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## **World Focus Can Help Awaken Stagnant Churches, Says Missions Agency**

***TMS Global outlines program to help move congregations from 'vaguely spiritual Rotary Club' to strategic outreach***

NORCROSS, Ga.—A wake-up call to sleepy churches has gone out from missions agency TMS Global, which wants to help revive inward-focused congregations through revitalized faith.

The interdenominational organization offers a roadmap to renewal in the latest issue of its “Unfinished” magazine (<https://www.tms-global.org/unfinished-magazine>), promoting greater involvement in world evangelization as the key to more vibrant churches. The summer 2017 issue is devoted to creating what President and CEO the Rev. Max Wilkins calls “a mission culture in the local church.”

A church that is not on mission “is often just a vaguely spiritual Rotary Club,” he says in his opening editorial. “It may do some nice things, but it is not really a church.” Many congregations are like the disciples after Jesus’ ascension, he adds, left looking to heaven. But when angels appeared and asked them why they were still standing there, “the implication was clear: stop staring at the clouds and get on with it.”

Sadly, the vast majority of North American churches today “are not on mission in any meaningful way,” Wilkins writes. Rather, the lack of involvement “reflects a lack of clarity surrounding the call to mission, and a concurrent lack of understanding of how a church can mobilize for that mission.”

Responding to that need, TMS Global’s Activate weekend is an interactive event for key leaders emphasizing God’s call to mission, and outlining how to develop a proven mission action plan for the church. That is followed by the Global Impact Celebration, during which church members get to connect with missionaries and mission partners to learn more firsthand about their ministries.

In one article in the magazine, the Rev. Rudy Guess tells how the TMS Global initiative has helped revolutionize three churches he has pastored. After participating recently, members of First United Methodist Church in Tuscumbia, Ala., pledged more than \$80,000 to missions, while general and capital fund giving has also increased.

“These events help the church begin to see missions in a new light,” said Guess. “If you want your church to join Jesus in his mission, as opposed to simply having missions as one committee of the church, this is the best way I know to make it happen.”

The pastor’s involvement is also crucial, according to another article. Writing about the Activate program for which he led the development, former TMS Global president, the Rev. Dick McClain, says, “Spearheading

missions efforts is one job that the pastor should not subcontract to anyone else in the church. In fact, I've come to believe that if the pastor doesn't take the lead, the church probably won't get to first base when it comes to mission."

Among the Activate participants who tell of their experiences is Jan Gilbert, a missions leader in Aiken, S.C. "I can't explain what happens during an Activate Conference," she says, "but somewhere in the process God grabs your heart, and you discover your purpose in the world."

Jorge Acevedo, the pastor of Grace Church in Cape Coral, Fla., tells how God showed him he had been "seduced into a Jerusalem-only ministry. In my zeal to reach the lost of Cape Coral and the surrounding area, I had forgotten about the world."

More than 400 churches across a number of denominations in the United States have participated in the program.

"It is a joy to celebrate the things the Lord is doing as churches become mobilized to join Jesus in His mission," says Wilkins, who, as a pastor himself, used the TMS Global resources to develop the missions focus of the church he was leading, before joining the Norcross, Ga.-based organization.

Founded in 1984 as The Mission Society for United Methodists, TMS Global has developed into an interdenominational agency that honors its Wesleyan heritage and beliefs, with staff and cross-cultural workers who now represent more than a dozen different denominations.

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*TMS Global ([www.tms-global.org](http://www.tms-global.org)) mobilizes and equips the body of Christ to share the good news of the gospel, with an emphasis on reaching to the least-reached peoples of the world. Workers are engaged in a wide range of dynamic, culturally sensitive ministries, from training and leadership development to literacy, medical care and relief aid.*

**To schedule an interview with a representative of TMS Global, contact *Ty Mays* at (770) 256-8710 or [tmays@inchristcommunications.com](mailto:tmays@inchristcommunications.com).**