,” write Aquila and Priscilla, “but could not have been so without prayers and support to lift up the name of Jesus Christ to those who so desperately need it.”

# Growing up beloved

Meet some of the orphanage children, who are getting to know their heavenly Father



**Age:** 12 years old

**School year:** Sixth grade

**Number of brothers and sisters:** Five

**Spiritual state:** He continues to attend Sunday school. He loves Jesus and praying.

**Interests/likes:** He loves to spend times with God.

**Prayer request:** He prays to get deeper in his relationship with the Lord and to be clean and well organized.



**Age:** 10 years old

**School year:** 4th grade

**Number of brothers and sisters:** Four

**Spiritual state:** He regularly attends church and Sunday school.

**Interests/likes:** He loves soccer.

**Prayer request:** He is very thankful because when he fell from the roof, the Lord protected and saved him. He prayed for God's provision for a bicycle. He also prayed for God's provision for clothes and food and he was happy when he was given new clothes. He felt like normal kids who have both parents alive.



**Age:** 9 years old

**School year:** 3rd grade

**Number of brothers and sisters:** One

**Spiritual state:** She regularly attends church and Sunday school. Also, she loves Christian songs.

**Prayer request:** She is grateful for answers to her prayers for food and new clothes. She prays for her neighbors to accept her and allow her to play some games with their kids.

*The notes above are excerpts from the reports written on each child with whom this ministry serves.*



Hurricane Katrina (2005) was the costliest natural disaster, as well as one of the five deadliest hurricanes, in the history of the United States. At least 1,836 people died in the hurricane and in the floods that followed it. *Christopher Capozziello/Genesis Photos*

# Rising above the ruins

How a church enduring its own tragedy reached out to others

By Reed Haigler Hoppe

A congregation of 500 in weekly attendance, Trinity United Methodist Church in Gulfport, Mississippi is very active in local and international mission. This wasn't always the case. But in 2005, gale force winds called forth a response of mercy and love for the world that has not subsided.

Stuart Allen has served as the mission committee chair since 2004. A commercial contractor by trade, Allen first discovered a passion for mission work after a short-term trip to Guatemala. Ralph Young has served on Trinity's mission committee since 2004 as well. Before his retirement, he worked as an attorney.

Previous to 2004, Trinity's mission programs included supporting one cross-cultural missionary, a few local outreaches, and one short-term mission trip to Central America. Both Allen and Young, along with some others in the church, felt called to expand Trinity's mission program.

Allen, Young, and another friend visited Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. "Frazer had a budget of 10 million dollars, with 35% of that going to missions. That really excited us and we wanted to discover how they got there. What we found was that it had been a 27-year journey. We were where they had been 27 years ago. So we learned about their history and followed their model," said Allen.

# What's a church to do?

Let's say your church wants to expand its mission program. Where to begin? Trinity's long-time missions volunteers offer suggestions.



Three of Trinity's mission volunteers: Sunny Draughdrill, Stuart Allen, and Ralph Young

- Make sure that you work to convince the congregation to climb on board. You can't be successful if you are constantly pitted against people who don't have the same dream.
- Set your sights high and trust God. People will support good ministry that relies on God's direction and provision.
- Be diligent about choosing the missionaries and ministries you support. Get to know each personally. Keep a personal connection by allowing them a forum to give updates from the pulpit, in classes, via the church newsletter, website, etc.
- Present the church with information about the mission programs. The church members need to see how their prayer and financial support is making a difference.
- Have a special missions event with speakers from the organizations you support. Conclude with a request for a 'Second Mile' or 'Faith Promise' commitment. (This is a commitment over and above the pledge to the general fund. It is made as an act of faith, trusting that God will enable the fulfillment of this commitment.)

*Photo by Tommy Triplett*

Trinity conducted The Mission Society's Global Outreach Weekend in August of 2005. Twenty days later, Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, decimating Gulfport and many other areas. "If there were ever a church that had reason to suspend international missions, it would have been Trinity. Yet they increased their giving and the number of missionaries they supported over the next several years," said Stan Self, senior director of Church Ministry for The Mission Society.

## "Unbelievable"

"Hurricane Katrina was unbelievable, even to those of us who experienced Camille 30 years earlier. Fortunately, our church building had little physical damage, but about 90% of the houses in the vicinity were flooded from one-to-eight feet," remembers Young.

"We immediately started serving food and handing out water. It started when a friend of mine who worked for the city school system brought by some food that was in one of the many school freezers that was thawing. To keep from wasting the food, Trinity members Regina Steward, her mom, Judy Bishop, and John Kelley started cooking for a few people in our congregation who did not have food. Before long, food, water,

and money were coming in, and we literally were serving about 2,500 people a day," said Allen.

"Trinity became a host church to mission teams who came from far and wide, providing meals and lodging for 50 to 100 volunteers on any given day. Lunch was provided to any and everyone," said Young.

"We received about \$750,000 from all over the United States in donations during that time," said Allen. "So we used the money to rebuild homes. We rebuilt houses for people in our congregation and others in the community. At last count we gutted and rebuilt approximately 615 homes."

A few weeks before Katrina hit, Trinity's congregation pledged more than \$67,000 to missions through a "Second Mile" or "Faith Promise" giving. The church's budget had previously allocated \$7,000 for missions. "I truly believe the obedience and unselfish giving on that

Missions Sunday had a direct and unmistakable correlation to the mountains of blessings that we received after Hurricane Katrina," said Allen.

"Many churches along the coast virtually closed down, some for two-to-three years, and a few did so permanently. Trinity

"If there were ever a church that had reason to suspend international missions, it would have been Trinity. Yet they increased their giving and the number of missionaries they supported over the next several years," said Stan Self, The Mission Society's senior director of Church Ministry.



After Katrina, Trinity United Methodist Church in Gulfport, Mississippi had little physical damage, but 90% of the houses in the vicinity were flooded from one-to-eight feet. *Photo by Tommy Triplett*

did not skip a beat in worship and financial support to the missions we were supporting during that time,” said Young.

### Then and now

Trinity has come a long way in their mission involvement since 2005. Despite Hurricane Katrina, Trinity has drastically expanded its mission budget and programs during the past six years.

Trinity supports a number of local, national, and international ministries. The local ministries they support include Feed My Sheep, ministries to seaman and truckers, prison ministry, and a local chapter of Youth for Christ.

Feed My Sheep is a ministry which provides meals for the homeless and homebound of Gulfport. In 2010 alone, Feed My Sheep served 122,221 meals. The ministry was started by Christians in 1984 and continues to remain a faith-based organization. Youth for Christ is a ministry which reaches out to youth through campus ministry, a teen center, and juvenile justice ministries.

Internationally, Trinity supports missionaries serving in Costa Rica, Cuba, Ghana, Haiti, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, and Russia. Several of these missionaries serve with The Mission Society. They are involved in ministries including medical work, church planting, leadership development, and agricultural work.

“Other members of the mission committee were very involved, such as Sunny Daughdrill, who put on a mission fair

with 23 exhibits at an all-afternoon affair, and was our point man for a young couple new to the mission field in Costa Rica,” says Ralph Young.

### Work that lasts

Trinity has grown into a church that is making a lasting impact in its area and around the world. The transformation has been very intentional. Members of Trinity sought to live out Jesus’ call to go “go into all the world and make disciples.” The ministries they support, both financially and with volunteers, are introducing people to Christ and helping bring hope to communities.

The increased mission emphasis has impacted Trinity as well. “I have received immense joy knowing that what we have done furthers God’s kingdom and helps so many people. I have always come back from trips and outreaches feeling that I got more out of the encounter than did the ones that I went to help,” says Allen. “Also, you come to realize that Trinity is part of the work of missionaries we are supporting,” says Young. “They are reaching hundreds, who will reach thousands, who will impact the world for Christ.” †

*Reed Haigler Hoppe is the associate editor of The Mission Society and is an ordained deacon in the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church.*

## Remembering a life of faithful witness

Leonard Stuart, Mission Society's first development director, dies at 85



The Mission Society's first development director, Leonard F. Stuart, went home to be with the Lord Tuesday, June 7, 2011 in Boyle County, Kentucky. Stuart began work with The Mission Society in 1987, just three years after its launch. Prior to his move to serve with this young organization, Stuart had already served in the Air Force in World War II and had been in ministry in the United States and Africa for more than 20 years.

In 1964, he served as lay associate pastor of First Methodist Church in Yuba City, California, before becoming a missionary. He served as field treasurer for the United Methodist Church in Congo, Africa, and hospital administrator at Phebe Hospital in Liberia, West Africa. After returning from Africa, he was assistant director of Redwood Christian Park in Boulder, California; served as development director of McCurdy School in Espanola, New Mexico; hospital administrator at Red Bird Mission Hospital in Southeast, Kentucky, then development director for The Mission Society.

Natives of Montana, Leonard and Marie retired to Danville, Kentucky in 1992. They were members of Centenary United Methodist Church, where Leonard was involved in the mission outreach, taught Sunday school, and started a men's breakfast group.

Julia McLean Williams, former Mission Society president, remembers when Leonard and Marie joined the staff at The Mission Society: "Leonard came to work

with us," she writes, "when we were taking 'baby steps' of a new mission organization. . . . Into this came this tall, handsome servant of God with much experience, ever steadfast faith, and a glint of joy in his eyes. He brought his common sense, hard work, and ideas to help change the atmosphere with calm. His presence was a gift to this new movement of God and solid mission force it was to become. . . . As the development officer, he sat at his desk early and late to gather folks from all over to support The Mission Society and with prayer and resources. . . . We remember you with love, Leonard, as you begin your new journey of wonder."

To Marie, Leonard's wife of 62 years, and their daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, we send our sympathy and love. What a faithful witness the Stuarts have been among us!

## Staffers Jim Ramsay and Frank Decker take on new positions

Jim Ramsay, who has been serving on The Mission Society's staff as senior director of field ministry, has accepted a new role as vice president for mission ministries. Ramsay and his family served for 10 years in Central Asia before joining The Mission Society staff in 2006. A graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary, he is currently enrolled in a D.Min. program in "Transformational Leadership of the Global City" at Bakke Graduate University, based in Seattle.

The position of vice president of mission operations was formerly held by Frank Decker, who will be taking on a role as vice

president of member care and development. This new division is being launched, says President Dick McClain, to enhance even more fully the development and care for our missionaries and mission community.

Congratulations, Jim and Frank. We praise God for you, and look forward to seeing how God will continue to use your lives to advance His Kingdom!



## Celebrating 25 years with The Mission Society

In 1986, the Revs. Dick McClain and Frank Decker, both elders in The United Methodist Church, joined The Mission Society – what was then The Mission Society for United Methodists. Dick took a position on staff in Decatur, Georgia as The Mission Society's first personnel director. Meanwhile, Frank began serving with his family as missionaries in Ghana, West Africa, where he would direct the national evangelism program of Methodist Church, Ghana, and launch a lay evangelists program. In 1993, he would join the staff in Decatur to develop The Mission Society's missionary's training program. Today, Dick and Frank serve in leadership of The Mission Society – Dick as president, and Frank as vice president for member care and development. On June 21, The Mission Society community of staff and missionaries (by email) celebrated the 25th anniversary of Dick and Frank's service with this ministry. We thank God for sending these two remarkable servants and their families to help direct and form The Mission Society, and help shape the lives of all of us who know them. We love you, Frank and Dick!



Dick McClain, president and CEO, joined the staff as personal director in 1986.



The McClains, early years: Dick, Pam, Josh, and Heather (Joey, the McClains' third child, would be born later.)



Frank Decker, vice president, joined The Mission Society as missionary to Ghana in 1986.



The Deckers, early years: Frank, Vicki, Emily, and Jake (Kaitlin, the Deckers' third child, would be born later.)

## The Mission Society consecrates 13 new missionaries

Most to serve in restricted-access locations

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 13 missionaries were consecrated by The Mission Society for service in Africa, Latin America, and restricted-access locations in various regions throughout the world. Workers serving in such restricted-access areas will be ministering in locations where it might be unsafe to be openly Christian, so they cannot be named publicly.

Those who can be named include a Texas couple and a former Memphis city-schools teacher.

Scott and Terri Schrader will be working with the Methodist Children's Home in

Costa Rica. Scott Schrader has bachelor's and master's degrees in English communication arts from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. Terri Schrader earned her bachelor's degree in English from St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas, and has master's degrees in counseling and education from St. Mary's and the University of South Carolina, respectively. The Schraders have two children.

After more than 20 years of teaching and several short-term mission trips to Zambia, Mark Parry will be the lead teacher at a school for AIDS orphans in Lusaka,

Zambia's capital city. Parry holds a bachelor's degree in microbiology and a master's in education from the University of Memphis.

Welcome to our newest Mission Society missionaries! We thank God for you.

Currently, 200 missionaries serve with The Mission Society in 37 countries.



# The 'long haul' of justice

Correcting oppression may be different than we think



"If girls no longer have to spend five-to-eight hours a day carrying water from a distance, then suddenly there is possibility of education, empowerment, and ministry. Thus even the provision of water becomes a justice issue because it is dealing with systemic causes." Here, a young girl in Haiti makes the long trek.

*Photo by Jim Ramsay*

When we hear the word "justice" in our contemporary context, perhaps it brings up images of Judge Judy on cable TV, or perhaps a courtroom scene, with justice equated to the prison sentence given as punishment for a crime. Politicians talk about bringing perpetrators of terror "to justice." But what does justice have to do with missions? In these examples, it seems a stretch to say it has any relation at all.

In the first chapter of Isaiah we read, "Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." (ESV) Throughout the Bible, injustice is often portrayed as a system that results in oppression or taking advantage of the powerless in society. Justice isn't usually put in the context of a specific incident or even specific person, but it is something to be sought in how we live our lives and in our attitude toward those with the least power. If there are situations that lead to injustice or oppression, God expects us to take on the cause.

This is where it gets interesting and has implications for us in mission. Seeking justice is not usually as simple as just grabbing a sign to protest or jumping into some heroic rescue. It takes prayer and discernment to truly understand some of the systemic causes of injustice and a long-term view of how to address them.

## Addressing the root cause

A good example of this deals with the sex trafficking business in Southeast Asia. There are not many people who could look at the situation of young girls sold into virtual slavery to work as prostitutes and not see this as a huge issue of justice. Thankfully, we have seen an increase in the awareness of this issue worldwide. But what is to be done? The immediate response may be to build rescue missions to get these girls out of the business, or to go into the bars and bring them out. Get them a place to live; teach them a trade, and all will be well.

Soon we will be sending a missionary family to work in Cambodia. Focusing

on education, they will work in primary and secondary schools with values education and in undergraduate schools training teachers of English. They also plan to explore ways to help the poor gain skills to start businesses. This will involve the very people who are most vulnerable to being trapped into trafficking. Most of the people who end up in prostitution do so because they believe they have no choice, no other skills they can market, and little sense of personal value that would preclude being used and abused by others.

In a recent meeting in Thailand with our ministry partners Nantachai and Ubolwan Mejudhon, the subject of trafficking came up. They observed that many Christian workers seek to come to Thailand and work in rescue, and certainly that is needed. But the Mejudhons said so many more girls could be helped if work were done in the villages where the trafficked girls often come out of. For this reason the Mejudhons have committed their lives to working in a poor area



According to HumanTrafficking.org, Thai women and girls are trafficked to Japan, Malaysia, South Africa, Bahrain, Australia, Singapore, Europe, Canada and the United States for sexual and labor exploitation. Many women and girls are trafficked by international criminal syndicates.” To prevent girls falling victim to trafficking, Mission Society missionaries in Thailand are working among poor communities, offering the love of Christ, education, and values to the village children. *Photo by Jim Ramsay*

in northeast Thailand. Mission Society missionaries Chris and Dora Barbee and intern Lila Ozley serve in ministry there. If the children receive education, values, and love from the time they are very small, they are much less likely to fall victim. This approach may not seem as heroic. It is a very long-term approach, investing in children over many years. But how much better is it if girls and boys can be prevented from falling victim to trafficking? Addressing these systemic causes is a biblical approach to doing justice. This is not to denigrate the important work of those involved in rescue, but it serves to remind that working for justice often will involve a much longer-term approach that focuses on the systems that cause injustice.

This reality is repeated in many other contexts. Someone who helps provide clean water by drilling wells in Africa is not just providing clean water. If girls no longer have to spend five-to-eight hours a day carrying water from a distance, then suddenly there is possibility of education,

empowerment, and ministry. Thus even the provision of water becomes a justice issue because it is dealing with systemic causes.

### **Birthing justice by ‘giving back’**

In January, I had the pleasure of visiting Haiti along with Darrell Whiteman. We visited the ministry of the International Christian Development Mission, operated by Yvan Pierre. Yvan has as a vision no less than “the taking back of Haiti for the gospel.” One way he is doing this is by operating a school in which children are not just given knowledge for their own futures, but are taught from the start that their education is given for the purpose of giving back to the community. He proudly introduced us to a teacher and a nurse in the community who started as pupils in the school years ago, completed higher education, and came back to serve their community.

It is this long-term commitment of allowing the gospel to transform systems of oppression over time that beautifully re-

flects a biblical view of justice. Justice is not going to be found in the 30-minute episode of Judge Judy or even the retribution achieved by the deserved punishment of a criminal. Justice comes when the light of Jesus identifies unjust causes, works to change them, and invests in people so that they can have a different future. †

*Jim Ramsay is The Mission Society’s vice president for mission ministries.*

“The idea that the gospel is addressed only to the individual and that it is only indirectly addressed to societies, nations, and cultures is simply an illusion of our individualist post-Enlightenment Western culture.”

–*Leslie Newbigin*



## What do you have?

Wondering how God can use you, your church?  
Feeling lacking? Empty-handed? This article is for you.



Have you ever had one of those situations where you thought you had messed up and then later it turned out to be a blessing? Such was the case for me a few months back. I had experienced a grueling week which ended on a Saturday that included an all-day teaching session for local church mission leaders. I crawled into bed sometime after midnight dead tired and then proceeded to sleep through all of my alarms on Sunday morning. By the time I had awakened, it was too late to attend not only my Sunday school class but the 10:45 worship service as well. I pretty much figured I had blown it when I remembered that my youngest son's church, 12Stone in Lawrenceville, Georgia, had a 1:00 service that I could make.

Pastor Kevin Myers was speaking that day on the well-known story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. Although the sermon

had a different focus, the outline Pastor Kevin used speaks to an issue that many local churches deal with in the area of missions. His simple outline was:

1. The people were hungry
2. The disciples did the math
3. Jesus did the miracle

Jesus had been informed of the death of John the Baptist and decided to get away with His disciples for a bit of rest and relaxation. Many people discovered where Jesus was going and rushed to get there ahead of Him. They were hungry for His teaching and healing ministry. The Bible says when He saw them He had compassion on them. He then laid aside His own needs and dealt with the needs of those around him. The day grew long, and the disciples went to Jesus and suggested that perhaps the crowd

should be sent away so they could get something to eat. Jesus responded to the disciples suggestion by saying, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." The disciples protested saying, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" It was then that the young boy with five barley loaves and two fish was brought forward. Jesus took the loaves and the fish, pronounced a blessing, and distributed it to the disciples. The disciples in turn distributed the food to the people who had been arranged in groups of 50 and 100. All that were there ate and were satisfied, and 12 baskets of remains were taken up.

### **The people were hungry**

Today, people all over the world are hungry. They're hungry for food, for relief from

their misery, for healing of battered emotions, for deliverance from addictions, for something to fill the spiritual void in their life, and the list goes on. As I write this, the folks in Joplin, Missouri are reeling from a tornado that ripped through their city destroying property and lives. Alabama is trying to put back the pieces after suffering the same type of destruction. Just west of Alabama, the people along the Mississippi River are seeing homes and livelihoods destroyed by massive flooding.

Within our cities and communities, people's lives are in upheaval because of a weakened economy that is affecting their jobs, the cost of goods and services, and their "normal" way of life. Add to that a growing number of ills such as homelessness, sexual exploitation, family breakups, and a host of others. Throughout the world there are wars, disease, mass displacements, and people lacking the very fundamentals of human life. The biggest loss may be the loss of basic human dignity.

All across our globe people are hungry. And just like in the story of the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus calls us, His disciples, to be the ones to stand between Himself and the hungry as the distributors of His grace and goodness.

### **The disciples did the math**

You can almost see them, can't you? Reaching under their robes, pulling out their calculators, and doing the math. "Let's see now. About 5,000 men here... quite a few women also. A lot of them have their kids...okay ...5,000 plus...uh-huh... throw in...uh...that many kids... that will bring the total to...No way! We can't feed that many people! Philip! Thomas! Does he know what He is asking

us to do? Impossible!"

Fast forward to today. We followers of Jesus still act pretty much the same way. Recently I was talking to a group about beginning the Global Outreach process in their church – a process that will position them for greater, more strategic outreach to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual hungers of the world. I told them of a recent experience with a church in South Carolina. The immediate response was, "How big is that church?" After telling them, I related another experience with a church in North Carolina. Their question was the same, "Well, how big is that church?" This group is not alone, for I frequently hear the same question from

The issue is not our limitations compared to others but our potential when surrendered to the power of the living God.

others. The clear implication is that if we have enough people, or enough resources, if it's all big enough then we can expect great things.

David Platt in his book *Radical* tells about thinking of his new church's bounty of resources and reckoned that if they could get behind a global purpose they could "shake the nations for the glory of God." He discovered how wrongheaded that was. He later concluded that they could have none of these resources, yet under the power of the Holy Spirit, they could still "shake the nations for the glory of God."

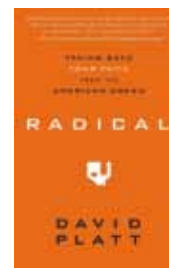
### **Jesus did the miracle**

Interestingly, while the disciples were focusing on the math, in their midst was a

Miracle Worker who was in no way bound by their calculations. They were a bit slow in recognizing His power, as are we sometimes. Some of that is in the way we often make things more complicated than they need be. In Mark's account, Jesus reduced the issue to two simple questions, one stated and one implied. The first is: What do you have? And the second is: Will you give it to Me? Wow! Do you think that maybe that is all that God is asking? That maybe it doesn't matter how big or small we are, whether we are a Chevrolet or a Cadillac, countrified or citified – maybe it boils down to whether or not we are willing to trust Him with who we are and what we have.

Notice what Jesus did. He took the loaves and fish from the disciples, blessed the food, and then gave it right back so the disciples could pass it on in abundance. The issue is not our limitations compared to others but our potential when surrendered to the power of the living God. Rather than looking at what others have, perhaps we should be looking at what we have and whether or not we have trusted the Lord with it. ☩

*Stan Self is The Mission Society's senior director of church ministry.*



A runaway bestseller, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*, referenced here, is ideal for small group study.



# Care for the neglected

Why our job includes bringing mercy and justice to God's non-human creation



**"There are no unsacred places. There are only sacred places and desecrated places."**

—Wendell Berry

In his book *The Next Christians*, author Gabe Lyons challenges the notion that conversion of souls should be the only motive of Christians. Lyons argues that Christians should be restorers who "envision the world as it was meant to be and [they] work toward that vision. [They] seek to mend earth's brokenness."

I've been meditating on Lyons' words quite a bit over the past couple of months and have particularly grown in my passion for restorative actions that do not have people as the primary recipients. As one who came to faith in a denomination that stressed the saving of souls, I did not spend much of my focus being an advocate for the physical world around me. In other words, I didn't know that it could be a spiritual thing to be involved in creation care.

## Mercy and justice issue?

*W-w-wait, Richard. You've lost me. What*

*does creation care have to do with mercy and justice?* Lest you start singing the Sesame Street song from the 70s, "One of these things is not like the other," allow me to share definitions for the words, *mercy* and *justice*. Mercy, as it has been used throughout this issue, is defined as the *compassionate treatment of those in distress*. Justice refers to *moral rightness as defined by ethics, natural law, religion, or some other standard*. If God's creation has been subjected to the Fall and to the sheer neglect of humankind, what better place to put an article like this than in a mercy-and-justice-themed magazine?

*But Richard, I'm still lost. Why spend magazine space on an article that deals with injustices toward God's creation? Write about poor people, enslaved people, sick people.* My answer: It has everything to do with worldview. A few years ago, I was on a committee with a native Canadian, and he made an unexpected contribution to the group. Prior to his comments, all of the conversation had been about causes directly related to people. My aboriginal friend – a born again, well-traveled, highly educated believer – passionately pointed this out and opened our eyes to see that we had completely neglected to discuss the rest of God's creation. It struck me as odd at first, but then I quickly remembered that every people group has something important to contribute to our understanding of God's Word. This brother was opening my eyes to a cause I regarded as

unspiritual, a cause I would have never associated with mercy and justice.

## Care, mend, restore

What about you? Have you enacted and proclaimed God's mercy and justice as it relates to His creation? I think of my wife who is quick to rescue animals. She once rescued a stray kitty whose head was stuck in an empty food can. Another time she saved a bird with conjunctivitis. Her rationale was that she was contributing to the redemption of God's creation.

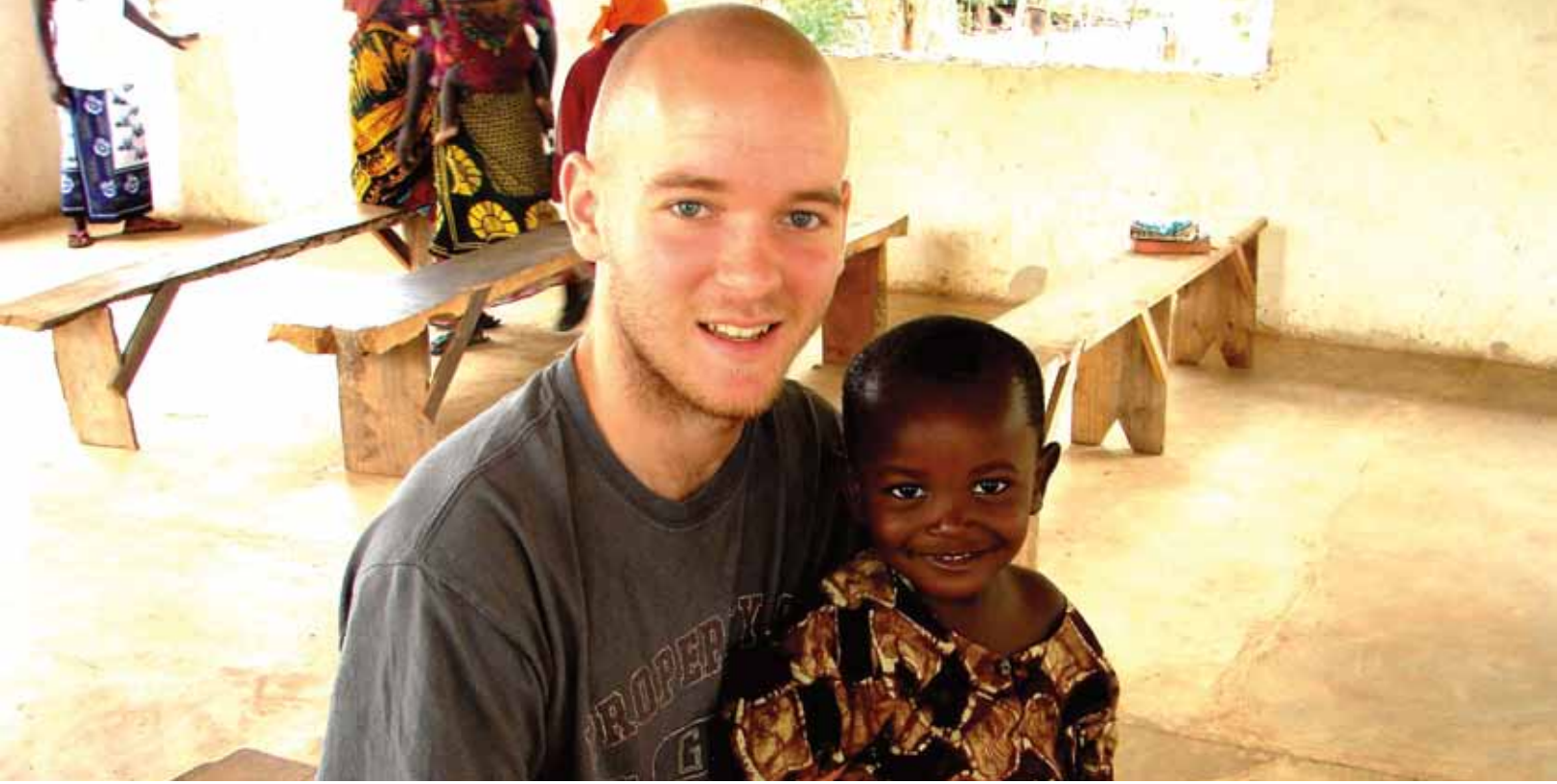
There are plenty of things you can do to help restore God's non-human creation. You can volunteer at an animal shelter, recycle, decrease your shower time, plant a tree, spread awareness about endangered species, and the list goes on.

Be merciful. God's creation is in distress. Demonstrate justice. Respect and uphold the natural laws God has set into motion. Do and proclaim God's mercy and justice! ✠

**Richard Coleman** is the director of mobilization and candidacy for *The Mission Society*.



Want a small-group study on creation care? In this collection, Christianity Today offers eight weeks of programs, including: "The Green Church: Is caring for the environment part of the Church's mission?"



# Calling all young people

It's often been said that our generation is one of great passion; that we have the passion and opportunities to do things that have never been done before.

The question is, **"What will you and I do with that passion?"**

Are you interested in cross-cultural ministry? Perhaps sensing a call to missions? Filled with a passion for people and to follow Jesus wherever He may lead you? But at the same time, are you maybe not so sure where to begin or where to even get started in pursuing this calling?

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