

Unfinished

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Taking the gospel where he lives

Helping the Majority World assume the lead in global missions

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Cover photo:

Taken outside of a leprosy hospital in Bihar, the second largest state in India and home to one of the highest concentrations of unreached people in the world. Photo by Jim Ramsay.

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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-African proverb*



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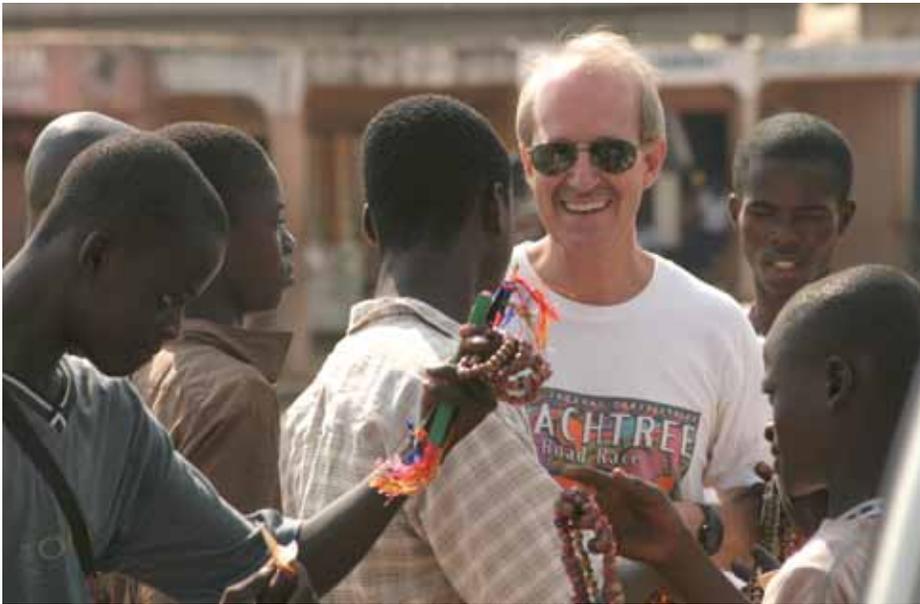
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Practicing what we preach

“We’re living in one of the most exciting seasons this side of Pentecost,” writes Dick McClain, who describes an initiative that was launched once he stopped being “the problem.”



“Today missions is about ‘the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world,’” writes Dick McClain. “In such a day, we have both the high calling and the joyful privilege of joining hands with the younger mission movements of the world.”
Shown here: Dick McClain in Ghana for one of the first Global Vision Seminars

“Don’t wait until you finish the job at home until you go to the ends of the earth, or else you’ll never go!”

When we began mobilizing U.S. churches for missions in 2000, utilizing what eventually would become the “Global Outreach Seminar,” that was the challenge we presented to every U.S. congregation we visited. The need for such an exhortation was pretty obvious. I say that because of the number of good church folks who, when presented with the reality of unreached people groups around the world, often responded by saying, “But there’s so much still to be done right here at home.” Of course, they were right. There were and are great needs in our own communities. But we reminded people that if the first believers had waited until they had “finished the job at home” before taking the good news to the ends of the

earth, the church today would still be a small Jewish sect still preoccupied with Jerusalem, swimming upstream against the prevailing religious tide in Israel.

Within months of launching the Global Outreach Seminar in U.S. churches, leaders from Africa, Asia, and Latin America urged us to bring it to their countries. I’m embarrassed to say that my standard reply during those early years was to thank them for the invitation, but to tell them that we didn’t have the personnel, the financial resources, or the time to come to them. Besides, I would say, we had only just begun to do the work of missions mobilization here in the United States. We couldn’t take the teaching to other countries yet because—you guessed it—there was still so much to be done right here at home!

Vision too small

Thankfully, the chair of the executive council who shepherded our early mobilization efforts (Bill Johnson, who now chairs The Mission Society’s board) offered his own challenge to me when he said, “When are you going to practice what you preach?” He probably said “we” and not “you,” because Bill is a gentleman. But the Spirit hammered me with Bill’s words. The truth is that the problem wasn’t with “us.” It was with *me!*

So in 2002, I spent several months writing out what we then called the “Global Vision Seminar,” creating materials for a pilot international mission mobilization seminar that we launched in Ghana in 2003. Even though the material was not really ready for prime time, God used it, and the impact of those initial mobilization conferences in Ghana is still being felt.

Sadly, for the next year I pressed ahead with building the Church Ministry department (we called it “World Parish Ministries” in those days) and expanding the Global Outreach program in U.S. churches. I didn’t make a decision *not* to do any more international work; I just didn’t make it a priority, so it didn’t happen.

Thankfully, the Holy Spirit (with no small amount of help from Bill and others) didn’t let me forget the urgency of international mobilization. To make a long story short, we rewrote the seminar materials in late 2004 in preparation for what we thought might be a week of training with a small group of key Latin American leaders the next summer.

About the same time, God led a friend to designate a very generous gift for “international missions mobilization.” To be honest, the size of the gift dwarfed the scope of our vision, so we began to pray and dream about what God might really want us to do. The result was that in August 2005, we conducted a mobilization event in Costa Rica that was attended by 75 key leaders—pastors, bishops, and mission agency heads—from 10 Central and South American countries. The following summer, we held an East Africa Mission Mobilization Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, attended by about 75 leaders from Kenya and a number of surrounding nations. Three weeks later, we conducted our first Mobilization Conference at a missionary training school in the mountains outside of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Fruit, fruit, and more fruit

In the years since then, many more such

conferences have been conducted on three continents. Thousands of indigenous pastors and leaders have gone through this training. Though it’s been impossible to tabulate the outcomes, we know of dozens of churches that have been planted, new mission initiatives that have been launched among unreached people groups, cross-cultural workers who have been sent, increased funds for missions that have been raised, and even new mission agencies that have been pioneered.

God has brought abundant fruit from these efforts. In the meantime, the work “here at home” hasn’t skipped a beat.

“Churches that used to simply receive missionaries are now sending their own. Tens of thousands of cross-cultural workers have been deployed from Korea, India, Nigeria, Argentina, and scores of other countries.”

More recently, The Mission Society has begun to offer to missionaries from several countries the same pre-field training (focusing on such things as cross-cultural ministry, discipleship, and spiritual warfare) that our own workers receive. Next year we hope to extend this new initiative to India, where there is a vibrant missionary movement but also the need for solid training in the principles and practice of cross-cultural witness.

Global missions in overdrive

Why is all this important? Because we’re living in one of the most exciting seasons this side of Pentecost—a

time when followers of Jesus around the world are increasingly joining in the task of global missions. Churches that used to simply receive missionaries are now sending their own. Tens of thousands of cross-cultural workers have been deployed from Korea, India, Nigeria, Argentina, and scores of other countries. International missions is no longer the sole domain of the church in the West. Increasingly, it is within the Majority World that we find the most vibrant mission movements. That’s not surprising, of course, since that’s also where the church is the most vibrant and growing.

Today missions is about “the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.” In such a day, we have both the high calling and the joyful privilege of joining hands with the younger mission movements of the world. Today we get to “carry the bags” of people like Timothy Olonade, a Nigerian global missions statesman with whom we have been privileged to collaborate. You’ll be blessed as you read Timothy’s article on page 4. Read from Peter Pereira, ministry leader in India; Bishop João Carlos Lopes, bishop of the Methodist Church in Brazil; and David Mutai, director of missions of Kenya’s Africa Gospel Church about mission movements in their nations. And learn more about how The Mission Society is equipping indigenous leaders and our own missionaries for cross-cultural ministry. So read on, and celebrate that it’s in this thrilling season that Jesus invites us to join Him in His mission. †

The Rev. Dick McClain is president and CEO of The Mission Society.



"In reality the worldwide church is crisscrossing the globe from everywhere to everywhere to focus on the finishable task of the Great Commission."

Finishable!

A leader in Nigeria's mission movement offers an inside look to the surprising current state of global missions



We are living in an era in which the global body of Christ is taking deliberate responsibility globally to completely evangelize the whole world. In varying degrees, the global church is preparing for Jesus' return. Discipleship has been stepped up around the world. Christ's followers are increasingly being mentored in ministry skills and biblical teaching that helps to correctly prioritize involvement in the Great Commission. And this is not just a case of the church in the West helping the rest of the world. And it is not just a case of Western Christian leaders adding "international" or "global" to their agencies' names or mission statements. In reality, the worldwide church is crisscrossing the globe from everywhere to everywhere to focus on the *finishable* task of the Great Commission.

Cross-cultural Christian witnesses are coming from everywhere and going to everywhere.

African missionaries are now serving in as faraway places as China and Japan, and as far south as Brazil and Bolivia. Brazilian missionaries are now serving in Tunisia, Morocco, and East Africa. Korean missionaries are found in remote villages in Northern Nigeria. South Africans are in the horn of Africa. Nigerians and Filipinos are found in Japan and throughout the Middle East. The presence of African flavor in global evangelism can also be seen in Europe, where the five largest churches are led by Africans. Recently, SIM [Serving In Mission, a mission agency] announced the appointment of a new international director, a missionary doctor from Nigeria, a country where the three founding

Crisscrossing the globe

Among The Mission Society's team of missionaries are several who have come from countries outside of the United States to serve in other nations. Here are a few.



From Germany to Namibia – Johannes and Lena Ebner

Johannes and Lena will join The Mission Society team in Namibia to work with Children of Zion Village (COZV). COZV is an orphanage in Katima Mulilo, Namibia. This is a home for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Johannes and Lena are both originally from Germany.

From Peru to Mexico – Florencio and Maria Guzman

The Guzmans minister in Monterrey, Mexico and other areas of Latin America. They are involved in evangelism, leadership development, discipleship, and writing Bible training curriculum. In addition, they have a vital ministry to the “garbage people” in Monterrey. Florencio is originally from Peru.

From the Democratic Republic of Congo to Togo – Esaho and Beatrice Kipuke

Kipuke Ministries was established in Togo by Esaho and Beatrice. Their ministry focuses on evangelism, church planting, mission mobilization, and community development. The Kipukes train pastors, evangelists and their spouses, as well as provide leadership training to church leaders. They have programs that train young women in home economics, that care for the elderly, and that care for orphans in their community. The Kipukes are originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

From Brazil to France – Gustavo and Dalila Faleiro

Gustavo and Dalila are from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he served as a pastor and musician. Through a collaborative relationship between The Mission Society and IMForM, a Brazilian missionary sending agency, the Faleiros serve with the “La Fonderie” project in the heart of Paris, France. La Fonderie’s purpose is to reach French people for Christ by encouraging, inspiring, and discipling Christians working in the arts and creative professions.

“The gospel that was in principle universal has now become in reality universal.”

–*Kwame Bediako, Ghanaian theologian and late rector of the Akrofi-Christaller Institute for Theology, Mission, and Culture in Akropong, Ghana*

fathers of that agency laid down their lives a little more than a century ago.

Of the 32 speakers on the stage at the Ethne-to-Ethne Conference in Bali, Indonesia in 2006, only six were from the West. When Colombia played host to the same event in 2009, the program coordinator was from Malta; speakers were from India, the Philippines, Africa, and the rest of the world. During the Tokyo 2010 Global Consultation on Missions in Japan, a large percentage of the conference officials, speakers, and seminarians were from the rest of the world. At the 2010 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town, not only did the speakers reflect the global body of Christ, the thematic expression of the confab bore witness to that. In recent years, the global body of Christ’s missiology is shaping up as locations for body of Christ gatherings and the active participants are reflecting the true status of the global church.

What factors are responsible for this global presence and participation? Is this part of the ongoing fulfillment of Jesus’ declaration that the “gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in the entire world as a witness to all nations; and then the end shall come”? Maybe. Whereas the first attempt by the Apostles met with resistance including loss of lives, we were told that all of Asia was reached with the gospel. Their unrelenting effort caused enough systemic upheaval that they were accused of turning the world upside-down.

The global church is growing in places where obstacles are the greatest.

After a period of slow down, we have recorded measurable breakthroughs in the modern mission era from the days of William Carey. Yet out of nearly 17,000 people groups

listed by the Joshua Project (which maintains a database of unreached peoples categorized by country and language), more than 6,900 are still considered least reached people groups. These least reached peoples are found in every corner of the globe, just as the church is present in every continent. The irony is that the church is experiencing major decline where it used to be strong, and it is growing phenomenally where it used to be alien. To complicate the matter, where the church is growing, its economic power is low. According to Todd Johnson (co-editor of the recent 400-page *Atlas of Global Christianity*), more than 60 percent of global church income stays where the church grows the least, and the church is growing more where the income is far less.

“If the church and the world continue to grow at their current rates, the world population will outstrip the church on every continent.”

The global church is rallying to reach the least reached.

To heighten the stake, the church is not catching up with the world population and world wealth distribution. If the church and the world continue to grow at their current rates, the world population will outstrip the church on every continent, and the gains of the past will be erased. So how has the Lord prompted us to act?

To reach the world and complete the task of announcing the gospel among every people group, three things stand out in recent years:

1. God has given the church a fresh spirit of collaboration to address issue-based and regional conflicts and concerns.
2. There has been an upsurge in the worldwide prayer for the unreached.
3. Efforts have increased to mobilize and train the church to raise up the required workforce to finish the task. (In some cases, providing training like this now is like building a ship when you are already on the high sea.)

“Out of nearly 17,000 people groups listed by the Joshua Project, more than 6,900 are still considered least reached. . . . Efforts have increased to mobilize and train the church to raise up the required workforce to finish the task,” writes the Rev. Tim Olonade, author and mission mobilizer, seen here (second from the right) at a leadership training event in Ongole, South India.



Unprecedented alliances are forming to finish the unfinished task.

To accomplish all these, God is birthing alliances in different regions of the world. These alliances are not just Western packages sold to the rest of the world. The Movement of African National Initiative (MANI) was primarily born to evoke continent-wide commitment to world evangelization. COMIBAM has been used of God to stir the Latino world into a conscious engagement in world mission. And from India Missions Association to Philippines Missions Association, the Asian church is taking its leading role in reaching the world.

Aside from the regional cooperation, God has initiated and is sustaining a number of mission accelerating global alliances and networks. While Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization continues to provide a wider platform of engagement, the Ethne-to-Ethne Initiative symbolically and strategically brings together Christian leaders who are passionate about doing whatever it takes to reach the remaining 27 percent of the world population.

For the global church, no challenge is greater than training “frontier workers.”

Of all the challenges confronting the global church in finishing the task, none is as acute as the recruitment, preparation, and strategic deployment of the frontier workers. Because the harvest force is now within or nearby the harvest field, we must develop appropriate methods of getting the right people into the field in the most cost effective way. To do this we need to mobilize the entire body. We need the company of prophets to sound the alarm or raise a clarion

call to the body of Christ to rise up and take action. We know that He who said the “harvest is plenty and workers are few” will be eager to call to Himself whomever He wills and “send them forth” to the least reached nations of the earth.

We are beginning to see the prophetic company emerging through such programs like The Mission Society’s Global Outreach Seminar, LSI Kairos, and M2414 Initiative. Of these three, The Mission Society’s Global Outreach Seminar has been a significant tool all across Africa. In Nigeria, it has been renamed “Global Engagement Training,” or “GET.” From East to West Africa, this tool is helping to raise new tribes of mobilizers. And there are more.

In Africa alone there are hundreds of training initiatives geared towards preparing the church to live out her distinctive, get a better grasp of her call to reach the nations, and fulfill her responsibility to the society in all areas of human endeavors. Asia is brimming with hundreds of strategies and training platforms and initiatives. From India to China, from Nepal to Bangladesh, programs aimed at helping the church to better preach the gospel abound, and the Latin America region is no different. While the Nigerian missions movement’s “Vision 50:15” seeks to place thousands of Nigerians in mission service from Nigeria all the way to Jerusalem, the Filipino’s PM3 aims at the total mobilization of the entire nation.

God has blessed the church with some organizationally led micro-initiatives—programs, projects, and trainings that are having an incredible global impact on the church’s effort to finish the task. These include, but are not limited to, The Missions Society’s Global Outreach Seminar, Living Spring International’s Kairos (from the Philippines), and El-Rehoboth

Nigerians are mobilizing to proclaim Christ throughout North Africa and the Arab Peninsula, which are largely Muslim-populated areas.



Announcing Christ from Nigeria to Jerusalem

Nigerians mobilize;
The Mission Society comes alongside

In 2006, Mission Society President Dick McClain, then the vice president of church resources met The Rev. Timothy Olonade at the Ethne-to-Ethne Conference in Bali, Indonesia. At that time, Olonade served as the executive secretary/CEO of the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA).

The goal of NEMA's "Vision 50:15" is to mobilize 50,000 Christians to train, send, and support 15,000 Nigerian missionaries by 2020. These missionaries prepare to serve in areas such as North Africa and the Arab Peninsula.

When McClain introduced Olonade to the Global Outreach Seminar materials developed by The Mission Society, Olonade expressed an interest in using this curriculum to help train Nigerian pastors in mission mobilization.

So in June 2009, NEMA hosted a mission mobilization conference led by The Mission Society. The Revs. Dick McClain and Kirk Sims (who served as a Mission Society missionary to Ghana at the time) and Dr. Darrell Whiteman (see pages 22-24) taught the Global Outreach Seminar to nearly 100 pastors and bishops from several denominations.

Since then, Olonade has taken the Global Outreach materials and created a "Global Engagement Training" seminar which he has taught to thousands of Nigerian pastors and ministry leaders over the past three years.

"Our effort in all this has been to come alongside what God is doing in Nigeria," notes President McClain. "We have said repeatedly that The Mission Society's job in the future would be to help our Global South brothers and sisters in their efforts, knowing they would be able to go where we could not and do what we cannot."

Foundation's M2414 Initiatives. More discipleship support initiatives like Bible for Life and ministries from Leadership Ministries Worldwide are also gaining global use.

Discipleship must be a priority for the global church.

As we prepare the church for frontier mission, we must ensure our effort is:

- Global in its scope – connecting God's people from all nations to work together worldwide.
- Missional in nature – reflecting the body of Christ's task to proclaim the Word of God to the nations.
- Mobilization centric – advancing the global cause of Christ in the church through the company of prophets calling the church to its primary job.
- Mentoring and discipleship in its outlook – preparing the church to live in biblical hope of the Lord's return. ✝



Timothy Olonade served as the executive secretary/CEO for the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) from 2000 to 2011. A missions mobilizer and writer, Olonade has authored and co-authored more than a dozen books on discipleship, missions, evangelism, human resources, and missions strategy.

In late September, Olonade participated in The Mission Society's "think tank" on global mission mobilization and training—a meeting of mission strategists who came together to discuss how to expand The Mission Society's mobilization efforts and missionary training programs internationally as a means of serving the growing Majority World mission efforts.

Pioneers

Leaders in areas where Christianity is growing fastest report the joys and challenges faced as missions accelerates in their nations

Between 1970 and 1985, “some 4,300 people were leaving the church on a daily basis in Europe and North America.” At about the same time, in Africa “there were over 16,500 conversions a day, yielding an annual rate of over six million,” reports Yale Divinity School’s Lamin Sanneh. The expansion of Christianity among the Majority World (the developing nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America) has been spurred on by emerging mission movements and by churches that are recalibrating to focus on missions.

Here, meet some indigenous missions and church leaders in Asia, South America, and Africa. They report from the ground about the move of God in their nations and the obstacles faced as their fellow countrymen increasingly take the gospel to the least reached inside and outside of their borders.

Peter Pereira – India



Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Wife: Esther Pereira

Church: Wheatland Salem Church, Naperville

Children: Rebekah, Jonathan, and Philip

Life examples: Billy Graham, John Wesley

Favorite verse or book of the Bible: Psalm 23



“Ordinary nationals who live and serve in obscurity... are laying the groundwork for great mission work that God is doing,” reports Peter Pereira who, with his wife, Esther, head Hope for Today ministries in Hyderabad, India. The Pereiras are involved in church-planting, leadership training, and compassion ministries. In addition, they work with women and children through the Alpha Schools and Homes (orphanages), a vocational training center, medical camps, and a nutritional feeding program. The Pereiras serve jointly with The Mission Society and the International Leadership Institute (ILI). Here, Peter describes how the Spirit of God is moving among the world’s second most populous nation.

What do you observe the Lord doing in your nation right now, particularly with regards to missions?

God is drawing many to Him, and this is being done through the ordinary nationals who live and serve in obscurity. They are laying the groundwork for great mission work that God is doing. The gospel is being shared through stories. Many of these nationals are illiterate, and yet they share with those within their sphere of influence their testimonies of life with Jesus—of restoration, healing, miracles, future hope, peace, and the joy they experience, even in the face of inadequacy and adversity.

What are the challenges being faced by Christians in India as cross-cultural missions has become more and more a felt priority among your churches?

Some of the challenges Christians in India face are (1) not having training and tools that could help them be more effective; (2) guarding the faith so it does not become diluted or distorted, and (3) learning to present the gospel message with greater confidence and in more creative ways. When we were training trainers to teach children, our team had flannelgraph material, and the participants were so excited and amazed. They had never seen anything like this before.

India is a fascinating country of approximately 1.2 billion people. Hinduism accounts for 80.5% of the population of India, Islam 13.4%, Christianity 2.3%, Sikhism 1.9%, Buddhism 0.8%, and Jainism 0.4%. It is challenging to be a Christian in India. Preaching the gospel in some areas or converting to Christianity from Hinduism can cost people their families, jobs, and possibly even their lives. (This is true, though, only in certain regions. For the most part, Indian people are very open-minded and generous.)

What has been helpful as Indian Christians and churches have increasingly reached out cross-culturally to those in other nations?

We have held four International Mobilization Conferences (hosted by *The Mission Society*, see pages 17-21) in India. After Dr. Darrell Whiteman's teaching about culture and worldview, people begin to understand how they can communicate their faith across cultural barriers. There has been great excitement; some are teaching others what they have learned. Among those who have attended the seminars, there is a new boldness. This is a huge blessing for India, and it is just the threshold of what is to come. One of the participants is now even planning to go to the neighboring country of Nepal to explore serving in missions there.

As Americans now take on a new role in missions (the West is no longer in "the driver's seat"), what would be your message for the church in the United States and in the West?

The church in the West has great love and zeal, and what they do and have done has been purely to reach the lost and the least. And I know it will continue. God is raising more and more workers to come and serve in this part of the world.

It will be a big challenge for the West not to sit in the driver's seat. I have seen, though, short-term teams from the West that have truly taken a back seat, trusting the Indian leadership on the ground. The results have been good—healthy relationships and partnerships as equals. To work with other cultures, we need humility, adaptability, compassion, a genuine interest in others, a willingness to serve, and a bias for cooperation and partnership as equals.

Westerners should also know that Indian people perceive Christianity as a Western religion, which can be a hindrance to the gospel in some areas. Also, Western Christians are often perceived as looking for numbers (stories about crowds of people coming to Christ). Indians are not looking for numbers. They are interested in going deep. They are interested in genuine partnership with Westerners—that Westerners would offer discipleship resource materials and spend time with the people of India, training alongside them as co-laborers together building for the kingdom of God.

Westerners also need to understand that their presence in some regions will bring more harm to sincere believers and potential believers in that region. Training nationals seems to be a tool that is working wonders. God has raised up many Indian leaders who are doing exceedingly great work. We need mission leaders from the East and West to unite, to seek together the kingdom first, to look at the areas of greatest need in our nation, research the places, identify ministry strengths that could address those needs, and assign work. Thus, we can maximize potential and resources.

The West has untold resources—not just money, but skills in training and equipping leaders, and materials and tools to gauge effectiveness. Money should not dictate the relationship between the West and other mission movements, and there should never be a pressure to produce numbers, but to understand how our cultures can work together to build Christ's church in deeper relationship with Him. That is discipleship "dipped in curry." As one great Indian saint has said, "Give the gospel in Indian cup."

Bishop João Carlos Lopes – Brazil



Hometown: Curitiba, Brazil

Wife: Audir Santos Lopes

Church: Brazilian Methodist Church

Children: João Paulo and Pedro Henrique

Life examples: my father, João Lopes; Larry Brown, American missionary to Brazil; E. Stanley Jones, and my good friend, Darrell Whiteman

Favorite verse or book of the Bible: Acts 20:24



“A renewal movement is sweeping through the Methodist Church of Brazil, and these believers are exhibiting a vision for participating in mission beyond their geographical and cultural boundaries,” wrote Frank Decker, a vice president of The Mission Society during a Global Mission and Evangelism Conference in Brazil. In 2006, The Mission Society entered into the process of mission development with the Methodist Church of Brazil. It began when the Brazilian church asked if The Mission Society could help it become a mission-sending church.

Bishop Joao Carlos Lopes served from 2006-2012 as the president of the College of Bishops of the Brazilian Methodist Church and presently serves as its vice president and as the president of the College of Bishops of CIEMAL. He has played a key role in the mission movement currently happening in this South American nation, encouraging Brazilian Methodist churches to focus on missions and helping to establish a missionary sending agency to mobilize, train, and send Brazilian Methodist missionaries. Says Lopes, “Our Brazilian leaders realize that it’s urgent that the Brazilian church begin to see itself as a sending church, and that we see we have the resources to engage the world and not just our nation.” Here, Lopes describes the mission movement developing among Brazilian Methodists.

What do you observe the Lord doing in your nation right now, particularly with regards to missions?

In the last 15 years I have seen the Brazilian church moving from a missionary-receiving country to a missionary-sending country. Little by little, the churches (different denominations as well as local congregations) are recognizing the importance of becoming actively involved in cross-cultural missions.

Can you describe how the increase in missions’ mobilization in Brazil has come about and what has resulted in this growing awareness of missions?

For many years the church of Brazil experienced good growth. The growth, however, was mostly internal with little concern for cross-cultural missions. I believe one of the reasons is because Brazil is so large and, thus, people tend to think that there is enough work to be done within the country.

But during this time a few local congregations, as well as

some para-ecclesiastical organizations, became involved in cross-cultural missions. Little by little, the Holy Spirit began to develop an awareness among churches of the wholeness of the Great Commission. In other words, Acts 1:8 does not say you will be my witnesses *either* in Jerusalem *or* Judea, *or* Samaria, but in Jerusalem, *and* Judea, *and* Samaria. One does not exclude the others. Therefore, the churches in Brazil are increasingly becoming aware of the blessing of “going and making disciples of all nations.”

This awareness in the Brazilian Methodist Church has been developed especially with the help of The Mission Society, which has held International Mobilization Conferences in seven of the eight Annual Conferences in Brazil. Hundreds of Brazilian Methodist pastors and lay leaders have attended those conferences and have returned to their churches on fire for missions. Also from 2007-2010, The Mission Society’s Orientation Training for new missionaries was held in Brazil, which made it possible for many Brazilian Methodist leaders to be trained alongside Mission Society missionaries and

people from other parts of the world.

At the same time, Brazil began to grow economically. And the church now understands that we cannot only send missionaries, but we are also able to support them financially as well. For example, in the last few years the 6th Region of the Brazilian Methodist Church has sent fully supported missionaries to Peru, England, Switzerland, Portugal, Germany, and Portuguese-speaking communities in the United States.

What are the particular challenges being felt as cross-cultural missions has become more and more a felt priority among your churches?

1. To avoid building wherever others have already built (not repeating efforts).
2. To convince the people who are called to cross-cultural ministry of the importance of cross-cultural training. In other words, charisma and the desire to serve are essential, but there is still the need for training—both formational and informational.
3. To deal with the church's institutional structure, which sometimes becomes a hindrance to mission (maintenance vision versus missionary vision).

How has the church responded—or is it responding—to those challenges?

1. We seek to become informed of what is already going on in the places God calls us to go. And we seek to partner with those who are already there. For example, in Portugal we desire to support the revitalization project of the church, so we partner with the North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church, which also has the same desire.
2. We require basic training for anyone (laity or clergy) who wants to get involved in cross-cultural mission. Every person we have sent so far has passed through some basic training.
3. We seek to be faithful to the church structure as much as possible. However, we have decided that obedience to God comes before obedience to any institutional structure. We also seek to influence changes in the structure of the church. As an example, a few years ago, the Methodist Church of Brazil understood that missionaries could only be sent through the church's national headquarters. But the 2006 General Conference decided that all Annual Conferences and even the local churches are to be encouraged to send missionaries overseas.

What has been helpful as Brazilian Christians and churches have increasingly reached out cross-culturally to those in other nations?

Two things have been very helpful. Learning from both the successes and the mistakes of those who have done cross-cultural mission before us; and partnering with those—like The Mission Society—who are willing to help us to train people in cross-cultural missions.

In your thinking, what are the top three essential practices or principles in communicating the gospel cross-culturally?

1. Different cultures are not a curse, but a blessing from God. The gospel of Jesus Christ affirms most of culture; critiques some of culture; and transforms all of culture.
2. God is at work in a culture long before we (or any Christian witness) ever get there.
3. A loving heart and a servant's attitude will break barriers.

The whole mission scene has changed around the world with the growth of the mission movement in the Global South and East. As Americans now take on a new role in missions, what would be your message to the church in the United States and in the West?

First, we need to recognize and praise the Lord for the church in the United States and Europe for bringing the gospel to us.

Second, we must recognize that, although the mission scene is changing, the church in the United States and Europe will continue to be the center for theological and missionary training for many years to come. In other words, we still need the North American and European churches to help equip and communicate missional knowledge to our people.

Finally, we should recognize that the task is way too big for us to continue to think in terms of “we” and “they” (the church in the West and the church in the Global South and East). We are the body of Christ, and Jesus did not label the different parts of His body as “the part under the equator and the part above the equator,” nor did he label them by time zones.

God has equipped each part of His body for a specific work *for the common good*.

David Mutai – Kenya



Hometown: Born in Bomet, then moved to Nakuru. Now lives in Kericho.

Wife: Alice Mutai

Church: Africa Gospel Church

Children: Deborah, Enoch, Margaret Bett (adopted), Naomi, and Elijah

Life examples: William Carey, Hudson Taylor

Favorite verse or book of the Bible: The book of John and the epistles



The Rev. David Mutai is the director of outreach for Kenya's Africa Gospel Church (AGC), providing overall leadership for an enterprise that involves nearly 40 Kenyan missionaries serving among several unreached tribes within Kenya and in three neighboring countries. He and his wife, Alice, have a passion to see missionaries serving effectively and seeing many people come to Christ and strong, growing churches established. Earlier in their ministry, for nearly seven years they served as AGC missionaries in Turkwel where they labored among the Turkana people. The Mutais come from the Kalinjin tribe and lived in Nakuru, a city in Kenya's famous Rift Valley. To effectively engage Turkana people, they moved to a remote village where they lived in a traditional Turkana hut, sleeping on leather mats on the ground. After seven years, they had so mastered the language and embraced the culture that they were adopted into the Turkana tribe. So when David speaks of the urgency of sending cross-cultural workers to labor among least reached peoples, he's sharing out of his own experience. Since 2007, Mr. Mutai has been instrumental in guiding The Mission Society's work in the areas of missions mobilization and missionary training in Kenya.

What do you see the Lord doing in Kenya right now?

The church in Kenya is growing. The church in Africa is growing. I have heard that Africa will be the hub of sending missions in the future. God is awakening the church of Christ. Mission organizations and ministries now need to come together to create a movement in Kenya and in Africa as a whole. I have in my office several applications from agencies of different denominations asking, "Let's work together." So the Spirit of Christ is going beyond denominationalism. Of course, there are bound to be issues with theology, but I think God is helping us to overcome some of those things. So we thank God for that.

Can you describe how the mission movement in Kenya has come about?

Two things. One, media has touched the hearts of people in tribes and communities in this country. Two, The Mission Society and other groups, including my church, have sensitized people to missions through international mobilization training (*see pages 17-21*). Africa is an oral

culture. If you train 10 people, they will tell the story to others. And when they tell the story to others, the story goes out. Because people are telling other people about International Mobilization Conferences we did with The Mission Society in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2012, almost every member in my own church has learned about missions.

With that in mind, what are the particular challenges that you and other leaders face as you reach out to least reached people within Kenya and even beyond?

Somebody might say that finances are a problem. To me, finances are not an issue. Where God has called, He will open the doors. But church leadership is an obstacle. If a church leader or pastor has been asked about missions, they will send a missionary and say, "Go, and God bless you," and that missionary is forgotten. They are not encouraged. They lack pastoral care. I tell you, the number-one obstacle and the number-one prayer is for church leaders to open doors for missions. If missions is preached in a local church once a month, it should make a big difference. But in Kenya, we

have mission sermons every month, even every week, and still missions is forgotten. So I want the church of Christ to do more than preach about it. God is putting in my heart to charge and encourage leadership to do that.

When I asked about obstacles, I think I imagined that you might have referred to some external obstacle. But what you've said is an internal obstacle, and that maybe suggests that the external stuff God can deal with pretty well if the church will be the church, but that requires leaders to lead in a way that is faithful to the heart of God and the mission of God.

Can I tell you an example? South Sudan. Some four years ago, people were not able to tell about Christ in Southern Sudan. But now the government of South Sudan is encouraging Christians to come to South Sudan and help the church. That's God dealing with outside obstacles. So yes, there are external issues like Islam, for example, but I'm sure if the church of Christ will move and pray hard, those barriers will be gone.

What has been helpful as churches in Kenya have reached out cross-culturally to fellow countrymen, particularly to the least reached in Kenya?

The best thing is the way that the Lord is opening up unreached communities.

For example, a community in Eastern Kenya called Africa Gospel Church to come and help them introduce the gospel. People in Mombasa, where people had chased away missionaries in the 18th and 19th century, came all the way to Kericho and told our bishop, "Please come to us. We are giving you 50 acres for you to build your church. If you want, you can build a hospital or a school. But the biggest thing is what we once refused, we want back." So they are telling us, "Come back." It's overwhelming. There were times I had to look at missionaries and had not much for them to do. But now, there are not enough missionaries. God is opening doors to these communities.

The church needs to know what we're going to do. We need three things.

1. We need God Himself leading us. We need to listen to God's still voice, because He has a plan for everything we do in the church.
2. Missionaries need to be prepared. This is key.
3. The sending church has to be prepared for the challenges

that will come its way, and it has to be prepared not to expect results very soon. If a missionary goes out prepared to learn the culture and learn the language, the Lord will work through the relationship that is built with the people. It may take some time.

Can you say a bit more about what it means to adequately prepare a missionary to go into another culture?

God brought The Mission Society to Kenya for a reason. Many times, there were missionaries who were sent out, but they got burned out, because they were not adequately prepared. So, we require our missionaries to attend The Mission Society's training (*see pages 22-25*). Also, gathering a community who will stand behind the missionary to pray for them is part of the preparation. In the International Mobilization Conferences seminars, we learn that what God will do will not be dependent on a church budget; it will be dependent on prayer. Those who are praying move God's hands. It's very important that we do things in faith. I tell you, it works.

As Americans now take on a new role in missions, what would your message to the church in the West be?

1. We'll have different roles (as we see Western missionaries taking on right now), but the work of missions will not end until Jesus comes for His church.
2. Partnership with the Western missionaries is very important. I am not talking about the partnership (that people sometimes want) of money. I'm talking about working together—you teach us what we don't know; we teach you what you don't know. As the African proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others." That is true and we want to go far in missions.

I will tell you one more thing. The churches in Africa need to take the battle on and move forward. I'm accepted in the Middle East better than a Westerner. I'm accepted in closed countries more readily than a Westerner. We have opportunities that God has given to the church in Africa. We need to rise up and do it. Let's do it together. I hear a lot of people saying, "We are done with missions in Africa," but I will tell you, no. You are not done. Jesus has not yet come.



Theirs is the kingdom

Christian historians estimate that Christianity makes up about the same proportion of the world's population as it did in 1910. What has changed is where Christians live. The Global South and East have now become the center of Christianity. This means Western Christians have a new role—to help equip and encourage the non-Western church as it enters unreached areas with the gospel and to learn from it about evangelism in the 21st century.

A key strategy in developing a global “kingdom collaborative” is The Mission Society's international mobilization effort. Read about what we learn as we engage with brothers and sisters in the Majority World.

Ask Michael Mozley, who heads The Mission Society's international mobilization efforts, what he's most excited about as he observes the worldwide church, and he will talk about the passion for missions in the Majority World. “In India, and Ghana, and Kenya, and Brazil, and Thailand, I hear young people 13-28 years old say, ‘I want to win our nation for Christ.’ I hear it time and time and time again,” says Mozley. “In the Majority World, there is a hunger and excitement to share the gospel. In Kenya recently, we saw that there is a grassroots movement of people who are saying, ‘I want to leave my village, my people, and go reach another people—whether it's in Kenya, or Somalia, or Uganda, or some other surrounding area.’ ... The Global South and East (Africa, Asia, and South America) are definitely where the greatest Christian movement is now.”

For years, Mozley has been uniquely positioned to observe God's Spirit calling individuals and churches to missions. As director of missionary personnel (1996-1999), he oversaw the mobilization of Mission Society missionaries. Then he served with his family for 10 ½ years in Ghana, West Africa. Three

years ago, he rejoined the staff to head The Mission Society's international mobilization effort. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in African theology from Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Culture, and Mission, Akropong, Ghana.

In his present role in international mobilization, Mozley leads a global team of teachers and trainers. These women and men come alongside indigenous pastors and church leaders to offer tools for mobilizing their congregations for local, regional, and international missions. This training usually takes place in a four-day event—called International Mobilization Conferences (IMC)—and is often so well received that teams are invited back to do more teaching. Already, IMCs have been held in 10 countries, and in places like Nigeria, the materials used at IMCs are being used by national mission movements. (*See the evolution of the International Mobilization in the timeline on page 18.*)

Here, we ask Mozley about his observations of the church in the Majority World as believers there increasingly engage in missions.

The flags shown here represent the countries and the order in which The Mission Society's International Mobilization Conferences have been held since 2002.



What would we in the United States be really surprised to know about the way that Christianity is understood or practiced in the Majority World?

We would probably be surprised that there is a sense of truly believing everything that is in the scriptures. For Africans, for example, their first worldview is spiritual, not rational or physical. They understood that the spiritual world is alive and real long before they had the names of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So when they grasp a belief in the living God in the person of Jesus Christ, it's like unleashing in them a tidal wave of freedom. They believe God to heal, and deliver, and save. They trust what the scripture say. And this seems to be the case throughout the Majority World. I think this understanding of the spiritual world as primary is one reason why there is such an explosion of growth in the church in South America, Asia, and Africa.

These national church leaders have so much to teach us. What part of the teaching offered in the International Mobilization Conferences seems particularly helpful to them?

The piece that Darrell Whiteman teaches about crossing cultural barriers and understanding worldview has been, hands-down, the most influential, mind- and

2002

- ▶ William Johnson, a Mission Society board member, taught the "Global Focus Seminar" in Kenya. Johnson urged The Mission Society to launch mission efforts internationally. In Kenya, the teaching took off. Kenyans mobilized to reach unreached tribes.



2003

- ▶ The Mission Society taught the "Global Vision Seminar" in Ghana to a group of 12 hand-chosen ministry leaders. Those 12 were trained in leading the seminar and began to teach it in local churches around Ghana.





heart-transforming part. It radically changes the way people think and feel about their own and others' cultures. For example, in his teaching on worldview, Darrell compares a person's worldview to an iceberg. Our behavior is just the small tip that can be seen, but underneath the water is this massive amount of what we really believe. It's hidden. And so, what we really believe may be hidden even from us and may be more influenced by our culture—for example, by superstition, or folk religion, or materialism—than by Christian faith.

What are some memories that stand out for you as you have spent time with national leaders in Majority World countries?

I have two. Near the end of the International Mobilization Conferences, we do a certain talk called "Grounding Your Church in Prayer." In the room where we teach, we hang flags

from all over the world. At the end of the talk, we encourage the participants to ask God what flag they should go to. And they go stand in front of a flag and lay hands on and pray for the people of that country. So you will see an Ecuadorian praying over the flag of Pakistan, or Iran, or Finland and weeping. Some are praying for the first time for another people group, tribe, or nation. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, God breaks the hearts of these brothers and sisters. In those moments it seems that God fills them, not only with compassion for other nations, but with a realization that He wants to use them in His mission in the whole world.

At the end of that session, everyone surrounds the flag of the host country and holds it up. Some people have anointed it with oil. I've seen key national leaders, sometimes bishops, begin to weep. Sometimes they'll kneel down and lay the flag on the ground, and pray and cry, asking God to pour out His Spirit over their country. I have remarkable images seared in

2004

► Ministry leaders from Latin America, Africa, and Asia reviewed the "Global Vision Seminar" and helped revise it for cross-cultural use. The seminar was rewritten and renamed the "Global Outreach Seminar."



2005

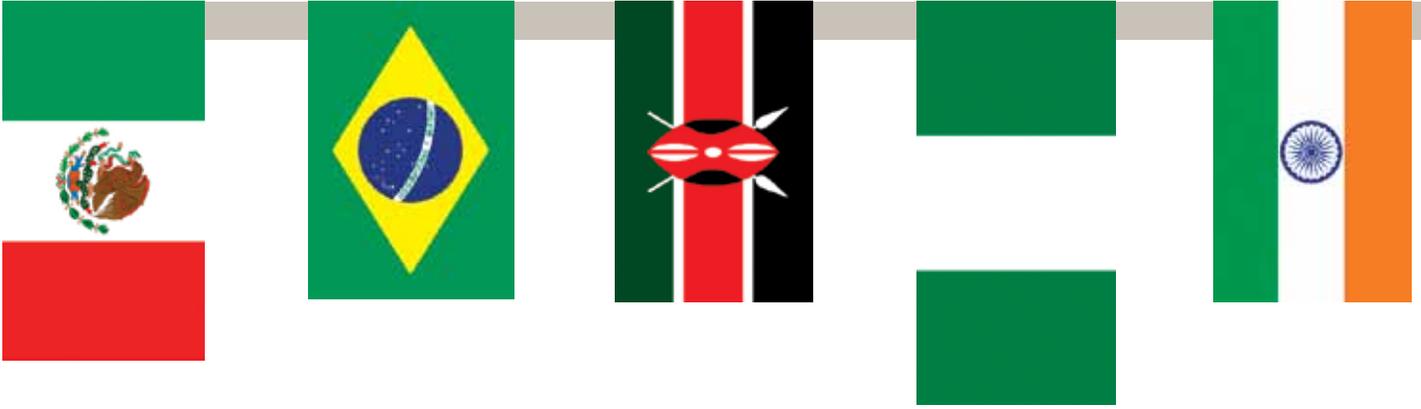
► The Global Outreach Seminar was taught in Spanish in Costa Rica. Seventy-five ministry leaders attended the conference, representing six denominations and 10 Latin American countries. All the delegates were given a complete set of teaching materials so they could teach the seminar in local churches.

2006

► An International Mobilization Conference (IMC) was held in Nairobi, Kenya. Seventy-five ministry leaders attended from 10 countries. David Mutai, director of missions for Kenya's Africa Gospel Church (AGC) invited the team to return and share the teaching with AGC's pastors and leaders.

► Kenyan ministry leaders taught the seminar with Mission Society staff in northern Kenya. People from Samburu, Trukana, and Boran tribes were among those who attended.

► An IMC was held in Brazil. The Methodist Church of Brazil invited The Mission Society to teach the seminar in each Annual Conferences.



my memory of God breaking the hearts of people for their nation and the world. It's an amazing experience.

My other memory happened in New Delhi last February. As we were going through the regular course of the teaching, at one point, I stood up and said to the group that I felt strongly impressed that what God was doing in that conference was raising up the next generation of people who would be evangelists like Billy Graham, and who would go—no matter their situation—to the surrounding nations to reach those people with the gospel. After I made that comment, there was no response, and I sat down. People went on about the seminar. The next day, a pastor stood up and said, “God spoke to me so clearly that He wants to raise up from within our small congregation missionaries who will go into Pakistan and Bangladesh.” This just broke my

heart, because this pastor had come from one of the poorest regions of India and yet he was believing God to raise up missionaries from his church.

What I love about directing our international mobilization efforts is the incredible privilege I have of engaging and interacting with some of the key, national leaders, many of whom are not prominent; they're the foot soldiers who are ministering in incredible ways, making a significant impact in the kingdom and in missions. Some of them have been persecuted for their faith; some have sacrificed so much to carry the gospel to parts of their country and beyond. Being able to sit down with them for a meal and hear their stories is a very humbling experience. I think about the incredible resources we have in comparison to what they have, and yet they continue to stay missionally focused.

2007

- ▶ Two IMCs were held in Recife and Curitiba, Brazil.
- ▶ A second IMC was held in Kenya, which was attended by 185 people from 35 denominations.
- ▶ John Kareithi was employed as a country coordinator for Kenya. Over a two-year period the seminar was presented in dozens of locations in Kenya as well as in several neighboring countries, including Sudan, Congo, Tanzania, and others.

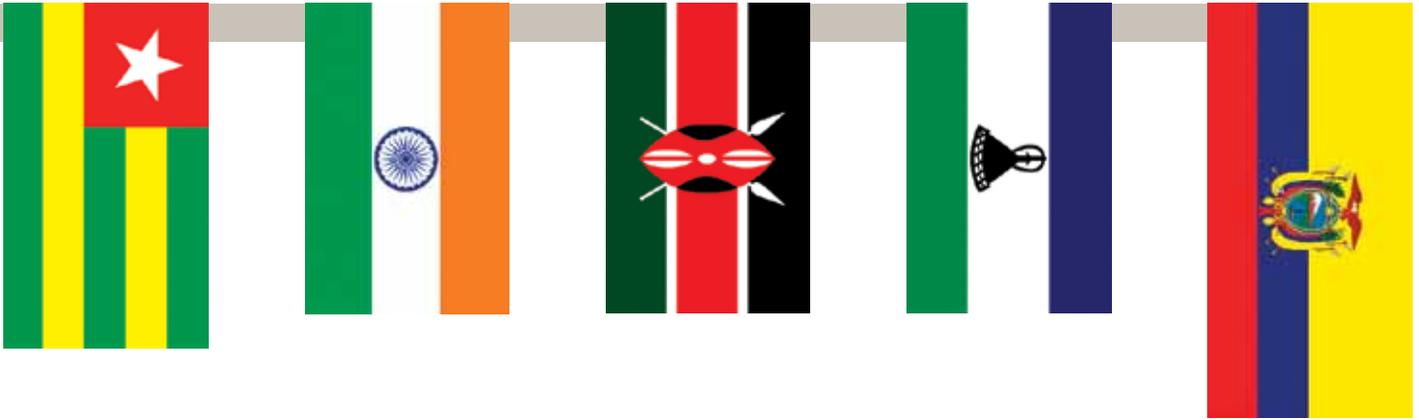
2008

- ▶ The Mission Society held an IMC for the Africa Gospel Church denomination in Kenya.
- ▶ A second IMC was held for The Methodist Church Ghana.
- ▶ An IMC was held near Monterrey, Mexico.
- ▶ IMCs were held in Porto Vello and Porto Alegre, Brazil.
- ▶ A third IMC was held in Kenya to present the material to the annual pastor's conference of the Africa Gospel Church. More than 700 pastors and ministry leaders attended the conference. There was a 100 percent increase in missions giving in the AGC the following year.

2009

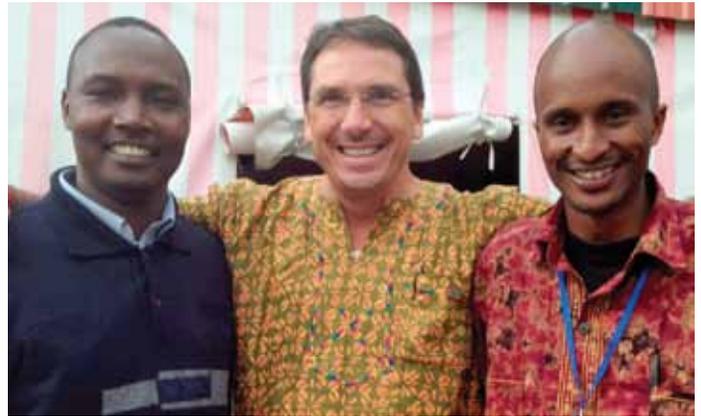
- ▶ An IMC was held in Jos, Nigeria, hosted by the Nigeria Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA). NEMA had adopted the Global Outreach Seminar as its preferred tool for mobilizing churches and renamed it “Global Engagement Training.”





Their having fewer resources hasn't diminished their passion for reaching the least reached.

Yes. In 1984, I was a one-year missionary in Ghana. I remember re-reading Matthew 5 and 6, and I was struck by the verse, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." When I read that, I had a new revelation that when you live without a lot of earthly possessions, you might have a sense of helplessness, which may actually be a hopefulness and a trust in Jesus—that He can meet every need. In many areas in the Majority World are people who are poor in spirit; they have nothing to hold onto except Jesus. And they really, fully trust that He will do this incredible work all over the world, and that He will use them, even though they don't have anything. They are the poor in spirit, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven. †



"What I love about directing our international mobilization efforts," says Michael Mozley, "is the incredible privilege I have of engaging with some of the key, national leaders who are making a significant impact in the kingdom."

2010

▶ No IMCs were taught internationally due to financial constraints.

2011

- ▶ Two IMCs were taught for the first time in India.
- ▶ An IMC was taught in Togo for French-speaking West Africans for the first time.

2012

- ▶ Two more IMCs were taught in India.
- ▶ A fourth IMC was taught in Kenya.
- ▶ An IMC was taught in Lesotho.
- ▶ Two IMCs were held in Ecuador for the first time.





Communicating the true gospel

Feeling uneasy in expressing your faith? Learn what missionaries learn.

Missionary training is not just for missionaries. To be effective witnesses in our workplaces and neighborhoods requires learning some basic principles, usually considered cross-cultural communication skills. Here, Dr. Darrell Whiteman, cultural anthropologist, offers some guidance. The gospel may prove to be more life-giving than you ever dreamed.

An interview

Throughout your career, you have helped train missionaries and church leaders from many different cultures. What have you observed to be of central importance in effectively communicating the gospel?

The most important thing in communicating the gospel across culture is confidence in the gospel and humility in the way we communicate it. Often it's the other way around. We're not really confident in the gospel, and we're arrogant about the way we communicate it. If the gospel has not impacted and transformed our own lives, then we're just talking out of someone else's book.

So the gospel that is alive in our own lives, that helps us

through troubled times, that inspires us, leads us, motivates us—that's the gospel I'm talking about. That gospel has got to be communicated with a very humble spirit. It is important to know the gospel, and then go as a learner. Understand that the people you will be interacting with (even if you are just going across the street) likely come from a very different world from yours. They are asking entirely different questions and have different doubts than you do.

So often we're in such a hurry to communicate what we want to say that we don't take the time to understand the people and their culture. Our focus should not be to speak eloquently or be scholarly, but to hear: what are the things

Darrell Whiteman, Ph.D., former missionary to Papua New Guinea, is The Mission Society's resident missiologist and vice president for mission mobilization and training. Prior to joining the staff of The Mission Society in 2005, Whiteman served as dean of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism and professor of cultural anthropology at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. Through his experience in cross-cultural mission, he has developed a passion for helping others understand how to communicate the gospel across cultural barriers.



over which this person is crying, or feeling hopeless, or even laughing? Until we cry and laugh with people, we don't know how the gospel is going to connect. What's important is establishing that relationship. Through that relationship the true gospel will really flow, and when that happens, it has been effectively communicated.

When we go with confidence in the gospel and communicate it with humility, we start to understand the gospel in a way we have not before.

We actually learn more about the gospel by sharing it with people who are different from us. We are exposed to things in scripture that we never saw before.

For example, I'm not aware that I focus on individualism and self-reliance; that's just who I am as an American. But when I communicate the same gospel to Africans whose identity is tied to who they are in the community—not what they achieve individually—I start to have a whole new appreciation for the gospel's emphasis on the body of Christ.

It's important to know what the gospel is not. Growing up in an evangelical home, I had the idea that a Christian was someone who didn't do five different things: smoke, drink, play cards, go to movies, and dance. When I talk to people about these things, they often say, "Yeah, that's what we were told about the gospel, too." But this is not the gospel.

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

—St. Francis of Assisi

When we start to peel away what the gospel is not, we start to see the true gospel. This is what we need to be communicating. When I travel to Africa and India, I encounter pastors dressed in suits and ties in hot, tropical climates. Why? Because they've been told that a minister of the gospel must dress like this. Often they look strange in their own culture, and this communicates to the people in the local community that the gospel is something foreign that was brought here.

That's the tragedy. Sometimes, instead of communicating that the gospel is for people in their culture, we end up miscommunicating it by dressing it up in our American cultural garb.

As the West increasingly becomes post-Christian, effectively communicating the gospel within our own neighborhoods, communities, and churches may seem progressively more complicated. If you could help train pastors, church leaders, and the Christian community in the United States about how to best communicate the gospel right here at home, what would you want to say?

North American pastors need to understand that the incarnation is a model for how to do ministry. This can come as a surprise. Let me tell you a story. I had finished

Read like a missionary

As part of their training, missionaries with The Mission Society are assigned reading. Here is a list of some of the books they read prior to leaving for their cross-cultural ministry assignments. Some of them are Christian classics. Consider adding one of these to your 2013 reading list.

People Raising, by William Dillon

The Great Omission, by Dallas Willard

Basic Christianity, by John Stott

Celebration of Discipline, by Richard Foster

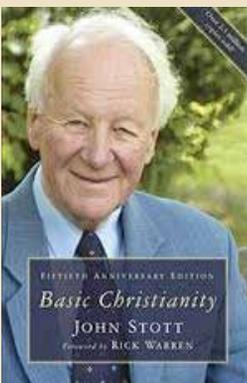
The Way to Heaven: The Gospel According to John

Wesley, by Steve Harper

Living Proof, by Jim Peterson

Ministering Cross Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships, by Sherwood Lingenfelter

Christianity in Culture, by Charles Kraft



A book of the century

Basic Christianity, by John Stott

“If Jesus was not God in human flesh, Christianity is exploded,” writes John Stott. “We are left with just another religion with some beautiful ideas and noble ethics; its unique distinction has gone.” In one of his classic writings, *Basic Christianity*, Stott examines the historical facts on which Christianity stands. Named among *Christianity Today's* “Top 100 Books of the 20th Century,” *Basic Christianity* is a sound, sensible guide for all who seek an intellectually satisfying explanation of the Christian faith.

speaking at an event (in which I spoke about incarnation as a ministry model), and a pastor who had been in the church 35 years went to the organizer of the event and told him, “I have never heard anyone talk about the incarnation as a way of doing ministry. I always thought it was just a theological doctrine. I always assumed that it was my congregation’s responsibility to understand me, because I was the one who had all the training; I was the one who knew how to exegete scripture, had a proper hermeneutic, all those things I learned in seminary. I didn’t realize I had to enter into the life of my congregation.”

We have to be incarnational in our ministries. We are living in an increasingly multicultural society. Everywhere you turn, people speak different languages and have different worldviews. If you want to be an effective pastor (or witness of the gospel), you have to become an effective missionary. Stop speaking “church language” and enter the world of unchurched people.

As the West becomes increasingly post-Christian, there

is greater reaction against Christianity, particularly against mainline denominations. We’re discovering that people are turned off to church, but they are still attracted to Jesus. In the crosscultural training The Mission Society does, we suggest that missionaries try simply telling the story of Jesus,

and let the people figure out how Jesus connects with their world.

What thrills me is to discover that the basic principles that we’ve always thought were training for cross-cultural missionaries turn out to be relevant for pastors, laypeople, everyone. God is at work in the life of every person long

before we show up. So our job is to enter into relationships in our churches and neighborhoods as a learner, really wanting to hear the heart cries of the other. Then when we express the true gospel—which has been freed from forms and rules that have nothing to do with the gospel—our sharing becomes simply a matter of blowing on a flame already begun in hearts by the Holy Spirit. †

“What thrills me is to discover that the basic principles that we’ve always thought were training for cross-cultural missionaries turn out to be relevant for pastors, laypeople, everyone.”

“Training makes all the difference”

“I would say that the overarching purpose of our training is to help connect God’s Word (which is for all time and cultures) with the world (which is always changing),” says Dr. Darrell Whiteman, who helps prepare Mission Society missionaries to communicate the gospel cross-culturally. We asked Mission Society missionaries to tell how the training they received affected their ministries and helped them connect with the people they serve. Here is what they told us.

Exceptional

Everyone has a calling. Everyone can have passion to serve. And everyone can have good intentions. But the key factor that makes all of those things work together effectively—the key thing that blends call and passion and good intentions into a beautiful and appropriate gift—is the exceptional training that we receive, both before going to the field and while we are serving. Training makes all the difference. The more we learn about culture, anthropology, missiology, history, and relationship, we see that it is all intertwined, and it all weaves together to make the difference in being effective servants for the kingdom.

Billy Drum
serving in Peru



Vital

As for our training: first, it was awesome! We agree that focusing on going in as a learner and building relationships is vital to survival on the ground. Spending time in relationship building is helping to break down walls and build bridges into the community and villages that are close to us.

Also, knowing about culture shock has been vital to survival. We learned in training that, as you hang in through this awful time, you will come out stronger in your faith, with a closer relationship to God, and a better understanding of yourself and the people you serve among.

Training gave us the opportunity to meet and bond with other missionaries. Many of those relationships continue even after not seeing these people for more than two years. Keeping in touch via email and newsletters allows us to pray for and encourage one another. It is like we are all one big family. Even though we are spread out all over the world, we all have the same mission—God’s mission.

Lorna and Travis Curry
serving in Namibia



Practical

For me, the Mission Mobilization conferences that The Mission Society organizes (see pages 17-22) were extremely important. I had the chance to participate in three of them in Brazil [Gustavo’s homeland]. These conferences help local churches and leaders to think about mission in practical and relevant ways. Today, my family and I live and minister cross-culturally in Paris, France. Thanks to many things that are taught in these trainings, we are not only here serving on the mission field, but we also have many local churches in Brazil who were motivated by these trainings and are now partners with us in this work in France.

Gustavo Faleiro
serving in France



Scriptural

We learned in The Mission Society’s training the strong scriptural basis for “incarnational living,” and how many doors to ministry can open when we live life with people and learn from them. The willingness of Katherine [Stotler] to go humbly as a learner and walk alongside the Xhosa people in South Africa earned her an invitation from the Headman to serve on the community committee overseeing the community project. At first, some were skeptical or uncertain of the relational approach Katherine utilized. But as they saw that her actions matched her words, they realized that she saw herself as co-equal in ministry, and her peer relationships deepened dramatically. Because she did not seek to *impose* her beliefs on them, the community *sought* her involvement and ideas, which gave her a *natural platform* from which to share the gospel.

Elliott Stotler
serving in South Africa



For more information about these or any of our missionaries, visit themissionsociety.org/learn/whereweserve

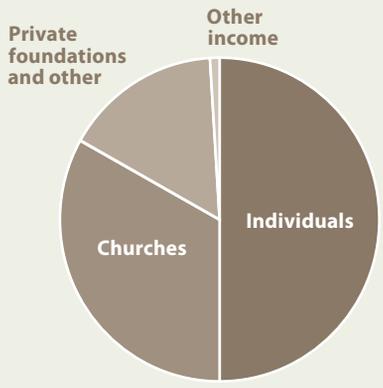


A year in review

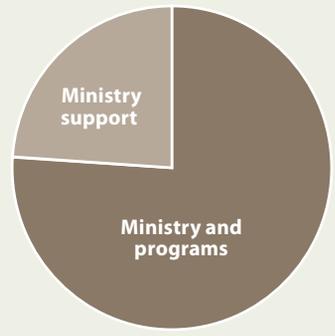
Reflecting on the advance of God's kingdom through The Mission Society. *The figures below reflect activity between May 31, 2011 and May 31, 2012.*

- 233** Number of Mission Society missionaries
- 42** Number of countries in which Mission Society missionaries serve
- 2** Number of new ministry locations opened (Estonia and South Sudan)
- 27** Number of new missionaries approved for service
- 15** Number of missionaries deployed for the first time
- 12** Number of new interns approved and deployed
- 19** Number of Global Outreach Weekends held in U.S. churches. (Events were held in 10 states: Alabama, California, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Washington)
- 295** Number of international missionaries, pastors, and church leaders (those from countries other than the United States) trained by The Mission Society.

As of May 31, 2012, there were 233 Mission Society missionaries serving in 42 countries.



REVENUE
 50% Individuals
 33% Churches
 16% Private foundations and other
 1% Other income
Total revenue: \$9,264,255

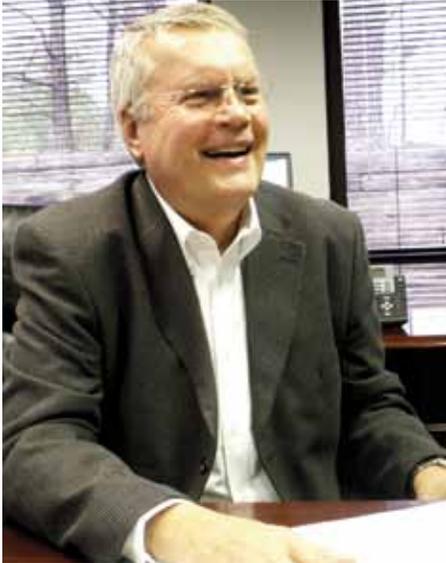


EXPENSES
 76% Ministry and programs (missionaries and projects, church mobilization, international mobilization conferences, training and resident missiologist)
 24% Ministry support (president's office, finance and accounting, advancement, IT and personnel)
Total expenses: \$9,005,225

Audited financial statements are available on The Mission Society's website: themissionsociety.org or by request to its finance department, phone: 678.542.9050.

Reaching least reached peoples using business

The Mission Society's Marketplace Ministries Division releases its strategic plan



“Our Marketplace Ministries activities are being done in connection with missionaries, nationals, and local churches,” says Denny Brown, left, who heads The Mission Society’s new Marketplace Ministries Division. Denny is pictured here with Mission Society missionary to Peru, Arthur Ivey, far right. Ivey has developed “kingdom businesses” with several of his Peruvian discipleship leaders, like Rodolfo Hinojosa, also shown. One of these kingdom businesses is a soft drink bottling plant in a rural jungle community.

Reaching the world’s unreached and under-evangelized communities will require “all hands on deck.” This, of course, includes businesspeople. In fact, now, maybe more than ever before, Christian business leaders have the chance to play a pivotal role in transforming society and spreading the gospel, according to Michael R. Baer, businessman, former pastor, and author of *Business as Mission*.

“Business is another way to reach into unreached areas,” says Denny Brown, who heads The Mission Society’s Marketplace Ministries division, which launched in January of this year. “Business is a model for ministry that sustains itself and gives business owners and managers an opportunity to disciple their employees, because employers are with their workers every day. And a business that

treats its people well, provides a good service, and puts money back into the local economy glorifies God.”

A former businessman himself, Denny served from 2003-2011 as The Mission Society’s vice president for advancement. “I felt God calling me to do business as mission,” he says. “I’m thankful to our president, Dick McClain, and to our board of directors for allowing me to pursue this calling.”

Recently, Denny released the plan for the Marketplace Ministry (MPM) Division, which is now being implemented. The plan focuses on three areas as follows.

1. Support missionaries who are engaged in Business as Mission

“One of the most effective ways to begin marketplace ministry is to come alongside missionaries who are

already involved, to some extent, in the marketplace,” notes Denny. To that end, The Mission Society’s Marketplace Ministries division provides missionaries with business expertise, advisory support, information, and contacts which they may otherwise have no access to. Marketplace Ministries also networks with other Christian business professionals willing to provide support and counsel to cross-cultural workers.

2. Provide business development/training for church planters

A strategic alliance is being developed with Global Disciples, a ministry that provides training to help national church planters and evangelists start very basic businesses that will fund and sustain their ministries. Global Disciples’ program has

Latin and South Americans prepare to take gospel beyond their borders

The Mission Society hosts International Mobilization Conferences in Ecuador



The Mission Society hosted two International Mobilization Conferences in Ecuador October 15-25, 2012. The conferences took place in Quito and Guayaquil.

Staffers the Rev. Michael Mozley, senior director for international mobilization; and Steve Wilson, director of missional communities, provided leadership for the conference. Mission Society missionaries Tim, Daina, and Kevin Datwyler, and Graham and Sharon Nichols, who serve in Ecuador, also assisted with the conference.

Eric and Santa Owen, who serve with The United Methodist Men of the North Georgia Annual Conference, also led sessions, along with three seminary professors from the South American Nazarene Theological Seminary in Quito: Freddy Guerrero, Roberto Quinatoa, and Fernando Almeida.

More than 100 people attended the two conferences, representing various denominations and non-denominational movements and several countries, including Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and Argentina.

The teaching of the International Mobilization Conferences (*see pages 17-21*) focuses on the concepts of God as a missionary God, the Bible as a missionary book, and God's call for the church to be missionaries. The teaching also includes training on crossing cultural barriers with the gospel.

Angelica, one of the seminary students in Quito, had previously committed to going to Cuba for two months as a missionary. Angelica answered this call, but did not feel prepared. After completing this conference, she said she felt ready. "God broke her heart for the people of Cuba, and now He has provided training. May God use this faithful servant for His glory and honor," said Michael Mozley. †

been successfully used with nearly 1000, church planters in a variety of areas and has been translated into 14 different languages. Training is already underway for a select group of Mission Society team members who are appropriately suited for this area of ministry. "As the Lord directs," says Denny, "we anticipate developing strategies in marketplace ministries that will allow us to address all of our fields, including areas otherwise closed to the gospel but open to business efforts."

3. Offer marketplace ministry training through local churches

"We have found that many U.S.

businesspeople in churches have an interest in marketplace ministry," says Denny, "but have no idea how to get involved or the opportunities available to them." The Mission Society's Marketplace Ministries and Church Ministry divisions are collaborating to develop a seminar. It will (1) update businesspeople on what is happening in the United States and around the world, and (2) show how business is being used to help others and lead them into a growing relationship with Christ. The seminar curriculum will give examples of people successfully engaged in marketplace ministry. It will also provide materials to help and encourage participants to be "on

mission" in their local workplaces, in hopes that some will hone their skills and gain confidence to reach out to others around the world. The initial launch of this seminar will be announced at a later date.

"Of utmost importance," says Denny, "is to note that our Marketplace Ministries activities are being done in connection with missionaries, nationals, and local churches (in the United States and internationally). In other words, business is just one tool, and we trust the Lord will use our efforts to enhance the ministries of others and to help reach into unreached communities with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ." †

Mission training institute named to honor The Mission Society's founding 'first couple'



The Mission Society's founding president and president emeritus the Rev. Dr. H.T. and Alice Maclin reared their four children in Africa. Shown here (from left to right): Greg Maclin, Cathie Boyles, H.T., Alice, Susie Maclin, and her husband, John Whitmire. The Maclins' youngest daughter, Ruth, passed away in 2008.

In honor of The Mission Society's founding president and wife, the Rev. Dr. H.T. and Alice Maclin, The Mission Society announced the founding of "The H. T. and Alice Maclin Mission Training Institute" as the name of its future annual missionary training conferences. (The most recent of these conferences was held in Huancayo, Peru in August of 2012.)

The Mission Society President Dick McClain and vice presidents Jim Ramsay and Lewis von Herrmann presented a framed certificate to H.T. and Alice in their home in Decatur, Georgia, in the presence of their three children. The certificate was accompanied by a letter from The Mission Society vice president and resident missiologist, Dr. Darrell Whiteman. It included the following:

"You [the Maclins] have already left The Mission Society several legacies – from your example of effective communication of the gospel and tireless service in mission, to your courageous guidance of The Mission Society through its first years, and to your continuous modeling lives of servanthood. Now, as we announce the founding of this Mission Training Institute, your legacy will expand. We will forever be reminded of your commitment to solid, thorough, missionary training. And what thrills us most is that effective training led by The Mission Society is now taking place all over the world. As the mission baton is rapidly being passed from the West to the Majority World, training that prepares our brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia, and Latin America for cross-cultural ministry will become even more important.

"Thank you for your life-long commitment to mission, for the way you continue to inspire and encourage those of us who are following in your footsteps, and for your contagious love for Jesus."

In the past three years, The Mission Society has trained 60 Mission Society missionaries as they prepared for cross-cultural ministry in various locations around the globe. Orientation Training, now called The H. T. and Alice Maclin Mission Training Institute, has been held in Brazil from 2007-2010 and in Peru in 2011 and 2012. In addition to the 60 missionaries trained, The Mission Society trained 114 ministry leaders, pastors, and missionaries from other countries including, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Haiti, Kenya, and Jamaica. †

Opportunity to pay tribute to the Maclins

The Maclin children have committed more than \$100,000 toward the funding of the Institute over the next four years, and The Mission Society is privileged to offer our friends the opportunity to participate and to match the gifts of the family. If you would like to join the Maclin family in this special honor, please contact Lewis von Herrmann in the advancement office at 800.478.8963, or email him at lvonherrmann@themissionsociety.org.



By Lewis von Herrmann

Are you prepared to mobilize without warning?

I listen to television ads every evening that are focused on life-changing issues such as home health care, reverse mortgages, home security, and others. To me it is clear that our financial lives require decisions and preparations for which we may never have planned. And as I observe people around me, the unexpected happens so quickly that failing to plan creates major problems for those who must care for them.

Recently, a close friend had a stroke that prevented him from returning home. The family was given no warning, and the resulting move to an assisted living facility was not expected. Fortunately, the family had made some good preparations in advance, and the sudden change has enabled his bills to be paid and his care to be handled.

Are you prepared to mobilize and to move financially on short notice? Your life could change immediately by a health emergency, a car crash, or some other accident. Let's review some steps that will ensure you are prepared to activate your emergency plans on short notice.

Simple steps

A key financial step is to arrange for your expenses to get paid. There are several methods to help, one of which is to set up automatic drafts against your bank account for regular monthly bills. But that may not cover every expense. The second is to set up a joint checking account with a trusted family member

who will pay the bills from that account. Remember that this means they become a joint owner, and they may one day retain what is left in the account after death. If that is a concern, arrange for the deposits or transfers to the joint account to be limited to the amount needed to pay the bills only.

Another method is to arrange for a Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA), where a trusted person can manage your financial affairs. If you are concerned about the timing of releasing the DPOA, create the document and

Responding to life's emergencies will require wisdom. "But if any of you lack wisdom," the scripture teaches, "you should pray to God, who will give it to you; because God gives generously and graciously to all." (James 1:5, GNT)

leave it with a trusted third party who will turn it over to the named person only under the circumstances you specify. The DPOA provides unlimited powers for the trusted person to act on all of your financial matters.

Even with a DPOA, many institutions require their own paperwork for that trusted person to manage the affairs of an investment account. Contact the broker or account manager and request their documents to sign and authorize the trusted person to manage those accounts.

Available help

In my friend's case, most of these documents were in place so the family could pay the bills and transfer enough funds to pay for the assisted living facility. But some institutions required new paperwork.

Fortunately, my friend remained competent to help get these final documents in place. Had my friend become incompetent as a result of the stroke, the family would have been required to go to probate court to have him declared incompetent in order to establish a guardianship that would permit his family to manage his affairs. That process would have been costly, time-consuming, and disheartening. Even so, we know that in the darkest times, the Lord watches over us. ("Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid, LORD, for you are with me." Psalms 23:4 GNT)

In conclusion, are you prepared for your financial affairs to be handled if your life were to change as a result of an accident or health emergency? If not, call me at 800-478-8963 or write me at advancement@themissionsociety.org for assistance in mobilizing and planning for life's emergencies. ✚

Lewis von Herrmann, The Mission Society's vice president for mission advancement, is a CFP® from Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc.



We all think we're the center of the universe

Why ethnocentrism is a major hurdle in finishing the task



“What is interesting, writes Jim Ramsay, is that even as many in the United States recognize and even expect ethnocentrism in ourselves, we sometimes make the mistake of assuming it is only an American condition.”

One does not have to be a child development specialist to recognize how little children tend to think the world revolves around them. In an individual, this is called egocentrism, and we hope the child eventually outgrows it as she or he begins to interact more with other people. For some, that maturity seems to take longer than others!

The same tendency occurs within culture and is called ethnocentrism. It is a tendency to view one's home culture as normative and to have a hard time imagining that people could think or behave differently without it being some sort of aberration.

Ethnocentrism is rampant.

As a college student I lived in Denmark for several months. Once, a visiting American asked me, “These people re-

ally speak English normally, don't they? All this Danish they speak is just for fun, right?” He could not imagine that someone would actually think in a language different from his native English. In Kazakhstan a young man once asked me incredulously, “So, your family speaks English to each other? Like, you wake up in the morning and just speak English? You think in English?” He was doubtful about my affirmative answers. These are rather extreme examples; most examples are a bit more subtle and often affect us at a more subconscious level when we face the differences in another culture.

Due to our nation's large size and having only two international borders, we in the United States have often tended to exhibit ethnocentrism. But with the increase in diversity within our

own country, increased international travel, and globalization, the U.S. population in general seems more aware now of other cultures and the differences than perhaps in past years. We are more apt to see differences as just differences rather than signs of lack of progress, civilization, or even intelligence.

What is interesting, however, is that even as many in the United States recognize and even expect ethnocentrism in ourselves, we sometimes make the mistake of assuming it is only an American condition. In an ironic twist, there can be a sort of ethnocentric assumption that only Americans are ethnocentric—as if there is “American” culture and “non-American” culture. Perhaps that is related to our cultural tendency to think in dichotomies, but that's another subject for another article.

How does all this relate to mission and, in particular, to our role in an era in which the Majority World has increasing involvement in mission? For several decades now, mission preparation in the United States focuses on teaching about concepts of culture and on preparing missionaries to live in a new culture, to distinguish gospel principles from “home culture” principles, and to seek to present the gospel without American packaging. However, if we only view world culture as “American” and “non-American,” then we can have the mistaken assumption that as Ghana, Korea, Mexico, and the Philippines send missionaries, they are automatically equipped to deal with other cultures, since they all are in the “non-American” category.

Ethnocentrism can make the gospel seem foreign.

We saw this during our service in Kazakhstan. There were some young believers from China who came to study in a Kazakhstani university. They wanted to be effective missionally and had been encouraged with great optimism by a U.S.-based organization that works in China. But they had received no cross-cultural preparation for what they were to face, and Chinese culture is very different from the Russian culture they encountered at the university. Russians don't even use chopsticks! Some of the Chinese students we got to know were having major struggles understanding and dealing with the local culture. At

one event I attended last year in Peru, it was Brazilians who were complaining about the lack of rice and beans (a Brazilian staple) in the food prepared for us by Peruvians.

This holds true within countries—as Indian Christians, who are concentrated mostly in the south of that country, pursue a vision to reach across to Indians in the north, their default mode will be to package the gospel in south Indian

“If we only view world culture as ‘American’ and ‘non-American,’ then we can have the mistaken assumption that as Ghana, Korea, Mexico, and the Philippines send missionaries, they are automatically equipped to deal with other cultures, since they all are in the ‘non-American’ category.”

culture and church tradition. This can make the gospel seem as foreign to the local people as if it had been brought by Americans in pith helmets.

Awareness of ethnocentrism has positive side effects.

There are huge implications for the role of Western missions. From our own mission history's successes and mistakes, we have learned the importance of understanding cross-cultural issues and staying alert to our own ethnocentrism. We need to recognize that ethnocentrism is not an American phenomenon,

but a human phenomenon. We can help our Majority World brothers and sisters develop training tailored to their own culture to help them be more effective carriers of the gospel to different cultures within their own borders and beyond. One of the great side effects to this is that the awareness helps them critique how the gospel was shared in their own cultures in years past, which may have been with a heavy dose of ethnocentrism from well-intentioned missionaries who may not have been conscious of their own cultural biases. This awareness can provide them an important perspective into the history and development of the church within their culture.

That is why the training being done at The Mission Society by some of our missionaries, our missionary preparation team, and our international mobilization teams has been so important and is so exciting. It is a joy to see the “aha” moments as Russians, Kenyans, Brazilians, Chinese, recognize their own cultural blinders and understand the implications those have on how they share the gospel. We are enabled then to share and celebrate the gospel that unites us among the beautiful diversity of cultures into which God has placed His people. †

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



Short-term missions with a long view

By asking one simple question, your team's short visit can help mobilize for ministry the global body of Christ



According to Dr. Robert Priest, professor of Mission and Anthropology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, each year about 1.5 million short-term missionaries leave the United States to do Christian work abroad at a cost of more than two billion dollars. The long-term kingdom impact of their efforts could be greatly increased by adding an equipping and empowering element to their ministry.

Several weeks ago a group of 15 or so people visited the early Sunday worship service at my home church. They were a short-term mission team from North Carolina on their way to the Atlanta airport with a final destination of Central America. Our pastor graciously afforded a spokesperson for the group a little time to address the congregation. I must confess, I cringed a bit as this person said they were going down to build a building for the people. He went on to say that the team would conduct a Vacation Bible School for the children there. As one who frequently teaches a course for short-term mission team

leaders, I will admit to being somewhat overly sensitive to words and phrases that sound paternalistic when it comes to dealing with our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. (We dealt with this issue along with others—such as unsustainable projects, not creating dependency—in the summer 2010 issue of *Unfinished*. Visit themissionsociety.org to view that edition.)

Short view

I do not really want to use this incident to revisit those issues. I also do not want to ascribe wrong motives to this spokesperson, given that I did not have

the opportunity to talk with him further about the short-term team's plans. Perhaps in this new setting he just failed to articulate their goals as well as he could. Rather, I want to use this situation to suggest that it might behoove short-term team leaders to add another filter to their decision making when planning a short-term mission. The filter I would add is this: Are there ways our short-term efforts can mobilize the body of Christ to be more effective in ministry? Begin by asking that question of those we are going to serve—the missionaries or the national church leaders. If we simply answer that question within our

own teams and on our own terms, we may be headed for trouble.

Take a friend of mine, for instance, who was going on a short-term trip to work in an orphanage in Asia. His team decided that one of their primary ministries while there would be teaching the orphans about prayer. After all, what could orphans in Asia possibly know about prayer, right? Imagine how the short-term team members felt when on their first morning at the orphanage they were awakened at five o'clock by the sound of every orphan in the place engaged in fervent prayer. These children were already great intercessors. So an appropriate question long before the mission team departed the United States would have been: What are some ways you could use us that would be beneficial to your ministry?

Long view

I was recently talking with a church about an upcoming short-term trip in which they were going to conduct a Vacation Bible School, much like the one that was mentioned in my church. They described for me the team that would be going, the theme of the VBS, the kids' activities, and the materials and teaching aids they would use. Then they asked me what I thought.

I told them I thought it was a great plan if they would add one more element. I suggested they get in touch with their local national church contacts and ask if it would be permissible for their children's workers to work alongside the team so they could learn this program. Furthermore, I suggested when the team members were through, they should leave all the materials and teach-

ing aids, including the puppets, with the local teachers so they could practice and then do additional Vacation Bible Schools in other parts of the city and even in the surrounding villages. After a big gulp about leaving the puppets (the only real teaching aids that were not readily available or could be constructed there), the team agreed and liked the idea of not just doing, but also mobilizing others for ministry.

There are even ways to turn the ubiquitous construction short-term mission into one that has mobilizing elements. The first thing I would suggest is to talk to the national contact about hiring local workers for the project using short-term project funds paid at local foreign rates. By that, I don't mean hire the locals as the "grunts," but rather find true craftsmen to hire. The short-term team can do the grunt work. As they assist the nationals, they should treat them with dignity, establish relationships, include them in devotions at the start of the day, share lunchtime with them, and if possible, find some way to even include their families.

The key here is to use the occasion to open doors for the local ministry team to build bridges to the lives of others, bridges that will remain after the short-term team has gone. The circle can be expanded and the outreach broadened if ways are found to include those on the periphery, such as building material suppliers and any others who support the project even in the barest of ways. The same partnership approach with local ministry can happen in many other ways including teaching business skills or ethics, agriculture principles, home health, and a host of others. In sum-

mary, identify a need that can be met through collaboration with nationals or missionaries; find ways to fill the need, and pass it along to locals who can either continue the work or follow up on your work.

Review and learn

This mobilization process can work in reverse as well. If the short-term team members are observant, they can often learn techniques from the nationals that can be applied to reach their own or other cultures back home. In the early 1980s I was on a short-term evangelism team in Bogotá, Colombia working with a group of young men studying to be church planters. In the morning we would study together under the leadership of the local pastor. In the afternoon we would divide up with two Colombians and one "gringo" going together to visit homes and businesses in an assigned sector. When we returned to the States, we turned the model we learned in Colombia into a means by which we, as church members, entered into surrounding subdivisions in a way that greatly increased the homeowners' receptivity to us. There is much we can learn from our national brothers and sisters if we pay attention.

By simply thinking of how to add "ongoing ministry value" beyond the immediate goal, short-term missions can be used as an effective mobilizing tool. And by being observant in the culture in which we engage in short-term mission, we can find approaches that will mobilize us for greater ministry at home. ☩

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



Sweet beans?

What our tastes in food have to do with finishing the task



Training is critical, even for those who serve as interns for only a few months.

It was an experience I'll never forget. The date: July 4, 2010. The place: Teresopolis, Brazil. Newly approved Mission Society missionaries had joined Brazilian Christians and a handful of people from other countries for The Mission Society's annual orientation training. Since July 4th fell on one of the training days, our Brazilian friends wanted to honor us and allow us to celebrate our special holiday with them. The cooks and organizers worked together to prepare food that would be served like a typical cookout in the United States.

So good

The menu included hamburgers, chips, and baked beans. The people from the States seemed a bit happy—as if the food gave them the nostalgic feeling of other July 4th celebrations they had known. The Brazilians seemed to be

excited to experience just a taste—pun intended—of U.S. culture. There was only one issue. The Brazilians learned that the baked beans were sweet. *Sweet beans?* Surely it was just a gastronomic gaffe, right?

Some of them furrowed their eyebrows; their minds were grasping for the logic behind such a culinary anomaly. Their reaction was similar to reactions I've seen (and even made myself) when I was in Peru and someone asked those of us from the States if we would like to try *anticucho* (marinated, grilled cow's heart) or *cuy* (guinea pig). Let's just say that our nonverbals gave away our true inner thoughts: "Yuck! Why would anyone eat that?"

Not so good

Back to my story. Being that I like to encourage people to take steps to challenge themselves culturally, I was thrilled to see a Brazilian woman poised to taste the baked beans. Her facial expression was somewhere between disgust and fear. I egged her on. "You can do it. They taste good." This dear sister in the Lord quickly shoved the beans into her mouth and immediately gulped a few swallows from a can of Coke to cleanse her bewildered taste buds. She had survived. There would be no encore bite, however.

I laughed so hard. *How could anyone respond so dramatically to something that wasn't even nasty*, I wondered? I mean, what's so gross about sweet beans?

Unfamiliar

I tell this story to illustrate further what you have already read in Jim Ramsay's article. (See page 32.) Every culture has its preferences—preferences in dress, preferences in music, and yes, preferences in food. And it's no easy thing for people of any country, not just those of us from the States, to leave what is familiar in order to go to a culture that is different. Communicating the gospel cross-culturally means fully entering into a world that is unfamiliar, just as Jesus did, and learning to love people whose history, customs, and preferences are likely strange to us. This is precisely why The Mission Society's training is such a crucial component of cross-cultural preparation.

While in Peru and Kenya as a part of the training team, I heard the testimonies of several in-country missionaries who verbalized their hope—mingled with regret—that they now knew what they must do to adjust their ministry approach. "I wish I had known this before," was a comment I heard often.

Missionary preparation can very well make the difference between a cross-cultural worker who thrives and one who does not—well, that along with a resolve to adhere to the missionary adage, "Where God leads me I will follow; what He feeds me, I will swallow." †

Richard Coleman is The Mission Society's senior director of mobilization and candidacy.



Go explore. >>>>>

Are you considering a life of cross-cultural ministry? Trying to piece together your education and experience with what God is already doing worldwide? Do you have a passion for people and cultures? But at the same time, are you maybe not so sure where to begin?

A GreenLight Internship of 2-18 months gives you the go-ahead to explore.

Explore what it looks like to live, work, and do ministry with people in another culture. Learn from missionaries with valuable experience and perspective. Make friends and engage in conversations that allow you a glimpse of the gospel through their eyes. Immerse yourself in the story that God is telling throughout the world—a story that is bigger than your own.

We are now accepting inquiries for the GreenLight Internship. If you're ready to explore, contact Kate Hilderbrandt at greenlight@themissionsociety.org.

"I had no idea how much higher and different and better God's plans were for my life. He was working in a foreign place I knew nothing about. He invited me and continues to invite me to be a part of it."

—Jennie Clements, Monterrey, Mexico

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