

Unfinished

A publication of The Mission Society

Fall 2006 | 34



**We shall all come together.
One body. No walls.**

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UNFINISHED
Fall 2006, Issue 34

Publisher/CEO
Philip R. Granger

Editor
Ruth A. Burgner

Researcher/Contributing Writer
Reed Hoppe

Design
Point of Vision / www.pointofvision.com

Information Technology Director
Phyllis Hughes

Founding President/President Emeritus
H.T. Maclin

Unfinished is a publication of The Mission Society. Subscriptions are free upon request.

Send subscription requests, change of addresses, and all correspondence to P.O. Box 922637, Norcross, Georgia 30010 or call 800.478.8963 (FAX 770.446.3044). The Mission Society is funded entirely by gifts from individuals and local congregations. All gifts are tax-exempt and are gratefully acknowledged. The Mission Society's publication is a member of the Evangelical Press Association. Please visit The Mission Society online at: www.themissionsociety.org.

The Mission Society staff: Jay Anderson, Dan Auman, Theresa Bennefeld, Dennis Brown, Sara Brown, Ruth Burgner, Janice Colvin, Doug Cozart, Frank Decker, Anna Drewry, Leslie Fellows, Debbie Finney, Philip Granger, Lauren Helveston, Reed Hoppe, Phyllis Hughes, Brenda Lee, Beverly Mancuso, Dick McClain, Paige Pushkin, Ivar Quindslund, Rick Roberts, Stan Self, Johanna Stahl, Darrell L. Whiteman, Allison Wiggins, Tracy Wiggins, Larry Williams, Johnny Winkle, Roger Wright.

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Our vision: The Cross of Christ within arm's reach of everyone in the world;

Our mission: To facilitate obedience to the Great Commission by the Body of Christ;

Our strategy: To create self-reproducing, indigenous, discipling Christian communities by mobilizing cross-cultural witnesses for Christ in partnership with nationals.

BRISTOL HOUSE

Your Partner in Discipleship



OUR FAITH TODAY
April 2006

Leading United Methodists Answer Your Questions

Q Why should Christians read the Old Testament?

A The simple answer is: for the same reason that readers of the last chapter of Henry's *Fire and Power* need to read the rest of the book. We can read that last chapter with enjoyment, but we grasp the real meaning and significance of that last chapter only if we have read what leads up to it.

The same is true for the New Testament: it is the conclusion to a book which begins in Genesis. The only church continued this when they came to call the great-Christ writings the "New Testament." They were saying that this was the second part of a series—the sequel to the Old Testament "pre-quel."

And both parts of the book are important to the other: neither one is meaningful. Of course our Jewish friends would have problems at this point, but this is just what both Jews and the Apostle Paul were saying. They said that when we see the Old Testament as pointing to and leading up to

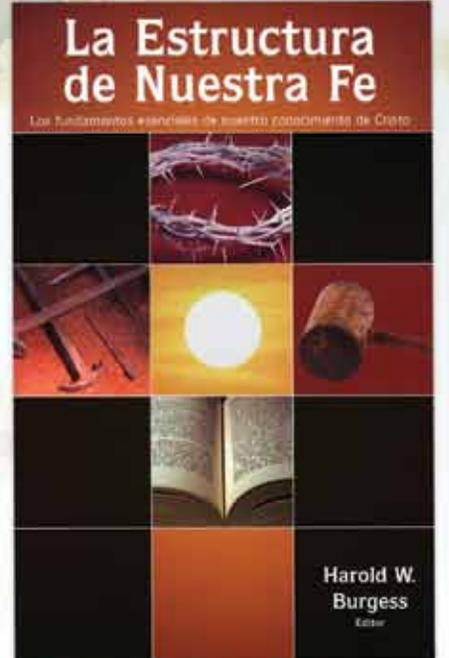
with God about matters of moral concern. It's telling God what's important in our lives and listening to what God wants in our lives. To pray to Jesus means to be proactive that Jesus has the final authority over our requests and desires to our relationship with God. We are submitting to his authority and power because his name is equivalent to his character. It's responsible to the phrase in the Lord's Prayer, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." When Jesus saw our 73 mistakes, they reported that "even the devil is subject to us in your name" (Luke 10:17). The name of Jesus is powerful in making God's kingdom real in our world today.

Praying in Jesus' name is not a lucky sign-off at the end of the prayer. It is surrender to his will.

Should I seek to be a pastor or evangelist?

Q Why is it so important to be in a church?

A When we examine the New Testament we find that



La Estructura de Nuestra Fe
Los fundamentos esenciales de nuestro conocimiento de Cristo

Harold W. Burgess
Editor

OUR FAITH TODAY

THIS MONTHLY BULLETIN INSERT answers questions about United Methodist practices, the Scriptures, personal and social holiness and more. A new section, written by **The Mission Society** staff, offers informative and inspiring stories from around the world.

Mission Society President and CEO, Philip Granger, says, "This bulletin insert is a way to minister to your congregation as you seek to offer the love and message of Jesus Christ in your own community and in communities at the ends of the earth."

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We need each other

Many years ago, I was in the darkest season of my life. Depression had been fierce for months, and there seemed never to be even a moment of reprieve. Nothing made sense any more. Why had God, whom I had trusted all my life, turned a deaf ear?

On a rainy mid-week morning, as my husband drove me to the train station, the despair came like a monster again. Tears gushing, I blurted out, “God please bless me. Please, please bless me.” I spoke it audibly. That seems odd, as I think of it now. I was desperate. I needed rescuing.

When I got on the train, I kept my face turned toward the window, so others couldn’t see me. People never talk to each other on the train, but this morning was different. Several minutes into the journey, an older black gentleman, a fellow passenger, began addressing me for all to hear. “You go to church don’t you?” he asked, picking me out with his gaze. “Yes,” I said, mopping my wet eyes. “My dad was a preacher; so is my husband.” “I knew that about you,” he said, “because you and me are on the same plane. I got filled with the Holy Ghost a few weeks ago, and **the Lord told me that He wanted me to start encouraging those who believe.** And I know you believe. In fact, the Lord is telling me something about you right now. He’s telling me that He wants to bless you. Before you get off of this train today, He wants you to know that you are precious to Him. He loves you.” For the duration of my train ride, he talked on, reminding me that God had not left me alone.

I’ve thought often about my fellow passenger as I’ve worked on this issue. It strikes me now how easy it would have been for him to have said nothing. But the Kingdom of God seems so often to involve a movement toward others. It is this forward movement toward one another for the sake of God’s Kingdom which is the theme of this inaugural issue of *Unfinished*.

Moving toward one another

In the fantasy book *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis depicts hell as a place of relative comfort but where people live light years away from one another. In his clever way, Lewis makes a clear point: God’s Kingdom involves togetherness. We are stamped with the image of a triune God, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit –

a Holy community. And the Church is called to community. “Let us not give up meeting together” (Heb. 10:25, NIV), the Scripture tells us.

All of this talk is familiar to us. It’s easy to think fondly of community life. And it’s breathtaking to see it lived out. But living it requires much from us.

We Westerners, are marked by the thinking of the European Enlightenment (*see pages 14-17*), so much so that we rarely question its rationalist values (i.e., trust for the “provable,” and seen; mistrust for mystery, the unseen). This affects the way we view God and the universe. People of many other cultures, however, see little distinction between the natural and the supernatural, between the empirical and the spiritual. A missionary who has served in West Africa for seven years tells: “For Africans, the spiritual world is primary, and the material world is secondary....I’ve begun to see that our [North Americans’] so-called ‘rational’ way of thinking is not necessarily the truth.” Missionaries who served in Afghanistan tell us that 85 percent of Muslims who come to faith in Christ come because Jesus appeared to them in a dream. This seems almost unthinkable for us, who give little heed to dreams and visions. “Western theology is pared-down theology,” says Andrew Walls, “cut and shaved to fit a small-scale Enlightenment universe.”

As we move forward toward one another to announce God’s Kingdom, we will discover that we need each other to challenge one another’s assumptions about the world. Not until all the cultures are gathered together can we begin to fully discover the richness of the Gospel (*see pages 2-5*).

I might have been skeptical about my fellow passenger’s revelation to me. After all, it was kind of far-fetched. But then, how can a rational mind comprehend a peace that passes all understanding? How can it understand that nothing can separate us from the love of God? “Our soul,” writes Julian of Norwich, “is so wonderfully loved of Him that no one can comprehend it.” This is the message we announce: The incomprehensible love of God.



Back to the future: Becoming a first-century mission organization

By taking a leap back in time, first 200 – then 2000 – years, President Philip Granger answers the questions you may be asking about The Mission Society

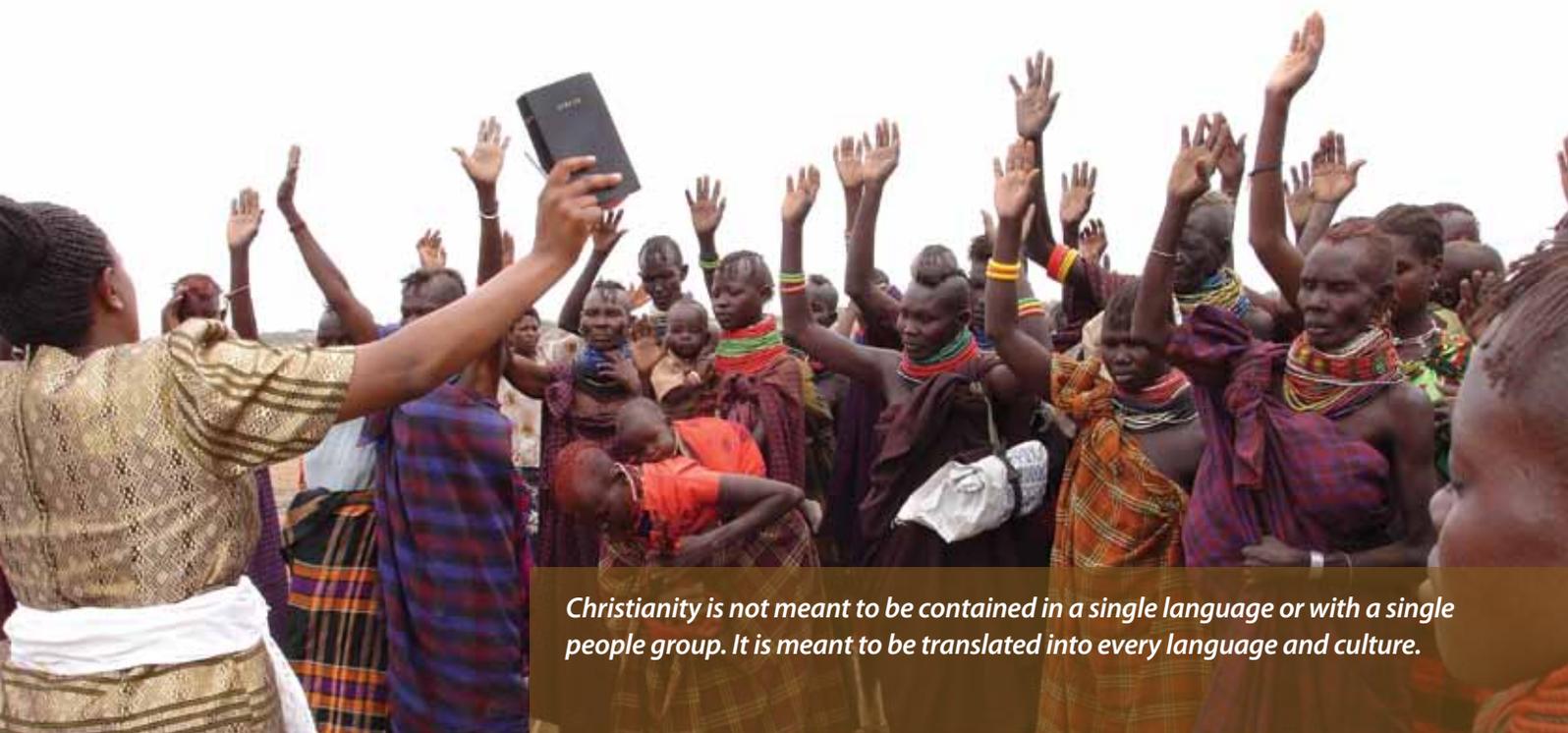
Recently a couple exploring the possibility of becoming missionaries with The Mission Society asked some questions that went right to the heart of what The Mission Society is and does. They asked: “First, what makes The Mission Society different from other mission agencies? Second, why should we consider joining with you?” Talk about getting down to business! As you can imagine, I love answering questions like these. But my answers took a route that this couple probably never expected. I found myself first setting The Mission Society’s story in context within mission history. With that backdrop, the role God has given The Mission Society – and the exciting direction He is steering this ministry – could be best seen.

As this couple and I talked that day, I realized that anyone who comes into contact with The Mission Society deserves an answer to these same questions. So here goes. Stay with me. I begin here with some abstract concepts, but you will quickly see their application to The Mission Society.

The three timeframes of modern mission history

One way to organize the history of missions is to see Christian missionary endeavor broken down into three general timeframes, which, for the sake of discussion, I will identify as “colonial missions,” “post-colonial missions,” and “back-to-the-future missions.”

Colonial missions are synonymous with the Western colonization of the world. Sometimes missionaries arrived first, but frequently they followed the colonists. Missionaries often took with them their Western practices and concepts, and imposed them on indigenous people. Religious forms, symbols, and practices were carried to the colonies and were communicated as the ways to God and to practicing the Christian faith. Christ and faith were equated with Western culture, so indigenous peoples were frequently forced to choose between giving allegiance to a Western understanding of God or remaining committed to their own culture. As such, colonial mission work was often done in the mode of “Christ against Culture.”



Christianity is not meant to be contained in a single language or with a single people group. It is meant to be translated into every language and culture.

There was little understanding of the importance of making the Gospel relevant to a particular cultural context, so that people could remain within their own culture and still follow Jesus as Lord of their lives.

Post-colonial missions

Fortunately, this model began to give way to post-colonial expressions of mission in the post-World War II era. During this time missionaries and nationals alike began to recognize the fallacies of colonial missions.

There were two different reactions to the colonial era of mission. One reaction, primarily by mainline mission organizations, was to conclude that mission activity had been the handmaiden of colonialism, and since political colonialism was coming to an end, it was high time for missionaries to go home. Some of these mission organizations began to question the centrality of Christ in mission and slowly slid into a mission theory that was more interested in inter-religious dialogue than in Christian witness. As such, mission activity among these groups became focused more on mission programs concerned for social justice, than on evangelism and church-planting. These mission agencies missed the central Gospel Truth that the Great Commandment (social concerns) was inseparable from the Great Commission (evangelism and discipleship). It is not surprising that they experienced a precipitous decline in the number of missionaries they sent around the world.

A second reaction to colonial missions began to occur in the 1970s and 1980s when some evangelical missionaries began to understand the need to connect the Gospel in ways more relevant to the indigenous culture. Also, some began to talk about planting indigenous churches that no longer needed to look like carbon copies of the churches “back home.” This was a quantum leap forward in missiological thinking, but problems still

remained. For many mission agencies, their personnel were, and still are, primarily Westerners. Because of this, the basic understanding of the Christian faith for most North Americans is still carried in Western thought forms to the world’s peoples. (This is very interesting for a faith tradition which had its beginning in the region we today call the Middle East.)

Back-to-the future missions

In the last several years we have begun to see the emergence of “back-to-the-future mission” or, more precisely, a Holy Spirit-guided return to a first-century understanding and practice of Christian mission. Christianity, as distinct from



The Mission Society

The fish, a symbol used in the catacombs under Rome, marked the way for believers to gather for worship in the face of persecution.

Christendom, was never meant to be identified with a single culture or thought form. It is meant to be translated into every language and culture. The image in Revelation of the great multitude of people gathered before the throne of God presents this truth in a vivid way.

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:9, NIV)

Christianity is meant to be spread to all people, so that they hear the Gospel in

their language and in ways that are relevant to their culture. The crowd at Pentecost in the streets of Jerusalem underscores the reality of this.

Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language: Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya and Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! (Acts 2:8-11, NIV)

Could it be that it will take all the cultures, all the languages, all the people groups of the world in order to understand and express all the dimensions of Christian faith in the fullest way? I firmly believe so!

We are moving into a new era of Christian mission that embodies an understanding of Christ as the “Transformer of Culture.” We can say it simply as follows: The Gospel confirms most of culture. The Gospel confronts and challenges some of culture, and the Gospel transforms all of culture. The many languages and cultures of the world are gifts of God’s grace. In the same way God has created a rich and diverse physical world, God has endowed human beings with the capacity to create a rich and diverse social and cultural world. In Christ all things become new, but in becoming new, all things do not become alike. This is the beauty of how the Gospel relates to culture.

What are the implications?

What does this mean for The Mission Society? It is important in at least three ways. First, it means **we must continue to be culturally sensitive and provide the highest level of cross-cultural preparation possible for our missionaries.** We are

Perspective

grateful that Dr. Darrell Whiteman, a foremost Christian cultural anthropologist, has been providing cultural sensitivity training for our missionaries for the past nine years. (Last December he joined our staff as our resident missiologist and will be, among other duties, assuming responsibility for our entire missionary training program.)

Second, **we must involve more and more indigenous leadership in the ministry.** It has always been Christian nationals who have been the natural bridge for the Gospel to traverse from the foreign missionary to the indigenous society. We understand our task as one of partnering with national church leaders in ministries that support and train Christians to engage effectively in mission. These ministries, in effect, multiply the churches' ministries of mercy, justice, and proclamation, and enable the formation of indigenous churches which will communicate the faith in more culturally relevant ways. This has at least

three benefits. First, the church can become more truly sensitive to the local culture. Second, by working with international partners, God can multiply our meager efforts, time, and resources for truly Kingdom purposes. (Today we have almost 200 missionaries working with more than

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3,500 nationals.) Third, it is simply biblical. Read the book of Acts and see how few missionaries there were at the beginning of the Church. When we go into the world with 200 missionaries, we go with the understanding that we are unable to do this work by ourselves. We must serve together with our international partners and other

agencies, and we need the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit to do so.

The third implication for The Mission Society is that, as we work with the indigenous Church, **we must strive to become a catalyst through which the Holy Spirit can plant a desire deep in the heart of the non-Western Church to engage in God's mission.** God has led us to share our Global Outreach Seminar with our international partners in other countries. This mission mobilization tool was first conceived to help North American churches develop an understanding of, and motivation for, God's mission in the world. Our international partner churches are now adapting it to their needs and using it to aid in the planting of new churches among previously unreached people groups, empowering their indigenous leaders, and founding new mission sending agencies across the world.

I am frequently heard saying that The Mission Society today is not your grand-

It will take all the cultures, all the languages, all the people groups of the world in order to understand and express all the dimensions of Christian faith in the fullest way.



parents' mission agency. With our concern for indigenous ministry, partnership with nationals and organizations of like mind, developing an understanding of, and motivation for, mission in churches here and in the rest of the world, all wrapped in a desire for the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world, The Mission Society has literally become a "new creation." We have come a long way since our founding 22 years ago as a supplemental mission agency for The United Methodist Church. Today we are in partnerships with 14 different Methodist bodies worldwide, as well as independent and other denominational groups. Our missionaries come from many different denominations and independent churches. We are proud of our United Methodist roots, but it is clear that God would have us embrace a wider ministry field and share our gifts and understanding with the whole Church, not just one denomination.

As we move forward in becoming a body

guided by first-century mission principles, we realize how much we are dependent on the Holy Spirit and how thankful we are for our Wesleyan heritage, which remains in our hearts. Rather than "reinventing" The Mission Society, we are simply responding to what we believe God is calling us to become. We are very intentional in seeking our way to the future as we listen intently to God and follow God's guidance.

Ancient message, new logo

In recognition of what God is doing we have shortened our name to **The Mission Society** with emphasis on **The Mission**. It is **The Mission**, the mission of God in the world, that we are all about. We don't care who gets the credit. We only care about The Mission and its being fulfilled. In support of this, we have redesigned our logo. It is now a roughly drawn globe reminiscent of a passport stamp signifying the international character of The Mission Society. Across the face of the globe is the

most ancient of Christian symbols, the fish. The fish, a symbol used in the catacombs under Rome, marked the way for believers to gather for worship in the face of persecution. This first-century symbol was exchanged between individuals facing persecution as a means to identify themselves as followers of Christ. Finally, the left side of the globe and the fish are incomplete, signifying that the task is unfinished.

The Mission Society remains firmly grounded in our Wesleyan heritage and embraces John Wesley's well-known quotation, "If you are of like mind with us, then give us your hand." We look confidently to the future, knowing that we are firmly rooted in the past, joining hands with many who are of like mind to complete the task. †

***The Rev. Dr. Philip R. Granger,**
The Mission Society president and CEO, is
an elder in the North Indiana Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.*



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A monsoon rain compromised the Lodwar-bound bus' ability to cross a river, leaving the group stranded for 20 hours.



One Body

Joining God's mission requires pulling together. Traveling the road toward togetherness, as did people of many tribes and nations this summer, becomes an unforgettable journey of the heart.

By John Michael DeMarco

How do you minister to a man who burned down your house and shot at your family?

A Burundi pastor posed this challenge to Dr. Karl Dortzbach, a ministry leader with Peacemaker Ministries, during the fourth day of the East Africa Mission Mobilization Conference in Kenya. Dortzbach, an American born in Ethiopia and living in Kenya, was in the midst of teaching his peacemaking material to 71 East Africa pastors when the question arose and a hush fell over the audience.

The conference was an outreach ministry of The Mission Society in cooperation with Kenya's Glory Outreach Assembly. Its purpose was to equip local clergy to mobilize their churches to minister to unreached people groups in their respective countries. Most in the audience were grappling with similar hurts when the vocalized dilemma brought Dortzbach's teaching dangerously close to home.

The image of East African Christians working to overcome their mutual distrust and foster peace seems metaphorical of another struggle – the struggle of all believers to be Christ's witnesses in "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)." Such a journey can only be completed when believers destroy barriers within families, churches, denominations, towns, regions – and especially within their own hearts.

Less than an hour into the conference, U.S. faculty members asked African attendees for forgiveness for the manner in which Western missionaries imported their version of Christianity to Africa. What happened next no one could have expected.



In East Africa this struggle is particularly pronounced, given age-old warfare among the numerous tribes and the massive numbers of persons who have yet to be reached with the Gospel. The small flickers of light being kindled in these African nations must daily contend with shadows, such as the 1994 Rwandan genocide, when two extremist Hutu tribe militias massacred approximately one million Tutsis and fellow Hutus. In this land, reaching out for the sake of Jesus Christ requires many to not only leave their comfort zones—the most fearful step for Christians in the West—but also to face the prospect of death.

The Burundi clergyman had only recently learned that a deacon in his own church was the same man whose arson had left his family homeless several years earlier. Now he was being told he must not only forgive but love and be reconciled with this man, whom members of the audience thought was deserving of death.

In the midst of the silent anticipation that followed the pastor's question, Dortzbach walked to the podium, grabbed a coiled rope and unbundled it. He fastened a noose on one end and looped the other around his wrist, and gently placed the noose around the pastor's neck. As nervous laughter trickled throughout the audience, Dortzbach walked across the room until the noose tightened.

Dortzbach noted how even though the pastor and the deacon had wandered far apart from one another, the bondage between them had continued. The pastor, he said, now had the opportunity to inflict revenge upon the deacon who had burned his home—and Dortzbach switched roles, placing the noose around his own neck and the looped end on the pastor's wrist.

"Every time you want to get back at me you can tug on my noose, and I'll tighten mine...and here we go, trying to be part of the same church, intertwined in our bondage to each other," Dortzbach asserted. As he explained how reconciliation leads to freedom in Christ and the grace to love and minister to one another, the rope slowly fell to the floor in symbolic gesture, freeing both men from its entanglement.

"We can't go as missionaries dragging a 20-pound concrete block with us of anger and unresolved conflict," noted Bill Johnson, a board member of The Mission Society and key organizer of this event. "Karl (Dortzbach) said, 'God does not honor that, and you must bury the hatchet.' It's hard to be a missionary unless you have learned how to resolve conflict biblically, and have been freed from your own personal conflict."

The tone was set

The manner in which the American faculty approached the Kenya conference set the tone for reconciliation and surrender

among the delegates. The first day began with Dr. Darrell Whiteman asking attendees for their forgiveness, for the manner in which Western missionaries imported their version of Jesus and Christianity to Africa.

"It was evident that they were stunned," said the Rev. Dick McClain, The Mission Society's vice president for church resources. "Westerners don't come apologizing for their failures."

Immediately, delegates began to stand and declare, "I want to ask for forgiveness for tribal warfare against so-and-so tribe," Johnson recalled. "People turned to each other, hugging and asking for repentance. One brother from Rwanda approached me and said, 'I need to ask for forgiveness for all the white missionaries my people killed.' I said, 'Brother, we stand on their graves today. You are the product of their martyrdom. They are in heaven, but you are here with the mandate to go [to others with the Gospel].'"

The faculty was amazed at the response. "The conference was an hour old; we didn't know the delegates yet," Johnson said. "The Holy Spirit used our confession to break down the walls even before we started the seminar. It all began with the vulnerability of these white-skinned people who traditionally come as know-it-alls, saying, 'We're here in an attitude of repentance, seeking forgiveness.... We're here to serve you. All we care is that Jesus is glorified and lifted up.'"

"They told us later that that was so radi-

The team who traveled to the frontier community of Marsabit (below) ministered among the unreached Boran tribes.



cally different that it disarmed them, and made them willing to trust us.”

Week two: Mission to Kenya’s frontier

Having responded to God with a foundation of repentance and reconciliation during the first week, the faculty and Kenyan Bishop David Thagana prepared to send delegates across a frontier for a short-term mission trip. For most it would be their first of any kind, an initial foray into their own “Samaria.” Samaria refers to a region that is geographically close, but so culturally different that we prefer to go around it.

The three simultaneous missions were based in the towns of Lodwar, Maralal, and Marsabit (see map on page 11). The teams would minister among the unreached tribes there—the Turkanas, Samburus, and Borans, respectively. And while the residing hometowns of the conference

delegates are Spartan when compared to the West, their distinction from the abject poverty, and the simplicity of the nomadic peoples of Lodwar, Maralal, and Marsabit is astounding. In these places the carcasses of cattle and livestock line the nearly impassable roads. To a visitor, the sense of despair is overwhelming.

Recalled Whiteman, “What I said to these pastors was, ‘What you’re about to experience is something very, very different. The cultural gap between New York and Nairobi is less than the gap you’re about to experience. You need to be prepared for that.’”

The arduous trip that followed could be compared to the journey of the heart, when God begins to move into the deepest interior.

“We left Nairobi, all these busloads of people going on a mission trip,” noted Rick Roberts, The Mission Society’s



African leaders from nine nations attended the East Africa Mobilization Conference. Some regional delegates rode bicycles for days over horrendous roads. Others traveled by truck stacked three deep. Regardless of the difficulties, they came.

vice president for cooperative ministries. “The regional delegates traveled by various means. Some rode bicycles on horrendous roads. Others traveled by truck stacked three deep. Regardless of the difficulties, they came.”

A total of 264 cross-cultural witnesses from Kenya were to join the teaching teams and delegates for the second week of the conference. The Lodwar team had planned to begin its conference at noon on Monday of week two. But a monsoon rain resulted in conditions that compromised the Lodwar-bound bus’ ability to cross a river, leaving the group stranded for 20 hours (see photo, pages 6 and 7). Another team, on its way to Marsabit, doubled-parked a bus that was confiscated by police. The team heading to Maralal had the shortest

distance to travel, but it was delayed in arriving and could not be contacted.

The growing sense of spiritual attack against the emerging outreach continued the next day. Two men on the teaching team fell ill. In Lodwar, which had been pounded by monsoon rains, sessions were taught in complete blackness. The mother of a Turkana host was bitten by a poisonous snake.

“We’re standing there in pitch black darkness, and we started saying, ‘Satan is very unhappy; therefore we must be doing something extremely Kingdom-oriented,’” Johnson said. “We started claiming that, and the Lord started ministering to me, saying, ‘I’m still God. Romans 8:28 is still in My Bible. Trust Me. I didn’t cause this trouble, but I’m going to work it out and

use it for my good.”

And as the group persevered against the darkness through prayer and obedience, the conference ended with a sense that the enemy’s oppression could not mitigate the fruit already blooming forth. McClain noted how national clergy at his sessions ended their time together by pledging to work together, to “stand in the gap as pastors and do what they knew neither the government nor the army could do—and that is, bring peace between these tribes.”

Roberts recalled a female educator who started crying as he had spoken of the 1.8 billion people who have little or no access to the Gospel. “She committed to live on half her salary, and give the rest to fund a pastor to go live among a neighboring nomadic group. I met another pastor who was barely



The East Africa Mobilization Conference included the distribution of Bibles and humanitarian aid. A total of 2,250 people were treated medically; 4,300 people were provided food, and more than 700 made new commitments to Christ.

putting food on the table, but committed what for him was a huge sacrifice.”

Pastor Simon Mwaura, a GOA overseer whose region includes all three of the towns visited during week two, told locals in Marsabit, “My tribe is responsible for the devastating conditions here in Marsabit, because we marginalize your people – and I want to ask your forgiveness.” Still ill at the time, Roberts said he was “awakened by a wailing sound” in response to the pastor’s confession. “I realized, ‘That’s not the program.’ People were down on their faces all over the room, pouring their hearts out to God. I thought, ‘Wow, thank you, Lord, that I got to see this.’”

Also in Marsabit, a young woman received a word of prophecy: “I have heard your prayers. It is an offering like smoke

rising up to heaven, and I hear your prayers. You have often spoken, and I listen. But these prayers I hear. I will respond. The end is closer than you realize, but you must act.”

In response, the Marsabit delegates organized themselves into work groups across denominational lines. Forty-five minutes later, they emerged with a unified vision of how to work together.

In total, the mission trips to the three tribes led to more than 700 persons making new commitments to Christ. In addition, leaders made new commitments regarding missions and outreach. Among them was Pastor Peter Maina Kiiru from Nairobi. After spending time among the Turkana people, he decided to leave his church and go live among the tribal people as a missionary. He said, “I cannot live here in



Seventy-one delegates from week one alone committed to train 8,041 local, regional, and international leaders next year, potentially impacting thousands of churches, and ultimately reaching tens of thousands of unreached people for Christ.

The East Africa Mobilization Conference: An overview

The East Africa Mission Mobilization Conference took place from July 28-August 14 in Kenya. An outreach ministry of The Mission Society in cooperation with Kenya’s Glory Outreach Assembly, the event featured faculty from the United States and Kenya.

The vision for these two weeks was to help mobilize more than 700 churches with 35,000 Christians, taking the Gospel to 100,000 people in unreached or least-reached tribes.

During the first week (in Nairobi), 71 African leaders were challenged to mobilize their congregations to the unreached/least-reached of nine East Africa nations. During the second week, 129 leaders were simultaneously challenged across the northern Kenyan communities of Lodwar, Maralal and Marsabit to share the Gospel in their own regions with the Turkana, Samburu and Boran tribes. The second week’s events also included the administering of medical care (three doctors and 12 nurses were among the teams); food distribution; preaching in street crusades; and the distribution of more than 1,500 Bibles.

The conference invited and sponsored 24 indigenous national leaders from the East African countries of Burundi, D.R. Congo, Erithera, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, along with 47 national leaders from Kenya. (Somalia delegates were prohibited by the Kenyan government from attending due to terrorist activities in that country.) Nine of the Kenyan leaders

were delegates from the Turkana, Samburu, and Boran tribes.

Representing 50 churches in Nairobi, 264 Kenyan Christians were sponsored on their first cross-cultural, short-term mission trip to the same three tribes. They sacrificed a week’s worth of wages in order to attend.



During the second week, conference delegates traveled from Nairobi to three northern Kenyan communities to help equip Christian leaders there and to offer Christ. For many, it was their first short-term mission experience. They sacrificed a week’s worth of wages to come.

The Mission Society’s “Global Outreach” and “Cross-Cultural Evangelism” seminars were taught to these leaders. The “Peacemakers” seminar on biblical conflict-resolution also was taught on the first Thursday of the conference.

In addition, conference faculty visited orphanages; dedicated the opening of a new dormitory at Tumaini Children’s Home; ministered to street children; and preached at a regional soccer championship tournament.

Nairobi in this comfort when there are so many who are suffering, and they've yet to know Jesus. I must go live among them and show them the Gospel," Roberts noted, adding that 14 persons from the pastor's church came forward to join him.

The steps of reconciliation continued in the days after the delegates and faculty returned to their homes. In an email sent several days after the end of the conference, Thagana reported, "Each day we are being blessed to receive testimonies of EAMMC (East Africa Mission Mobilization Conference) impact. GOA (Glory Outreach Assembly) women have just returned from Burundi with great results of Hutus and Tutsi being reconciled, families being reunited and

hundreds turning to worship Jesus."

McClain said the magnitude of the mission was beyond anything The Mission Society had ever undertaken, and that all efforts accrued to the benefit of someone else's ministry. "We teach an Acts 1:8 plan. We are to be Christ's witnesses in our own Jerusalems (people right outside our doors), and to our Judeas and Samarias. And somewhere along the way, someone has to do what Paul did in Acts 15, to go to the ends of the earth—where the Gospel hasn't gone. Whomever we can help do that, it accrues to the Kingdom and to Christ," he said.

Seminars and conferences can be a dime a dozen, Roberts added. "You've got white

faces going there all the time to help these African Christian leaders. Everywhere we went they said, 'This is the first thing we've had that equipped us in developing a strategy to make a difference.'

The emerging big picture for The Mission Society is the role it can play in stimulating similar movements in other parts of the world. Confession, repentance and forgiveness often serve as a spark to light the fires of revival. And in the streets and towns of East Africa, it appears those small flickers are amplifying and that—despite the shadows of the past always eager to snuff them out—the flames may follow.

The walk from Jerusalem to the "ends of the earth" is a long one. And testimonies

Behind the scenes

A massive undertaking, the East Africa Mission Mobilization Conference is the fruit of a relationship born in 1999 and stretching across two continents.

The life stories of the key organizers of this two-week event represent magnificently its heart. Bishop David Thagana, who now heads Glory Outreach Assembly (GOA), a thriving ministry in Kenya, grew up without knowing God was reachable. "My grandfather taught me that our God lives on top of Mount Kenya," he says. "He lives there, I was taught, because people disturbed Him so much that He went on top of the mountain to hide and get away from people."

Bill Johnson, an Atlanta businessman, was called into ministry at the age of 14. For the next 40 years, he did all he knew to do with the resources with which God blessed him, generously supporting his church and Christian causes. In the late 1990s, God began to expand Bill's heart and vision to include the unreached peoples of the world. By then, this now-successful businessman was heavily involved in his church, in missions, and with The Mission

Society. "The Lord laid on my heart Romans 10:14-15," says Bill. "How are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? ... And how can they preach unless they are sent? To a businessman like me, that makes sense. It's multiplication. The Lord



was defining my call. I was to use the rest of my life helping to equip and send more preachers and Christian leaders to reach the world for Christ."

Meanwhile, in Kenya, the young David Thagana had encountered the Truth—that

God desires relationship with people—and he wanted to tell everyone he knew. He did, first as a high school teacher, and later, in 1998, in full-time ministry. He planted a church, and the churches (now Glory Outreach Assembly) kept multiplying.

Previously unreached tribes are now hearing the Gospel, as God is bringing together people from different continents, like U.S. businessman Bill Johnson and Kenyan Bishop David Thagana. Thirteen of the 80 churches overseen by Thagana are discipling more than 3,000 new Christian converts among the unreached Turkana and Samburu tribes.

In 1999, these lives intersected. While Thagana was in the Atlanta area attending Bible college, he began going to Roswell First United Methodist Church and met Johnson in Sunday school class. Later, in 2002, Johnson (who was chairman of

flowing out of East Africa show clearly that the first steps have been taken. The first steps are those of the human heart.

The need for reconciliation presented by the Burundi clergyman is the same across the globe. And the answer of love and freedom from bondage, offered by Karl Dortzbach, is the penetrating truth with which each us must reckon in order for our hearts to be fully unbound and available to Christ – in order for us to take the first steps into our “Samaria.” †

John Michael DeMarco is a United Methodist deacon and a freelance writer speaker and trainer based in Central Florida.

The Mission Society's outreach to U.S. congregations) traveled to Kenya to teach the “Acts 1:8 ministry strategy” to the Glory Outreach Assembly. The two-week conference reported in the preceding pages is the fruit of the relationship that began during those days.

Today, reports Bishop Thagana, God has used the Acts 1:8 strategy to increase the number of GOA churches to more than 80 (as of July 2006). Since January 2005, 13 of these churches have been planted to disciple more than 3,000 new Christian converts in the unreached tribes of the Turkana and Samburu, in North Kenya, where famine and drought are causing a massive human tragedy. Previously unreached tribes are now hearing the Gospel, as God is bringing together people from different continents – like Johnson and Thagana – and using them to help accomplish His mission.

The Global Outreach Seminar

Presenting simple, biblical principles that are helping to reach thousands

What was presented to these African leaders to equip them for ministry among unreached tribes? In addition to cross-cultural mission training (provided by The Mission Society's Dr. Darrell Whiteman), and the Peacemaker Ministry teaching (provided by Dr. Karl Dortzbach), the “Global Outreach Seminar” was introduced. Developed by The Mission Society, this seminar charts a course for a transformation of the church's heart, perspectives, and actions by examining three vital issues.

First, the seminar explores the biblical foundations for mission by examining “**The Mission of God.**” From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible declares one consistent message: God desires all the people of the world to know Him, love Him and worship Him. From the moment after the fall of man until now, God has been on a mission to redeem His lost creation. He now

invites us to join Him in that mission. As we embrace God's heart for the world, our hearts are transformed.

Part two takes a closer look at “**The World God Loves.**” It celebrates what has been accomplished during two millennia, as the Church has grown from 120 Christ-followers gathered in the Upper Room to a worldwide throng of Christians numbering nearly one-third of the earth's population. However, it also examines the unfinished task, with a special focus on the 1.8 billion people who are members of more than 1,000 unreached people groups that still have little or no access to the Gospel. Finishing this task must become the strategic priority of every local church.

Finally, part three leads the congregation into an exploration of what it means to be “**On Mission With God.**”

Four major paradigm shifts are needed within the local church if it is to be effective in joining God's mission: (1) The church must reorient itself from maintenance to mission; (2) Churches must cease being “come-to” congregations and become “go-to” churches; (3) The church's approach to ministry must change from ministry being done only by ordained professionals, to ministry being done by ordinary believers; and (4) The church must move beyond having a missions “program” to having a missional heart.

From these foundational principles, the seminar then suggests six practical

Because the Global Outreach Seminar is designed to be transferable, conference attendees are given every tool they need to teach this seminar among their own congregations.

strategies that will lead to effective and strategic outreach: (1) develop an Acts 1:8 plan; (2) build Kingdom partnerships; (3) involve people in short-term missions; (4) bring the world to your church; (5) focus your giving globally; and (6)

ground your ministry in prayer.

“While these six strategies are not comprehensive, they are also not theoretical,” says the Rev. Dick McClain, The Mission Society vice president for church resources, who is the chief writer/editor of this seminar material. “The Mission Society has seen that churches which have embraced and applied these principles and strategies have succeeded in effectively mobilizing their members for outreach across the street and around the world.”

Wondering how to develop an Acts 1:8 plan for your church? Plan to attend a workshop in Atlanta on April 20-21, 2007. See page 22 for more details.



The Great Shifting Tide

Christianity, which once moved only *out* from our shores, is now coming back *in*. And the incoming Christianity, says Dr. Darrell Whiteman, may help save the Western Church.

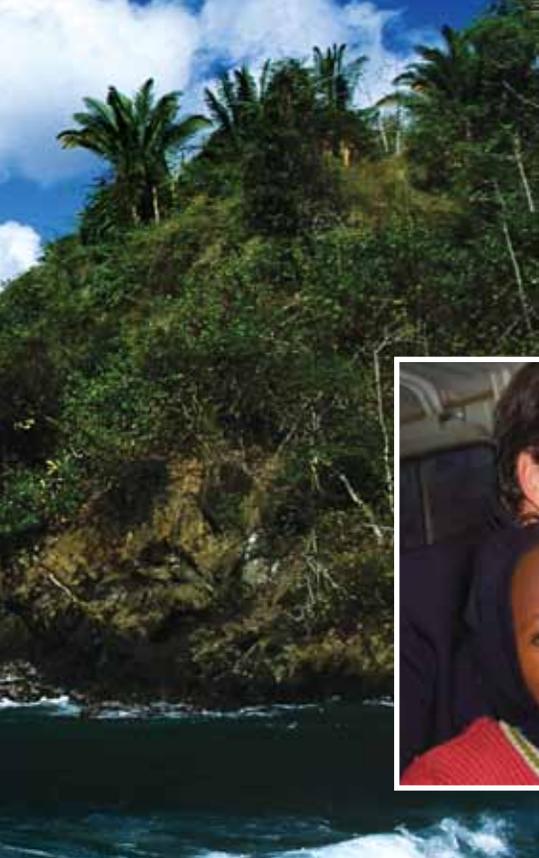
***F**or centuries, Westerners (Europeans and North Americans) exported the Gospel to non-Western nations. The Gospel message offered by Western missionaries was wrapped in their own culture, and informed by a belief system that exalted reason and individual autonomy. Today, the tide is reversing. The homeland of Christianity is no longer in the West. And now the “post-Christian West” has become the receiver of the Gospel message marked by the culture and belief systems of non-Westerners, who are coming to offer Christianity to us.*

In this interview, Dr. Darrell Whiteman offers a look at post-Western Christianity. You’ll recognize its markings when you read about it. Post-Western Christianity may already be re-invigorating your faith.

How is the mission world different today than it was in the past?

During the days of colonialism—when “the sun never set on the British Empire”—the West had influence everywhere. Missionaries, seeking to extend their denominational influence, often came along with the colonial governments. Consequently, the seeds of Christian faith were planted. That led to Bible translations which, in the end, did a great deal to preserve the different languages and cultures around the world. (Three cheers for missionaries!)

But in the 1960s, colonialism ended. The number of missionaries from the West (North America and Europe) began to decline, especially among mainline denominations. Christianity also began to decline, especially in Europe. The Western world has become post-Christian.



“In places all over the world, Christianity doesn’t look like Western Christianity any more, and it never should have,” says **Darrell Whiteman, Ph.D.** A former missionary, Whiteman serves as vice president and resident missiologist of The Mission Society. He was a member of the Asbury Theological Seminary faculty from 1984-2004 and served as dean of its E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism for three years. He is president of The American Society of Missiology; president of the International Association for Mission Studies; and chair of the Network for Christian Anthropologists.

Today, the center of Christendom* has shifted. Two-thirds, and maybe higher, of the world’s Christian population is located outside the West. In 2000, the number of non-Western missionaries surpassed the number of Western missionaries. Places where the Holy Spirit now seems to be moving and where the Church is growing most are in the South and East. “The game is no longer in our town.” In other words, the Western world has essentially become post-Christian.

And the West becoming post-Christian has caused another interesting shift. The seed that was planted during the colonial era was a Western form of Christianity. Today, however, the grandchildren of those early converts have begun to realize that their understanding of Christianity has

been informed by the West, and they are learning to live out their faith according to their own cultural contexts [in a “post-Western” form of Christianity].

In these non-Western areas, the Church is growing by leaps and bounds. In other words, the seed planted in Asia, and Africa, and Latin America has become a big, flourishing tree, as these non-Western Christians have discovered the relevance of the Gospel for their culture.

What is different in missions today is that we, in the West, get to come alongside these non-Western Christians and literally live in the shade of that tree. And as we learn to do that, we begin to see that there is much that that tree can provide for us. Is there nourishment that we can help provide for it? Yes. But it has much, much to give us. We need each other.

What does post-Western Christianity look like lived out?

It addresses the concerns of these non-Western cultures—such as concerns with evil spirits, concerns with ancestor veneration, concerns with power for everyday life. We

in the West are prone to think we don’t really need the power of God very much, because we have money and we have health insurance. But when you are impoverished, when you do not have enough food to survive, when you don’t have enough money to pay a doctor, or there is no doctor or hospital, you need the power of God to intervene in everyday life. And when you’re living like that, your faith comes alive. And if your local church doesn’t address those concerns, then you go someplace else. So post-Western Christianity is incredibly relevant to where people are living. In Zimbabwe, for example, where 24 percent of the population has AIDS, if the church is not teaching how the Gospel message is relevant to AIDS victims and their families, then its message falls on deaf ears.

What post-Western Christianity illustrates is that where Christianity comes alive and is at its best is when it is anchored deeply within the soil of the people. And that’s happening. In places all over the world, Christianity doesn’t look like Western Christianity any more, and it never should have.

*Linguistically, Christianity and Christendom mean the same. However, Christianity connotes a system or style of conduct based on belief. Christendom suggests a realm and reflects particularly the Western experience of Christianity.

Dana Robert put it this way, “Christianity is the first universal local religion.” Christianity has spread all over the world. It’s universal. But every place you find it, it’s local. It is a local expression of a universal Truth. And the degree to which it becomes more and more local and addresses local concerns and meets local needs, the more powerful it becomes. That, to me, is the empirical proof of the Truth of Christianity.

“When we minister out of our weakness and vulnerability instead of out of power and prestige, the Holy Spirit is at work. It’s one of those basic Kingdom principles that you just can’t get enough of.”

Do you sense that post-Western Christianity is having an influence in the United States?

This may surprise you, but there is an enormous number of missionaries coming to the United States. And North American Christians are being influenced by these

non-Western missionaries. Through them, we are starting to catch on to how God is moving in other parts of the world. They are helping to re-ignite our faith. Their influence here is important. It may, in fact, save the Western Church.

Are these non-Western Christians actually moving to the United States for the purpose of being missionaries? Or are you referring to non-Westerners who are moving to the United States and, by virtue of their living out their faith among us, are being missionaries to us?

These people are coming here as missionaries to us. In fact, one of our missionary couples from The Mission Society recently told me that their home church is bringing on staff an Ecuadorian pastor who is being sent by his church in Ecuador to the United States as a missionary. So this family is coming from Ecuador to Georgia to be missionaries! Now, will they work among Hispanics? Yes. But they will also minister – and have influence – among the larger community.

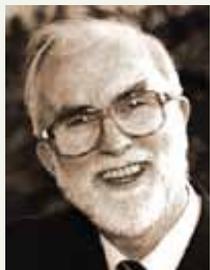
What are some of the things about the Christian faith they will be teaching us?

I think this Ecuadorian family will teach what total reliance on God is like, because they will likely not be coming with economic power or political prestige. They will probably come with very little. In that way, their ministry may look an awful lot like the early disciples.

When we minister out of weakness and vulnerability instead of out of affluence, power, and prestige, the Holy Spirit is at work. It’s just one of those basic Kingdom principles that you just can’t get enough of. And here it is: The poor, the weak, the marginalized are just going to show us up. And some of us are going to catch on and say, “Wow, the Spirit of God is still alive.” We’re going to see it in the lives of these non-Westerners, and they will be reminding us that this abundant life in Christ is available for us, too. So you see, post-Western Christians may, in effect, help re-evangelize the post-Christian West.

As North American Christians, what can we do to ready ourselves and

America’s immigrants: Principal agents of Christian mission



A new great migration may be on its way, says Dr. Andrew Walls, and it has massive implications for missions.

Christianity was once the religion of confident, technological advance and rising affluence and sometimes saw these things as a mark of God’s favor. Christianity now will

be increasingly associated mostly with rather poor and very poor and with some of the poorest countries on earth. And people from the non-Western world will be the principal agents of Christian mission right across the world. Even in the Western world, they will have a significant place, for it may be that in some areas of the West at least, Christianity will increasingly be associated with immigrants.

The great new fact of our time is that the great European migration has gone into reverse. There has been a massive movement (which all indications suggest will continue) from

Christianity now will be increasingly associated mostly with the rather poor and the very poor and with some of the poorest countries on earth. ... It may be that in some areas of the West, Christianity will increasingly be associated with immigrants.

the non-Western to the Western world. The 2001 U.N. report on population projects a rise in the world population of 1.2 percent per year, an annual aggregate of 77 million people. Half of that

shape our ministries for this changing face of missions?

One of the fundamental truths of the Gospel is that all members of the Body need each other. **So first, we need to know that we are not self-sufficient.** Even though our culture teaches us we should be independent and self-reliant, God's Word tells us that we are His Body—dependent on one another.

Second, we need to remember that God has commissioned His Church to go into His world to reach this world that He loves.

We need reminding of this. Our churches need reminding of this. When William Carey, who is often considered the father of the modern missionary movement, wrote in 1792 about reaching the unevangelized people of the world, it was a brand new idea. Why? Because most self-respecting Englishmen of his day thought, "If God really wants to 'get these people saved,' God will do it. It doesn't involve us." (Funny thing is, we sort of think that way even today.) But William Carey said, "No. You're wrong. It does involve us. Jesus' commission given to the disciples is given to us."

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,

Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth," Jesus said. This is the commission of every local congregation today. That means every congregation should be involved in each of these areas of mission—in our Jerusalems (meaning our neighborhoods and our cities); our Judeas (meaning our regions); our Samarias (meaning the nearby areas that are so culturally distant that we wish we didn't have to go there); and to the ends of the earth. And the best thing in the world is to be in all these areas of ministry in partnership with people from other neighborhoods, regions, and nations.

There are still four billion people who don't know Jesus, and 1.8 billion of them have little or no access to the Gospel. Many of these people live where Western missionaries are not welcomed or are even prohibited, so the Western and non-Western churches must work together. If we can come alongside the non-Western countries and help them become missionary-sending countries, a powerful missionary force will be unleashed that will greatly advance God's mission.

Third, we need to pray. Our busyness should not prevent us from learning

about what God is doing in the world. We don't have to get on an airplane to do research; we can read. We can develop friendships with people from other nations. As we do, we discover that God can use us tremendously by our praying very concretely for very specific people and very specific situations. And the power of those prayers cannot be underestimated. As we do these things, the priorities of our lives will change. I am willing to submit that we will become less busy. We will take more time for people. We will be less about doing and more about being. And we won't buy into cheap values and the world's definition for success, because we are of a different world.

I have a former student who always wanted to be a missionary. She never got to the field, but she stays informed about the world, and she prays. She has four boys, and she and her husband have reared those young men to be world Christians. Simply by the way they live their lives, she and her husband are making an impact—making a huge contribution to God's work in the world. ☩

increase will come from six countries, India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. The increase in population growth will be concentrated in the areas least able to sustain it, leading to irresistible pressure for migration. By 2050, the population of Africa will be three times that of Europe, even after allowing for the anticipated deaths of 300 million Africans from HIV/AIDS. But the population looks set to fall by 14 percent in highly industrialized Germany and Japan by 2050; in Italy, by 25 percent; in Russia and the Ukraine, perhaps by as much as 40 percent. In other words, the developed countries will need immigration if they are to sustain anything like their present economic activity... The United States will need a million new migrants a year to sustain itself.

Andrew Walls is the curator of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh and the director of the Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies at the University of Aberdeen. His recent books include *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* and *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*. Excerpts here and on page 19 were taken from his lecture "Christianity after Christendom" delivered in Vancouver, British Columbia during Regent College's 2003 Summer Lecture Series. To order, contact the Regent College Bookstore at www.regentbookstore.com or 1-800-334-3279.

Give postmodernism a second look

This popular worldview may play a surprising role in the new era of mission

“This moment, even as Christianity is dying on the vine in the West, could be one of the greatest of Christian history,” says missiologist and cultural anthropologist Dr. Darrell Whiteman. “The reason this is so is because as the West is becoming more post-Christian, it is also becoming more postmodern.”

In the United States and throughout the West, what is emerging out of the ashes of this burned-out Christendom is a postmodern culture. And what is so amazing is that the postmodern culture has a lot in common with the non-Western world, where the church is growing.



“What is so amazing is that the postmodern culture has a lot in common with the non-Western world, where the church is growing.”

Let’s look at this. First, the Church is growing in non-Western nations because of an emphasis on relationships, not because of institutional structures. The same value is true in postmodern culture. People are seeking trusting relationships. Institutional structures, such as denominations, are an anathema to postmodern people. They, like non-Western people, demand relevance, and institutional structures are perceived by them as often irrelevant.

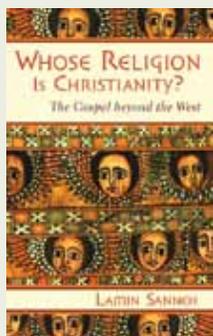
Another common denominator between non-Westerns and postmoderns is their easy embrace of mystery. They can accept that God is bigger than we are, and that we don’t have

to understand everything. Truth, for them, is bigger than our understanding of it.

So, as I see it, postmodernism is not the enemy of the Gospel in America. In fact, it offers a great opportunity to rediscover, for ourselves and for others, the relevance of the Gospel. It serves to remind us that we don’t understand or know everything. It moves us beyond our comfort zone and challenges us to find new ways of communicating the Christian message. Our reaching postmoderns won’t be through institutional programs, organized by the church. It will be through one-on-one relationships. And frankly, that’s the way people have always come to faith—through their friends and their family.

One of the reasons we are suspect of postmodern people is that they say that there is no universal truth. In a sense, they are on to something, because even though there is universal truth, the way it is experienced is very different from one group to another. That doesn’t need to scare us.

Our theology, particularly systematic theology, is often presented as a tidy laying out of truth propositions. This kind of propositional truth makes a lot of sense to a modern mind. But the postmodern will say, “The audacity of you to tell me that this is how it’s all laid out. That may be true for you, but don’t ask me to buy into that.” Is there still truth? Yes. There is truth. But we may need to come to terms with the idea that some of what we regard as “truth” may have only been an attempt by a modern mind to make sense of a theological concept, like atonement, for example. We may need to begin to notice the heavy presence of relational truth in the Bible, which will be much more attractive to the postmodern mind than a tidy set of propositional truths. †



We recommend
WHOSE RELIGION IS CHRISTIANITY?
By Lamin Sanneh

Sanneh’s engaging narrative takes the form of a self-interview, in which he asks questions about the cross-cultural expansion of Christianity and provides insightful answers and meaningful predictions about the future.

His own background and lifelong involvement with non-Western cultures bring a richness of perspective not found in any other book on world Christianity. Literate, relevant, and highly original, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?* presents a stimulating new outlook on faith and culture that will interest a wide range of readers. (\$12.00)

Adapted from online review at Amazon.com.

Top 10 guidelines for reaching postmodern people

By Michael A. Rynkiewich



Dr. Michael Rynkiewich, a former missionary to Papua New Guinea, is professor of anthropology at Asbury Theological Seminary. Among the books he has authored are several dealing with an anthropological look at American culture.

Hospitality. Be inviting, welcoming, non-judgmental, and inclusive. Postmodern people need a place and a people, because they feel alone, rootless without hope and without meaning.

Relationships. Find ways to build relationships, to integrate the seeker or novice into small groups and networks of Christians.

Community. Tolerate uncertainty, doubt, immaturity and an exploratory spirit. Work to build community. Allow people to belong before they believe.

Involvement. Provide clear paths and easy access to lay ministry in and for the church. Let your motto be: Every member in ministry.

Diversity. Be intentional in recruiting and preserving variety among the membership. Let your model be the Kingdom of God gathered around the throne as described in Revelation 7:9.

Dialogue. Provide a non-threatening atmosphere for honest sharing. Be prepared to listen, learn, and appreciate the story of the other. Let the Holy Spirit guide the transformation. Remember: We are God's witnesses, not God's lawyers.

Narrative. Tell the story of the Church, and situate it within the larger story of God and Missio Dei. Invite the story of the seeker, and show how they, too, fit into the story of God, Jesus Christ, and the Church. Repeat as necessary.

Incarnation. Engage people with the whole Gospel on all levels – in sermons, in public celebrations, in confession, in counseling, in acts of justice and mercy. Address whole persons in their intellectual, emotional, and ethical dimensions.

Contextualization. Encourage the work of doing local theology by forming communities to examine the Scripture texts and consider how Christ confronts, confirms, and transforms culture in their particular day and place. Teach the difference between form (i.e., rituals and customs) and meaning. Show contextualization in the New Testament Church.

Integrity. Be sure that Jesus shines through you. Postmodern people are suspicious and will not tolerate duplicity. Meet suspicion with authentic Christ-likeness. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we point to Jesus as Lord and Savior and much more.



We shall all come together

“In Ephesians, there is no sign of a Jewish church and a Gentile church; there is one Church, one Body, needing all the functioning organs. The Christian Church is diverse because humanity is diverse. The Church is one, because humanity is one. And Christ is humanity in its fullness.... In Christ, all these culture-specific humanities are gathered up; their specificities turn to Him. And so, says the apostle, we shall all come together. Together, because none of us can make it on our own or just with our own kind – to that oneness of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God that reaches to the very height of Christ's own stature.”

–Andrew Walls



Catching God's wave in Brazil

Read how God is bringing North and South Americans together for His purposes

If you have ever been surfing, you know what it's like to catch that perfect wave. Once you have positioned yourself properly, you are then carried by a force much more powerful than yourself. And the ride is exhilarating. In August I was part of a team of The Mission Society staff who visited Brazil to meet with church leaders and make plans to work together. One afternoon I looked down on the

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.

Brazilian coast from the mountain called Corcovado, home of the famous "Christ the Redeemer" statue which has dominated the Rio de Janeiro skyline since 1931, and I thought about the magnificent wave we are riding.

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. A very strong synergy is evident due to this movement within Brazil and The Mission Society's efforts to enable indigenous churches who have historically been mission recipients to become more involved as mission senders. One staff member from The Mission Society in reference to our meetings said, "I saw this as a 'kairos moment' as their enthusiasm for

becoming engaged in mission was matched by our eagerness to share what God has taught us about cross-cultural ministry."

During the first of a two-week process, The Mission Society staff and officials from Brazil Methodist Church's First Region (annual conference) met in Rio de Janeiro to discuss the whole range of topics related to organizing a mission sending organization, recruiting



missionaries, training them, placing them, and supporting and caring for them. We also received teaching from a Baptist missionary whose Ph.D. dissertation focused on characteristics of Brazilian culture that shape and influence Brazilian missionaries. These and other discussions helped to shed light on many issues (including why previous attempts to send missionaries by the Brazilian church has resulted in an attrition rate of more than 50% in the first year of service). By the end of the first week, plans to conduct joint training in 2007 for missionaries from The Mission Society and the Brazilian Methodist Church were finalized. The training will occur at IMFORM (the Methodist Institute for Missionary Formation), which is in a rural area north of Rio de Janeiro. In addition to enabling

the fledgling Brazilian movement, moving The Mission Society's training to Brazil (which has, in the past, been conducted in Georgia) will provide a more cross-cultural element to the training experience.

The second week, The Mission Society and Brazilian personnel conducted a Global Outreach Seminar and training in incarnational ministry to 72 participants. The event was held at IMFORM, and was attended by representatives from five of the ten regions of Brazilian Methodism. "Bishop Roberto [of Brazil's Northern Missionary Region] opened with an amazing prayer that reflected brokenness and repentance for the church's failure to engage the whole world in mission," remembers Dick McClain, who heads The Mission Society's Church Resources ministry. "That led to an extended time of intercession, during which time many wept as there were prayers of repentance and commitment. The net effect was to significantly raise the spiritual temperature of the remainder of the event."

Everyone who participated in the consultations and conference in August came away with a sense that God's anointing as South Americans are stepping up their efforts to reach out in mission, and North Americans are learning about mission from a different cultural perspective. We continue to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit to enable us to catch God's wave of mission, which is moving in creative and powerful ways. ✠

Frank Decker, vice president of The Mission Society, is a former missionary and an elder in the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Katrina, one year later

On a recent trip to Biloxi, Mississippi a member of The Mission Society staff surveyed the damage left in the wake of the storm and talked with people about their experiences during the past year.

The unbelievable strength of Hurricane Katrina can still be felt along the Gulf Coast today, over one year after its August 29th strike. Although construction continues and some homes have been rebuilt, a vast majority of the coast still bears the scars of the deadly storm. Boats remain perched in tree tops; restaurant signs hang half-fallen from roof tops; debris lines the streets. Yet the spirit of many people remains strong and the desire to rebuild and continue their lives along the coast is echoed among much of the population.

The Mission Society sent a mobile medical clinic to FUMC in Biloxi just weeks after the storm. Staffed by several missionaries residing in the States at that time, the clinic functioned for four weeks in the parking lot of The First United Methodist Church (FUMC) in conjunction with the church's Disaster Recovery Team. Jo Waltz, long-time medical missionary of The Mission Society, treated more than 300 patients during her stay in Biloxi.

Again and again volunteers hear the deep gratitude of local residents. "I don't know what God is doing in heaven all alone since so many of his angels are down here helping us," remarked one church member. Churches and Christian organizations across

the nation have teamed up to provide aid to the victims. Time and time again they hear people tell, with teary eyes, stories of being taken advantage of after the storm. One 84-year old widow gave most of her savings as a down payment for reconstruction on her dilapidated home. She never saw the contractor again.

More than cleaning out debris and painting homes, Christian workers who come to the area are restoring hope to the citizens of the Gulf Coast, like this 84-year-old. For those who have endured so much loss, having others give without expecting anything in return is a welcome change. —Reed Hoppe



In the wake of the storm, The Mission Society sent a mobile medical clinic to Biloxi, Mississippi. Staffed by several missionaries, the clinic functioned for four weeks in the parking lot of Biloxi's First United Methodist Church.

Missionary/Pastor David Seamands dies

Dr. David Seamands passed away in Wilmore, Kentucky on July 29, 2006 at the age of 84. Seamands was one of the 33 founders of The Mission Society at its inception in 1984 and was a leading evangelical voice in The United Methodist Church for decades. Born in India to Methodist missionary parents, he developed a passion for missions at an early age. He and his wife, Helen, would later serve as missionaries in India for 16 years.

Dr. Seamands served as the pastor of The United Methodist Church in Wilmore, Kentucky for 22 years.

To read an interview with Dr. Seamands on the topic of discerning God's call, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org.

In 1984 he accepted a position as professor of pastoral ministries at Asbury Theological Seminary, remaining there until 1992. For the two years prior to his retirement, he also served as the dean of the Asbury Seminary chapel. A pioneer in the field of counseling, Dr. Seamands wrote numerous books on the subject, and led hundreds of couples in marriage enrichment seminars with Helen.

Dr. Seamands is survived by his wife of 64 years, three children, nine grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren.

Throughout his life, David Seamands was an influential voice for evangelical missions. We are deeply grateful for his faithful witness and for his imprint on this ministry.



Dr. David Seamands, a former missionary to India, was an influential voice for missions throughout his life.

Want to develop a mission strategy or plan a mission event in your church?

Don't miss these workshops.

November 3-4, 2006

Short-Term Mission Academy

Valdosta, GA

The Mission Society's Short-Term Mission Academy offers a fun, interactive one-and-one-half day training designed to equip leaders to effectively coordinate, train, and disciple the members of their short-term mission teams. Mark your calendar. Location: Park Avenue United Methodist Church, 100 East Park Avenue, Valdosta, Ga. Cost is \$99 per person.

January 12-13, 2007

Global Impact Celebration Workshop

Atlanta, GA

This workshop will equip church leaders to plan, promote, and execute an annual high-impact missions celebration event in the local church. Cost is \$99 per person.

April 20-21, 2007

Developing an Acts 1:8 Plan Workshop

Atlanta, GA

This workshop will provide each participant with the training and tools needed to implement an effective missional structure and strategy that will be a unique fit for their local church. Cost is \$99 per person.

To request more information, or to register for the workshops above, email cr@themissionsociety.org or call 1.800.478.8963, ext. 9046. For other upcoming seminars, visit us at www.themissionsociety.org.

The Mission Society seminar connects congregations in Western and non-Western worlds

Seminar materials recently presented in Kenya and Brazil had its start in U.S. churches. Since then, it has taken on a life of its own. This is its story.

In 2000, The Mission Society's church resource division began mobilizing U.S. churches for global outreach through weekend seminars and a mentoring program. A key principle was, "Don't wait until you've finished the job at home to begin to reach out to the ends of the earth. If you do, you'll never go!"



In 2002 some of the weekend seminars' core teachings were taught (by The Mission Society board member, Bill Johnson) to leaders of Kenya's Glory Outreach Assembly, which would become a new ministry partner in 2005. The fruitfulness of that ministry led The Mission Society to develop a pilot seminar designed specifically for non-Western churches.

Entitled the "Global Vision Seminar," the program was unveiled and enthusiastically received in Ghana in August 2003. With the help of a major grant from a Christian foundation, the material was revised during the early months of 2005. In August 2005, the new version was presented at the Latin America Missions Mobilization Conference in Alajuela, Costa Rica (attended by 70 key leaders from 10 Latin American countries), with another overwhelmingly positive embrace. Another revision of the seminar was taught to 200 leaders in August 2006 in Kenya.

The international effectiveness of the Global Vision Seminar resulted in a major transformation of the materials for use in American churches. Renamed the "Global Outreach Seminar," it was field-tested in the spring of 2006 and is being formally introduced to churches spanning from Georgia to Washington state beginning this fall. *For more information about the Global Outreach Seminar, see page 13.*

Tale of two missionary families

These summer staff changes illustrate the never-complacent Body of Christ

Ramsays: On September 1, veteran missionary **Jim Ramsay** joined The Mission Society home office staff as director of field operations. For the past 10 years, he and his family have served as missionaries in Kazakhstan. There, Jim was The Mission Society field leader and also served, at various junctures, as director of the primary/secondary school, academic dean of the ESL program, acting president of the Central Asian Evangelical Seminary, seminary professor, director of the medical program, coordinator of the Small Business Training Center, and The Mission Society regional coordinator for Asia.

Jim and Shawn now live in Lilburn, Georgia with their children: Rebekah (21)

attends Houghton College; Keith (18) is a college student in Atlanta; and Jonathan (17) and Naomi (15) attend high school. Welcome, Ramsays! We are so grateful you have joined us on this side of the ocean.

Hoyts: Just as the Ramsays were leaving the mission field to join the home office staff, long-time home-office staffer **Adam Hoyt** was resigning his post as director of training to become a full-time missionary of The Mission Society. He and Mary, and their twin girls, Anna and Rachel, now minister among a Muslim community in the Atlanta area, as Adam attends seminary. They plan to later serve in Tajikistan. We miss you in the office, Adam. We also love watching how God is using you, Mary, and the girls in this new chapter of your ministry. You're in our hearts.



Ramsay family



Hoyt family

Gallup Poll among Japanese offers missionaries insight into Japanese worldview

In early 2006, the results of a Gallup Poll on “religious and worldview attitudes among the Japanese” were released to the missionary community in Japan. The Gallup Organization surveyed 3500 Japanese from various backgrounds and ages. The poll indicated that Christianity is growing in Japan. Today, seven percent of Japanese teenagers and four percent of adults claim to be Christian.

In addition, the poll uncovered some disturbing news about Japan's youth. George Gallup, Jr. reported: “Twenty-two percent of U.S. teens say they often wonder why they exist, compared to 85 percent of Japan's youth.”

“All things said, God is moving here in Japan in ways that have not been seen

before,” writes The Mission Society missionary Neal Hicks, “There is a growing openness to the Gospel, and missionaries are being encouraged to intensify prayer efforts in seeking God's face corporately. Pray to the Lord of the Harvest that He will send forth ‘reapers’ into this whitened harvest field.”



According to a Gallup Poll in Japan, Christianity is growing among Japan's teenagers. The report also indicates that the number of suicides on Japan's college and university campuses is growing, painting a different picture than this one – of a Japanese Christian youth group – provided by The Mission Society missionaries Neal and Mari Hicks. As part of their ministry, the Hickses conduct prayer walks on Japan's college campuses.

Welcome, new missionaries!

On September 7th, The Mission Society board of directors welcomed 21 new missionaries, bringing the total number of missionaries of The Mission Society to 190. Please join us in praying for these friends as they prepare for their new lives in cross-cultural ministry.



Back row: Lauren Helveston (staff), Janice Colvin (staff), Dr. Phil Granger (staff), Katie Waser, Susanna Powers, Amanda Smith, Tate Welling.

Front row: Magdy Bassaly, Amany Bassaly, Barbara Gray, Jim Gray, Trevor Johnston,

Jannike Seward, Laurie Drum, Kia McEuen, Audra McEuen, Aylis' McEuen Ash McEuen, Todd McEuen, Miki Chastain, Charlie Chastain, Isabel Chastain (newborn), Adam Hoyt, Mary Hoyt, John Heinz, Katheryn Heinz, Samantha Claxton, Cathy Coburn.

Missionaries needed in new locations

Positions available:

Healthcare workers

Doctors, nurses, dentists, ophthalmologists, and pharmacists are needed in rural settings to which very little medical care is available. Offer physical as well as spiritual healing to thousands of patients around the world.

Ghana, Paraguay, Peru and Russia

English teachers (TESL)

Individuals are needed to teach English as a second language. Relationships formed in educational settings can open doors for sharing the Gospel with students. Instruction in TESL available during missionary training.

Hungary, Kazakhstan, Paraguay and Peru

Children & youth ministers

Work with missionaries and national workers to provide spiritual nurturing and mentoring for fledgling youth and children's ministries.

Hungary, Kazakhstan, Paraguay and Peru

Hospital chaplain

Chaplain needed to minister in the Ankaase Methodist Faith Healing Hospital in Ankaase, Ghana. Work with healthcare professionals in this village clinic and minister to both the patients and their families. Hundreds of Ghanaians treated each week. Some pastoral experience required.

Ghana

Orphanage workers

Abandoned children in Russia are in need of persons called to ministries of compassion, evangelism and discipleship. Work in and among orphanages in the Russian Far East.

Russia

Community health workers

Motivated and creative people are needed to help implement a program of community development

among villagers and their families. While there are no medical or professional skill requirements (training in Community Health Evangelism is available), leadership and relational skills are a must.

Ghana, Mexico and Paraguay

Teacher for young missionary

Home-school teacher needed for fourth-grade girl, the daughter of missionaries in Ghana. Other ministry opportunities are available within the village of Ankaase, Ghana to build relationships with national Ghanaians and share Christ through the local hospital and community. Some fundraising necessary.

Ghana

K-12th grade teachers

K-12th grade teachers are needed yearly for a variety of grades and subjects in several schools overseas. Classes taught in English and modest salary is provided. Share your faith through building relationships with students and their parents in this strategic ministry.

Hungary, Kazakhstan, Mexico and Paraguay

Literacy teachers

Act as a teacher's assistant to missionaries teaching both English and native literacy. Students learn their own "mother-tongue" reading and writing skills while reading the Bible. Education majors and TESL teachers especially encouraged to apply.

Ghana and Peru

Director of short-term teams

Coordinator of short-term mission teams needed to organize and communicate with teams traveling from the United States. Highly organized and motivated person desired to minister to teams and facilitate projects to help the community.

Paraguay and Peru

Pastors and theological teachers

Opportunities abound to teach courses, seminars, and conferences in local seminaries throughout

several nations. Leadership development training of pastors and other theological leaders needed. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

Ecuador, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Paraguay and Russia

Agricultural missionary

Seeking an agricultural specialist with the responsibilities of maintaining relations with national agriculture specialists, working one-on-one with local farmers in improving yields, marketing, and soil. Individual will maintain small plot research sites to gather information on crop systems. This individual should be a strong evangelical Christian, self-motivated, with a deep calling to missions.

Ghana and Paraguay

Missionary Training Center director

Couple needed to work in a missionary training center/seminary in Curitiba, Parana, Brazil. Administrative and teaching skills with past missionary experience required. Vehicle and furnished housing provided.

Brazil

Terms of service:

Mission intern – 1-11 months

Mission explorer 1 & 2 – One or two-year term

Career missionary – 5 years including one year on homeland retreat

Global Resources mobilizer – Serve on The Mission Society field for weeks to months at a time, consulting on a particular project in their discipline of expertise.

If you are interested in these or other positions, please contact The Mission Society. Visit us at www.themissionsociety.org or call 1.800.478.8963.



Trouble in paradise

As Christ's Body, our work involves interceding on behalf of the persecuted church. Here, contributing writer Reed Hoppe acquaints us with the plights of some of our suffering brothers and sisters worldwide. In this issue, she examines the island nation of Maldives.

Along the sandy shores of Maldives rest flocks of tourists, eager to explore the uninhabited islands, scuba dive among the coral, and enjoy the posh resorts that speckle the land. In the Indian Ocean south of India, Maldives consists of 1,190 islands, 200 of which are inhabited.

The crystal clear waters provide a pristine image that would easily attract anyone interested in an island retreat. Tourism is the primary income of Maldives, hosting several thousand visitors each year. However, for many of the residents of Maldives, lying on the beaches without a care is hardly a reality. For Maldivian citizens, freedoms of religion and speech, and the right to a fair trial are nonexistent or severely restricted.

Maldives is ranked fifth in nations known for the most severe persecution of religious rights, according to Open Doors International. With Islam as the official state religion, all citizens are required to adhere to Sunni Muslim beliefs. Converting from Islam carries the consequences of a loss of citizenship, as well as the punishments recommended by Islam's shari'a law.

No churches exist in Maldives and the nation remains today one of the least evangelized countries on earth. Christian materials cannot be imported except for personal use by foreigners. The government does allow foreigners and tourists to practice their religion in private, as long as Maldivians are not encouraged to participate. Only a few ethnic Maldivians are thought to be Christians,

practicing their faith in utter secrecy.

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, in power since 1978, has the ultimate judicial authority to uphold the tenets of Islam. The government is reportedly undergoing reform in the constitution to allow for expanded political freedoms since riots occurred in the capital island of Male in 2004.

The U.S. Department of State's "International Religious Freedom Report" investigated Maldives in 2005 and published its findings. Human rights violations such as arbitrary arrest, torture, flogging, and banishment to a remote island remain a problem. Freedom of speech rights are severely limited, and journalists often experience harassment and arrest if they publish unfounded criticism of the government. Four writers were arrested and sentenced jail time in 2002.

At the time of the State Department's report, no prisoners charged with religious crimes were found. Generally, Maldives does not experience the violence of other nations experiencing extreme persecution, and most view the legalized religion as a uniting force for their country.

Islam was introduced to the Maldivians in 1153. At that time, they were Buddhists. Today, Maldives, one of the world's 10 Islamic states, has one of the highest percentages of Muslims of any nation, numbering 99.9% of their 359,008 residents.

With land only six feet above sea level, Maldives was one of the most severely devastated nations by the 2004 tsunami.



A tropical resort, Maldives is a getaway for its tourists. Its people, however, live with restricted basic human rights.

Almost all of the inhabited islands were partially or wholly flooded. One hundred people were killed and 29,000 were displaced, 11,000 of whom have not yet been able to return to their homes. Relief efforts after the tsunami primarily came from the Red Crescent Society. To date no non-Islamic faith-based groups have been allowed to work in the nation.

Pray for the Maldivians and their opportunity to hear of Christ and experience the true freedom that no government can oppress. ✝

For more information, see the U.S. Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report of 2005 www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/; Open Doors International www.opendoorsusa.org; and Freedom House – www.freedomhouse.org

Reed Hoppe, a commissioned deacon in the Alabama-West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church, is The Mission Society's online editor and contributing writer for *Unfinished*.

With the message of the crucified and risen Christ, The Mission Society missionaries and their families minister in 32 nations around the world. We offer their names here. How we thank you for your prayers for them!

Michael Agwanda, Ari Arfaras, Sandra August, Ed & Linda Baker, Jose & Audrey Banales, Julianna Barron, Magdy & Amany Bassaly, Jim & Angela Beise, Bill & Becky Bess, Liz Boggess, Reid & Lola Buchanan, Margaret Buell, Debra Buenting, Doug & Brooke Burns, Julie Campbell, John & Sandra Carrick, Chris & Sue Champion, Charlie & Miki Chastain, Amantha Claxton, Cathy Coburn, David & Carol Cosby, Patrick Cummings, Tim & Daina Datwyler, Don & Laura Dickerson, Christian & Angelica Dickson, Caren Dilts, Billy & Laurie Drum, John & Colleen Eisenberg, Micah Eldridge, Sue Fuller, Dan Godwin, Cam & Anne Gongwer, James & Barbara Gray, Dave & Beth Greenawalt, Alicia Grey, Justin Grogg, Florencio & Maria Guzman, Charlie & Chris Hanak, Kevin & Laura Heikes, John & Katheryn Heinz,

Jon & Jeanne Herrin, Neal & Mari Hicks, Ron & Bonnie Hipwell, Ronnie & Angi Hopkins, Andrew & Margaret Howell, Arthur & Mary Alice Ivey, Charles & Becky Jackson, Charlie & Mary Kay Jackson, Andrew & Juliana Jernigan, Trevor Johnston, Wilson Kendrick, Esaho & Beatrice Kipuke, Clay & Deborah Kirkland, Sue Kolljeski, Joetta Lehman, Ash & Audra McEuen, Cheryl McGraw, Grant Miller, Mike & Claire Mozley, Dondee Nations, Steve Nikkel, Sara Olds, Ron & Michelle Olson, Peter & Masha Oswald, Donald & Carol Paige, Peter & Esther Pereira, Len & Betsy Phillips, Courtney Picardo, Martin & Tracy Reeves, Leon & Vicki Reich, John & Rosalie Rentz, Ben & Jenny Reyes, Ruben Rodriguez, John & Bess Russell, Mary Beth Sandy, Wendi Schambach, Michael & Jannike Seward, Kirk & Nicole Sims, Rick & Debra Slingluff, Amanda Smith, Mike

& Valerie Smith, Robert & Linda Spitaleri, David & Jennifer Thompson, Ron & Belinda Tyler, Bill & Beth Ury, Reed Walters, Mark & Johanna Waltz, Katie Waser, Tate Welling, Larry Williams, Steve & Heather Wilson, Dai & Neva Wysong

In addition to those listed above, 36 missionaries serve in areas where security is an issue for Christian workers. For that reason, they remain unnamed here. Thank you for praying for these dear brothers and sisters, as they face unique challenges.

For more information about The Mission Society missionaries or fields, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org.

May we pray for you?

Each morning at The Mission Society, we start by praying. We pray for the world. We pray for our missionaries. And we pray for you. Do you have prayer concerns that you would like to share with us? We invite you to do so. Here's how: Write your request on the response card included in this mailing and return it in the envelope provided, or

- Email us at prayerrequest@themissionsociety.org , or
- Call us at 770.446.1381 (ext. PRAY or 7729) and leave your prayer request message, or
- Write us at: Prayer, The Mission Society, 6234 Crooked Creek Road, Norcross, GA 30092

Your shared concerns will be handled with care and prayed for by our staff and visiting missionaries. Thank you for the privilege of joining you in prayer.