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The Mission Society Launches Programs to Raise Up, Equip Young Leaders for Ministry

Latest issue of 'Unfinished' magazine highlights efforts to introduce millennials to missions and support young church leaders facing modern-day challenges

NORCROSS, Ga. – In a six-week trip to Thailand and India, seven college-age women came together to form the inaugural team for The Mission Society's GreenLight: Gateway program -- an initiative that gives opportunities for 18- to 23-year-olds to explore cross-cultural ministry and be groomed for missions.

The fall 2016 issue of "Unfinished" magazine (<https://www.themissionsociety.org/unfinished-magazine>) shares the success story of the group that began as strangers and ended as friends.

"I have never seen a group mesh like this one," said co-leader Jennie Clements. "During the summer, we had a very small taste of what it looks like to work and function together really well as the body of Christ."

Clements, a former missionary to Mexico, led the group alongside Asbury Theological Seminary student Amanda Allen. The team began in Thailand, where The Mission Society's team teaches English, coordinates youth ministry, leads Bible studies and camps, works with young men and women who have escaped the sex trafficking industry, and disciples Thai youth.

Then the team participated in The Mission Society's H.T. and Alice Maclin Mission Training Institute in India, where they were educated in cross-cultural ministry.

The experience caused participants to view faith through a different lens. One participant, Danielle, said, "I want to identify with being a follower of Christ and not just the comfort and familiarity of being a Christian."

Some participants are considering full-time, cross-cultural ministry as a result of the experience. Jennie commented, "Many of the team members were struggling to discern God's will for their life. They wanted to know where God was calling them to serve, when should they go, and for how long. It was neat to see them release those questions to God throughout the trip and just draw closer to Jesus."

Meanwhile, The Mission Society seeks other creative ways to equip and support influential young leaders so they can be more effective in sharing the gospel and



addressing theological and social issues. The Rev. Richard Coleman worked with a team to identify 1,000 emerging evangelical influencers from across the globe selected to attend the 2016 Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering.

Under the theme “United in the Great Story,” the gathering took place in August in Jakarta, Indonesia, and provided a forum for leaders from ages 25 to 40 to be informed, inspired and mentored. “It was important for us to select today’s influential younger leaders who are already making a tremendous impact in their spheres of influence,” said Coleman.

“In these exciting times, we are witnessing a concerted, conscious, ongoing global effort being moved further by the vision and sense of community among the world’s younger leaders.”

The Mission Society President Max Wilkins further emphasized the importance of continuing to equip millennials for ministry: “This generation understands the culture shift we see happening worldwide. The world needs answers only the gospel can provide, and these leaders are ready to address those issues in a relevant way.”

The latest issue of “Unfinished” also features several stories on joy.

Wilkins compares the lasting and profound realities of biblical joy with the fleeting and disappointing pursuit of happiness. Pastor Denny Heiberg shares the joy of discipling believers, while missionaries describe the joy of following Jesus’ calling, even in the most challenging circumstances. But joy sometimes eludes us, leading to long periods of spiritual drought. Spiritual director Laura Baber helps readers learn how to persevere through those seasons of joylessness.

The latest issue of “Unfinished” is available for free at www.themissionsociety.org/unfinished-magazine.

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Founded in 1984 in the Wesleyan tradition, The Mission Society (www.themissionsociety.org) exists to mobilize and deploy the body of Christ globally to join Jesus in His mission, especially among the least-reached peoples. The Mission Society recruits, trains and sends Christian missionaries to minister around the world. Its church ministry department provides seminars, workshops and mentoring for congregations in the United States and abroad, helping equip churches for outreach in their communities and worldwide. The Mission Society has 180 missionaries serving in 35 countries.