

Unfinished

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Christianity and the Kingdom of God

Rediscovering the Gospel of Jesus for today's world (page 4)

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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.

Join us in The Mission

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

INCARNATION

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

INTEGRITY

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

PASSION

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

PEOPLE

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

PARTNERSHIP

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

PRAYER

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

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Glamourless living

An inside look at missionary life

It was 10:30 at night. Dr. Darrell Whiteman (our resident missiologist) and I were sitting in the airport in Accra, Ghana, waiting to board our plane for an eight-hour flight to Amsterdam. In Amsterdam we would have a five-hour layover and then catch a nine-hour flight to Atlanta. We had just finished leading a five-day retreat and an in-service training for our Africa-based missionaries. It had been a very busy but highly productive time. We were tired and not looking forward to the next 22 hours of travel at all. I don't care what anybody says, this kind of travel does not get easier with experience (or age).

I wonder: Does this scene resemble what most people imagine the life of missions home-office staff is all about? Frankly, I doubt it. I also have a hunch that most people's perception of the life of a missionary on the field is far different than reality also. Missionary life is just not as glamorous as one might think.

Monotony and Joy

A pilot friend of mine once told me that flying a plane is hours of boredom broken up by minutes of sheer panic. Most missionaries probably feel an affinity with this statement. Mission work is not boring, but it does have a lot of routine tasks related to it. And the routine tasks of being good parents and seeing to the daily activities of family life are even harder on the mission field than here in the States. In addition, there is the time spent in

building relationships by which the Gospel can be shared. Jesus spent three years pouring His life into 12 individuals, so they might be His representatives in this world. In the process He faced disappoint-



Missionaries Ed and Linda Baker, who serve in Paraguay's interior, drill water wells to assist the existing Methodist churches there and to help plant new churches.

ment (like Jesus' disappointment over the disciples' arguing between themselves about who was the most important, and His sadness over the loss of Judas). Should we expect anything different? But this routine work is broken up by the joy of seeing someone come to Christ and watching him or her mature in their faith.

Monotony and Sorrow

Sometimes the routine is broken by sorrow or even fear. In this issue of *Unfinished* you will read about missionaries doing such a good job that they were asked to

leave the country in which they had ministered for years and to never return. You will read about mission work among Muslims where one misstep might cost new believers their lives (page 16).

You will read about people just like you and me who have answered the call of Christ to share the Gospel, not because it is glamorous, but because they know it is God's desire for their lives. After you read about these real people, why not look at the list of needs The Mission Society has for additional missionaries (page 24), then pray and seek God's guidance. Who knows? You might hear that small still voice asking, "Who will go for me?" And like Isaiah you might find yourself answering, "Here I am. Send me."

On a night more than 2000 years ago, Jesus entered this world in a very unglamorous way, so that all might come to know of God's love. As we approach the anniversary of His birth, why not give to Christ and His mission the greatest gift you can give – yourself?

Merry Christmas! ✝

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.*



HOW DO YOU FIND GOD'S PLAN OF STEWARDSHIP FOR YOUR ESTATE?

As a steward, you will want your estate plan to reflect God's plan of distribution. But how do you determine what is His plan? The following system will place you in a position to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal that plan.

Step #1: Make a list of all financially dependent individuals. Husband, wife, aged parents, minor children, and charitable organizations. Your support will cease unless you make provisions for it to continue.

Step #2: Make a list of individuals to whom you will give because of love. Though they are not financially dependent, you can give everything you have out of love, if it's God's plan. Love is also the reason we support those who do God's work here on earth.

Step #3: Make a list of property. What do you own, how do you own it, when did you buy it, what did you pay for it, and what's it worth today?

Step #4: Reduce those values to cash. Forget about it being houses, land, stocks, bonds, or insurance. Assume it is cash. This will help you understand its impact upon your beneficiaries.

Step #5: Give it away today. If death had occurred last night, how would you want the "cash" divided among the people listed above today?

Step #6: Before you give it away, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you His plan of distribution. God is the owner of it all, so why shouldn't He have some say in its distribution?

And the Holy Spirit is in the eternal. He is the only One who knows what impact dollars will have upon the people to whom we want to give... whether it will make them stronger, or whether like the prodigal son, it will destroy a lifestyle.

NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE TOOLS, TAXES AND TECHNIQUES.

Once you have found God's plan of stewardship, it must be placed in writing to guarantee that it will be carried out. We call it an estate plan. It is important that we distribute the property which God has entrusted to us, to the beneficiaries He has revealed to us, with the least amount of costs and delays. We can now work with some of the tools, taxes and techniques to accomplish this.

To help you begin this process, or if you already have an estate plan, to assist you in reviewing your existing plan, our staff has prepared a **Guide to Planning Your Estate**. Please use the enclosed card to request your free copy today.

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Serving at His pleasure

Explore the plight of Mission Society missionaries serving in nations hostile to Christianity

Imagine going away from home on a trip and not being certain you'd be allowed back again. Imagine being called into a local government office and told that you could not teach about the faith. Imagine being given three days notice that you had to leave your home of many years, then not even being allowed back to pack up the belongings you left behind or say goodbye to dear friends.

Fortunately, in most places our missionaries are able to serve openly and are welcomed, or at least tolerated, by local officials. Missionaries may need to work in acceptable platforms, such as teaching, community development, or project management, but these platforms themselves can provide bridges to sharing the Gospel. However, there are some settings where missionaries must be extremely careful – where the word “missionary” itself carries so many misconceptions that it has to be avoided altogether.

Passport black stamp

The three examples above are all cases going on right now in the lives of some of our missionary families. (I cannot divulge the names or the country names and will use pseudonyms in place of the families' names.) The Baileys

were recently deported from their country of service. From the best we can tell, the reason appears to be jealousies of local officials with the success of the community development work the Baileys were involved in. Officials enlisted the help of former staff members to spread untruths about these missionaries' work. Several from the local Muslim population came to the Baileys' defense, protesting the deportation, but to no avail. They were given

very little notice; the Bailey children were pulled from school and their other activities, and were removed from their friends. Now a black stamp in the Baileys' passports prevents them from even applying for a new visa.

God's plans

Even as we grieve with the Baileys, we celebrate with the Adkins with the news that they received a one-year visa to return

to their country of service. There, recent political changes have resulted in many missionaries being denied visa renewals. (In fact, in the past year the number of missionaries serving in this country from one major mission agency has gone from more than 130 to just a dozen.) We were already discussing where the Adkins may go to serve if the door closed. But praise God that they found favor and were granted one-year visas. So for now, back they go.

Another family elsewhere has been told that they may not do any religious teaching without having a missionary visa. If they continue at all, they will be prosecuted, fined, and deported. Yet we also know that a missionary visa there is hard to obtain and can be a target for harassment. What to do? We're still working on that one.



According to a September 2007 poll sponsored by *Christianity Today International*, active U.S. Christians continue to strongly support “danger zone” missions.

BRISTOL HOUSE

Your Partner in Discipleship

Missionaries all know deep down that we serve at the pleasure and even whim of local officials. How does one emotionally and spiritually handle this uncertainty? This is only possible by focusing on the One who called us, and by remembering that we really serve only at His pleasure. Thankfully, He does not decide by whim, but by the plans He has laid out for us (Jeremiah 29:11).

Missionary work can be hard, frustrating, and heartbreaking. From their temporary home in a neighboring country, the Baileys wrote, "I do regret not being able to bring more books, though. I'm afraid that in three weeks, I will be done with all the books [for the children's home school] and will need more. It's frustrating to know that they are just sitting on a shelf in my house. ... I feel very homesick and so do the kids. They miss their friends. I miss my art students, my team, my house, my friends, and my routine. Steve feels the most hurt in regard to the betrayal of our two staff members. He really trusted them."

The pain is real. But in the end, we know God will have His way and that in everything – *everything* – God works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28) ✠

After 10 years on the mission field in Central Asia, **Jim Ramsay** now serves as The Mission Society's director of field ministry.

OUR FAITH TODAY April 2006
Leading United Methodists Answer Your Questions

Q Why should Christians read the Old Testament?

A The simple answer to the question is that reading the last chapter of the Old Testament is to read the rest of the book. We can read the last chapter with excitement, but we cannot 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 began in Genesis. The only church confession that they came to call the post-Christ writings the "New Testament." They were saying that this was the second part of a series—the second to the Old Testament "prequel."

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

Christ, we are misunderstanding it. Again, this is what the early church meant when they called it the "Old Testament." They did not mean "the Testament that has been rendered unnecessary." They meant to say, "This is the first part of the total that is necessary to understanding the rest." We need to see it that way, too. *John H. Steward, Professor of Old Testament at Wesley Biblical Seminary, is a member of the International Mission and New Living Translation of the Bible.*

Q Why do we pray in Jesus' name?

A As the youngest child in my family (and the only boy) I didn't always get my way. To convince my older siblings, I would always say, "The Man said so," then invoking an authority my siblings respected. But that only worked if over I used men's names in vain, claiming something about her that was contrary to her character or her will did us kids. *Chitra Willard is the Director of Community Affairs prayer at a congregation.*

with God about matters of mutual concern. It's telling God what's important in our lives and listening to what God wants to answer. To pray in Jesus' name is to proclaim that Jesus has the final authority over our requests and decisions in our relationship with God. We are submitting to his authority and power because his name is equivalent to his character: it's compatible in the phrase in the Lord's Prayer, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." When Jesus said our 12 statements, they reported that "even the devils submit as to 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 similar to his will in the Lord's Prayer, it is a prayer to Love, Obedience,

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

A When we consider the New Testament we find that

La Estructura de Nuestra Fe
Una Familia—antes exclusiva de nuestro movimiento 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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Forty-seven baptized in Ghana's "Samaria"

Wa is a shunned area. Even local Ghanaians avoid it. That was a draw for the Russells, whose call is to help bring the Gospel where it's never been heard.

By John Michael De Marco



In Ghana's dry, desolate northern region, Islam and animism are prevalent. Many Ghanaian pastors feel that if they are assigned to the North, they are being punished. But after much prayer the Russells, Mission Society missionaries from Alabama, felt that Wa – an area in the UpperWest region – was exactly the place to which God was calling them.

In the words of missionaries John and Bess Russell, the town of Wa is "Ghana's Samaria." A recent massive baptism in this remote area proved that the Holy Spirit continues to bless efforts to spread the Gospel to "Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Part of the UpperWest region of Northern Ghana, Wa is in an area with few Christian churches, in the poorest and most underdeveloped segment of the country. Most residents are illiterate, and the majority of the population is Muslim. Another strong spiritual presence is traditional African religion, both animism and JuJu.

"Many times we find people of the cities and towns having a mixture of Islam, animism, and Christianity in their beliefs,"

say the Russells, who serve through an appointment by The Mission Society. "We have also found areas with no Christian church or community. Some areas have not heard the Word of God before."

The Russells, who hail from Alabama, developed a burden for Wa when they learned about this area while serving as missionaries in the city of Kumasi, Ghana. Then they visited Wa. "The church is not that strong in the area; many Ghanaian pastors in Ghana try to avoid the area. They feel that if they are assigned to the North, they are being punished. After much prayer we felt that Wa, UpperWest was the place for us to serve."

Going to Wa, the Russells felt, would enable them to help to strengthen the local church and serve the poor. The Lord also

placed Muslims and the disabled upon their hearts. As a result, one ministry that has emerged has been the Wa Methodist School for the Blind.

"We also wanted to help bring the Gospel to areas that had never heard the Word of God before," the couple notes.

The Russells' obedience to offer Christ to Wa's unreached has led to tremendous fruit. This past September 23, in the Wa village of Kaangu, John Russell and other local church leaders baptized 47 individuals – the first new believers in a church that had launched just eight months earlier.

Kaangu's new church

The Russells found Kaangu, because they were looking for an area with no Christian church or school. They first visited this

area in December 2006 after learning of this village through the contacts of a governmental official and a friend of one of their ministry helpers.

“We initially simply visited with the people, talking with them and listening to their needs and wants,” the couple recalls. “We also visited several times. Bess treated some with simple medical care. Out of these medical outreaches, we found Dennis, a father to one of the boys Bess treated. He could read and write and wanted to help us with the church.” Dennis, the Russells continue, became the first “caretaker” of the Kaangu Church.

The couple quickly learned that its members generally did not know the Bible.

“They did not know of the Creation story, Noah and the flood, Abraham, or about Jesus,” the Russells say. “A small group had heard of the name Jesus before, but did not know Him. When sharing the story of Jonah, only one young man in the village had heard the story before.”

Over time, the couple’s relationships with the churchgoers developed. They helped the Russells hold their first Christian service under a tree in the village. They shared the Creation story and introduced Jesus.

“One of the elders told us that he had never heard of these things before. Another man told us, ‘We believe you because of the good things you have done.’ We introduced the local Methodist pastor to them and then the elders gave land for a church building. The people of Kaangu worked and built most of the structure with us

simply helping with supplies and the roofing,” the Russells recall.

This past Easter, the church held its first service in its new building. Many persons professed Christ as Savior for the first time. Several others did so during a medical outreach in late May with Asbury United Methodist Church of Madison, Alabama.



Shown above, a church in the Wa circuit. Below, the Russell family: Bess, Rachel, John, and Isaac

Down by the riverside

After ongoing teaching, sharing their faith and visiting the village, the Russells realized that a group of persons had formed seeking baptism. This group was baptized

in conjunction with the Ghana Methodist Church, particularly the Rev. James Salia of Lawra Methodist and the Rev. Isaac Nsia Berko of the Wa Methodist Education Unit. Salia and John Russell performed the baptisms, and Berko assisted (along with the outgoing and incoming lay leaders for the Northern Diocese).

“We offered the people a choice of immersion in a nearby stream formed from the recent rains or sprinkling the chapel,” John Russell recalls. “About two-thirds were baptized in the chapel and one-third in the stream. The people were very excited. We sang and danced and smiles were seen everywhere. In the chapel some heart-moving baptisms took place, particularly with Angnayage, a crippled boy who is one of the most faithful church attendees; and Abobo, a young girl whose life was saved by the recent Asbury UMC medical outreach.”

After the baptisms in the chapel, the full group walked down to the stream singing praises to the Lord. The people of Kaangu stood along the banks and encouraged those being baptized. It was a special time of following the old tradition of baptizing “down by the riverside” out in God’s creation, John Russell notes.

“Since the baptisms, we are continuing with normal visits to Kaangu and participation with the people in Sunday worship,” he adds. “There are others who are ready and will be baptized soon. In addition, since the baptisms, the first teacher for the first school in Kaangu has just arrived. She will teach kindergarten in the chapel at Kaangu.”



“We also look forward to the baptisms soon to take place among the other churches in the Wa circuit. Every society or church has a list of those ready for baptism.”

Looking to the future, the Russells are encouraged to see the excitement flowing from the people of Kaangu and the involvement of the Methodist Church.

“We are also encouraged at the good response from the U.S. Church from hearing of the Kaangu baptisms,” the Russells add. “We also look forward to the baptisms soon to take place among

the other churches in the Wa circuit. Every society or church has a list of those ready for baptism.”

At the Wa Methodist School for the Blind, about one-third of the students and staff are Muslim. John Russell leads devotions with them each Wednesday morning. Meanwhile, revival meetings are being conducted at the struggling Methodist churches, where the Russells note people’s faiths “rekindled and set on fire.”

Jim Ramsay, a former missionary to Kazakhstan and now The Mission Society’s director of field ministry, visited Wa last year and is very encouraged by the Russells’ work there. “It was neat to hear the excitement of the people as they heard the Bible story for the first time,” Ramsay says.

“The way the Russells are preaching is telling the story of the Bible. And the people see the respect for their culture the Russells have. John goes right away to the village chief, and always shows that person respect and deference.”

The key for missionaries such as the Russells, Ramsay adds, is to move in and let the Gospel take root in the culture – without destroying the culture. Ramsay observes, “I was really impressed by how they were doing that in very practical ways.” †

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

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

Mobilizing your church for greater outreach can begin with the Global Outreach Weekend. The Mission Society team is available to come to your church and present the six-hour **Global Outreach Seminar**, as well as to minister during your worship services on Sunday. This seminar is designed to cast a greater vision for outreach and introduce effective means of mobilizing the entire congregation.

In addition, three essential strategies that are taught in the Global Outreach Seminar are now being presented in a more in-depth interactive workshop format in:

Developing a Global Outreach Plan

April 10; September 4, 2008

Norcross, 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 your local church.

Cost is \$30 per person.

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Norcross, GA

This workshop will equip church leaders to plan, promote, and execute an annual high-impact missions celebration event in your local church.

Cost is \$30 per person.

For more information and to register online, visit us at www.themissionsociety.org or contact us at 1.800.478.8963 ext. 9046 or cr@themissionsociety.org.

Introducing your newest missionaries



On September 13, 2007, 11 new missionaries were approved for service with The Mission Society. They are (from left to right):

Katy Roark (from Springfield, Ohio); Jamey and Sharon Prickett (from Braselton, Georgia); Kristen Matveia (from Marion, Iowa); Nicole McCoy (from Alpharetta, Georgia); Otto Arango (from McAllen, Texas); Amy Killen (from Florence, Alabama); Louise Reimer (from Pratt, Kansas); Jonathan Killen (from Florence, Alabama), and Beth and Bryan Tatum (from Madison, Alabama). Welcome, friends. We thank God for you and for the privilege to serve Him in partnership with you.

Nigeria ramps up mission efforts

The Mission Society invited to partner

The shifting of the homeland of Christianity from the global West to the global South and East has vast implications. Countries which only 100 years ago were receiving missionaries are now sending them.

One example is the Nigeria Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA). Formed 25 years ago, NEMA aims to mobilize 50,000 new Nigerian missionaries in the next 15 years, many of whom will be sent to the North African (predominantly Muslim) nations.

NEMA's leaders asked The Mission Society to help equip them for this massive undertaking. So in October, members of The Mission Society staff journeyed to Nigeria and taught its Global Outreach Seminar to a group of about 40 pastors and church leaders in the city of Jos. The Mission Society team also taught some of the material (which NEMA is publishing in Nigeria as "Global Engagement Training") to a group of 100 leaders of Nigerian mission agencies at NEMA's 25th anniversary celebration.

Keeping missions alive in the local church

Four keys to continuing your church's momentum for outreach



The Mission Society's church ministry team is committed to helping your church strategically extend its ministry to other parts of the world. For more information, contact us at cr@themissionsociety.org or call 1.800.478.8963, ext. 9046.

In 1844 London, England was in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. Young men were pouring into the city for the 12-hour-a day, six-day-a-week jobs that were available. These young men slept packed into rooms over their company's shop. The streets outside the shops were filled with all sorts of evil and debauchery. Recognizing the plight of these young men, George Williams founded an organization for the primary purpose of providing Bible study and prayer as a substitute for life on the streets. The organization took hold and began to spread. In the latter part of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, lay evangelist Dwight L. Moody and John Mott created a major missionary movement under this group.

This organization was instrumental in the founding of the Gideon's, a group that has placed millions of Bibles in people's hands. This organization is the Young Men's Christian Association, or YMCA.

Today, if you asked the average person on the street what the YMCA is, the answer overwhelmingly would be a recreation center or a daycare. Somewhere along the way, the YMCA lost sight of its primary purpose. What once was its form has now become its function. Recently, a young man in Marietta, Georgia had his membership revoked because he was sharing his faith on the YMCA's premises. After some negative press coverage, he was reinstated.

Pressure to lose sight of the goal

There are constant pressures on organizations to move away from their original purpose and intent. The church is not immune from such pressures. Societal changes, turnover in church membership, and even the weariness of "well-doing" are just some of the factors that may move a church away from its purpose.

One of the teaching points in The Mission Society's Global Outreach Weekend is that missions should be a priority and not just a program of the church. Churches that have applied the six essential strategies presented in that weekend have seen a marked increase in excitement, involvement, and the scope of their outreach. The question is: how does a church maintain this level of engagement and keep missions positioned as a priority? I want to suggest four ways of keeping missions alive in your church.

1. Keep missions personal

It is hard to get people excited about generalities. There is a world of difference in the slogan *Have you driven a Ford lately?* and *Have you driven a vehicle lately?* Providing a congregation opportunity for real contact with missionaries, national workers, and missions personnel brings a level of personalization that creates a dynamic connection.

A missions leader in a local church was concerned about raising the excitement level for missions throughout her entire church. One of The Mission Society staff members asked about her recent trip to Africa. In recounting her experience, she began telling about a particular woman

she met. The more she talked about this woman, the more the excitement built until she was bursting with enthusiasm. The staff member interrupted and told her that what she was feeling now is what was needed in her church. The way to achieve that enthusiasm is to be intentional in creating opportunities for the church congregation to get *up close and personal* with missions and missionaries. As Jan Gilbert, Global Outreach leader at St. Johns United Methodist Church in Aiken, South Carolina, says, “People meeting people makes all the difference in the world!”

2. Keep missions forefront

We have all heard the axiom: out of sight, out of mind. The Rev. Brenda Westmorland, associate pastor at Norcross First United Methodist Church in Norcross, Georgia, rightly says, “We realize that mission doesn’t come naturally to many or most. Additionally, people are busy. We keep mission before the congregation, reminding them of God’s instruction for Christians to reach out.” Brenda says one of the ways Norcross does this is with “frequent personal testimony in worship by members who are involved in mission.”

Bob Sloan, director of missions at Asbury United Methodist Church in Madison, Alabama, says, “We work at casting a vision for missions through quarterly ‘Missions Emphasis Sundays’ and through the annual Global Impact Celebration. The sermons on those Sundays are keyed to a particular element of the vision for missions. The monthly church newsletter also focuses on that

aspect of the vision and is timed to arrive in homes the week preceding the Mission Emphasis Sunday.”

Brenda and Bob recognize that the way to keep their congregations engaged is by keeping missions before the people in a variety of ways.

3. Keep missions strategic

A sign over a desk in an office reads, “A good manager never confuses activity with accomplishment.” Although activity is necessary, it has little value if it doesn’t produce the desired outcome. We in the church are good at activity, but accomplishment may be another matter. It is the promise of accomplishment that gets people’s attention, keeps their attention, and produces a desire to invest themselves. Accomplishment demands that we be strategic. Being strategic means discerning what God is calling us to, developing a plan to make that happen, and the carrying out the plan. The “achievement” is God’s doing, but in church after church, we see how God honors the strategic, intentional work of His people.

4. Keep missions urgent

Unfinished has repeatedly called attention to the 1.8 billion people in the world who have little or no access to the Gospel. Additionally, millions have access but have not heard the Gospel clearly enough to make an informed decision. Without Christ, these people live without hope. There is a poem that reads in part, “They don’t have time to wait/Please don’t hesitate/The sands of time are surely slipping by.” There should be an urgency about

proclaiming the Good News of Jesus to this generation, and that urgency should be conveyed regularly in the local church.

Almost every weekend, The Mission Society’s church ministry team members are in local churches presenting a Global Outreach Seminar. They find that when a congregation’s members understand the biblical foundation for mission, the state of global outreach today, and how they can be on mission with God, they are ready to make missions a priority in their personal lives and in the life of their church. Try the four actions described above, and expect God to continue to accomplish great things through your church.

Stan Self is The Mission Society’s director of Church Ministry.

“We realize that mission doesn’t come naturally to many or most. Additionally, people are busy. We keep mission before the congregation, reminding them of God’s instruction for Christians to reach out.”

—The Rev. Brenda Westmorland,
Norcross First United Methodist Church,
Norcross, Georgia

Is God calling you to cross-cultural ministry – maybe to Latin America?

This holiday season, enjoy some time reviewing these open positions. Consider what new thing God is doing in you and in your family. How is He calling you as the new year dawns? We hope these pages will serve as a resource for you, for your Sunday school class, and friends. May these listings be for you a topic of thought and prayer.

Don't forget that The Mission Society offers missionary internships of 1 - 11 months, and terms of service ranging from one year to four years. You can even serve in cross-cultural missions with The Mission Society's Global Resource Team without ever moving from the United States. For a complete listing of personnel needs, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org and click "Where we serve," then "Personnel needs." For more information about terms of service offered (including information on the Global Resource Team), click "Terms of service."

BRAZIL

Missiologist — 1 - 5 years

There is a need for a theologically and missiologically trained teacher at the Instituto Metodista de Formacao Misionaria in Teresopolis, Brazil.

Retreat center administrator – 1 - 5 years

A person with administrative experience is needed at a retreat center in Telemaco Borba to run the retreat center and to pastor a small church.

Training center director – 1 - 5 years

A couple is needed to work in a cross-cultural training center/seminary in Curitiba, Parana, Brazil. Administrative and teaching skills with past missionary experience are required. Vehicle and furnished housing is provided.

ECUADOR

Pastoral/theological educators – 1 - 5 years

These positions offer opportunities to teach courses in the local seminary as well as seminars and conferences throughout Ecuador. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

MEXICO

Community health workers – 1 - 5 years

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.

Chaplain/dorm resident assistant – 1 - 5 years

The Monterrey Theology School needs a single male to serve as a chaplain and residency hall chaperone. Applicant should have prior ministry experience.

Teachers – 1 - 5 years

Qualified teachers are needed for a bilingual Methodist School in Monterrey, Mexico, grades K-12. Spanish is required for some positions.

Pastoral/theological educators – 1 - 5 years

These positions offer opportunities to teach courses in the local seminary as well as seminars and conferences throughout Mexico. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

Camp workers – 1 - 5 years

Camp counselors and administrators are needed to revitalize a Mexican Methodist campground ministry. Spanish and appropriate camp or youth ministry experience is required.

PARAGUAY

Medical personnel (physician, nurse, pharmacist, optician, and dentist) – 1 - 5 years

The mobile medical clinic is a vital ministry on our Paraguay field. The clinic travels to remote areas of Paraguay that are in dire need of medical help. In 2004 alone, the clinic staff assisted 7,000 patients. Doctors and nurses are needed for the clinic staff to examine patients; opticians are needed to manage the eyeglass clinic; pharmacists are needed to distribute medicine. Positions are open immediately! Conversational Spanish is recommended (language school is included in missionary training).

Youth program director – 1 - 5 years

Paraguay needs a passionate person with experience in youth ministry. This person must have a vision to mobilize Paraguayan youth leaders, help organize evangelism campaigns and youth rallies, and oversee planning for a youth camp. There is also potential for the development of a clown or mime ministry in local churches. Conversational Spanish is required (language school is included in missionary training).

Community health workers – 1 - 5 years

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.

Children's program coordinator – 2 months - 5 years

The Methodist Church of Paraguay is in need of a coordinator of children's programs. This person is needed to develop a method of training Sunday school teachers in various churches. There is local interest among mothers and youth groups to develop a puppet, mime/drama and clown ministry for children and for older youth. Conversational Spanish is required (language school is included in missionary training).

Pastoral/theological educators – 1 - 5 years

These positions offer opportunities to teach courses in the local seminary as well as seminars and conferences throughout Paraguay. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

Teachers – 9 months - 5 years

K-12 teachers are needed yearly for a variety of grades and subjects at Asuncion Christian Academy (<http://www.aca.edu.py/index.html>). The school, which primarily serves the children of missionaries and diplomats, uses U.S. textbooks and all teaching is done in English. The school arranges for resident visas, housing, and a modest salary. Conversational Spanish is required (language school is included in missionary training).

- **High school social studies** (World history, U.S. history, geography, economics/U.S. government)
Requirements: BA/BS degree in social science or related field, state teaching certificate (or eligible for ACSI Teaching Certificate), and a minimum of one year of teaching experience.
- **High school math** (Algebra 1 & 2, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus)
Requirements: BA/BS in math or math education or related field, state teaching certificate (or eligible for ACSI Teaching Certificate), and a minimum of one year of teaching experience.
- **High school science** (Biology, physical science, chemistry, and physics)
Requirements: BA/BS in science or education (with a science minor), a minimum of one year of teaching experience MA/MS is desired.
- **Elementary teacher (K, 1st, 2nd)**
Requirements: BA/BS in elementary education, liberal studies, or related field, state teaching certificate (or eligible for ACSI Teaching Certificate), and minimum of one year of teaching experience. Experience with ESL/ELL is desired.
- **ESL/ESOL teacher**
Requirements: BA/BS in elementary or secondary education with an emphasis in bilingual education or ESL/TESOL. Minimum of one year of teaching experience is required. MA/MS is desired.

• **Special education/resource room teacher**

Requirements: BA/BS in elementary or secondary education with an emphasis in special education. MA/MS is desired. Previous experience with individualizing instruction and assessment, and a minimum of one year SPED experience are required.

TESL teachers – 6 months - 5 years

Energetic self-starters are needed to teach English at a private Christian school in a suburb of Paraguay's capital. Teachers will have opportunities to form relationships and share the Gospel with students. Conversational Spanish would be helpful. No teaching degree is required.

Administrative skills teachers – 6 months - 5 years

The Methodist church is looking for ways to increase the job market for the poor in their churches. Opportunities exist to train church members in shorthand, filing, and computer skills. Some Spanish would be helpful but is not required. (Language school is included in missionary training.)

Administrative assistant

Missionary Ben Reyes, The Mission Society's regional coordinator of South America, is in need of an administrative assistant.

Director of short-term teams – 1 - 5 years

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

Agricultural missionary – 1 - 5 years

An agriculture specialist with the responsibility of directing the Small Farm Resource Center, maintaining relations with national agriculture specialists, working one-on-one with local farmers in improving yields, marketing, and soil. This individual will maintain small-plot research sites to gather information on crop systems. He or she will live in a remote region of Paraguay and should be strong in faith, self-motivated, and have a deep calling to missions. Positions are open immediately. Conversational Spanish is required. (Language school is included in missionary training.)

Engineers

Workers with engineering experience are needed to work alongside Paraguayan water-well drillers and to host work teams who come to help drill water wells.

PERU

Children/youth workers – 1 - 5 years

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

Christian school chaplain/ English teacher – 1 - 5 years

Individual or couple is needed to serve as a chaplain for a small Christian school in Huancayo (approximately 50 to 60 students) and to teach English as a second language. The chaplain would work with the students and also visit their homes and work with their families as well. Many of the students and their families are not Christians.



Community health workers – 1 - 5 years

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.

Director of short-term teams – 1 - 5 years

Individual or couple is needed to coordinate and care for short-term medical, evangelism, discipling, training, and construction teams. The Peru team hosts approximately 12 - 15 teams per year. This person must interface with other missionaries, local workers, and government officials. The gift of administration would be a great asset.

TESL teachers – 1 - 5 years

English as a second language teachers and coordinators are needed to work in a large, highly-acclaimed Methodist school in Huancayo, establishing an ESL program and leading classroom teaching.

Theology professors – 2 - 4 weeks a year

Qualified persons are needed to teach theology courses to missionary students enrolled in a B.A. program. Courses are taught in an intensive manner usually during the months of January/ February and August/ September in the cities of Lima and Huancayo. Master's degree is required. Classes offered include: Theology, Christology, Intro to the New Testament, the Gospels, Hebrew, and Greek.

Medical workers – 3 months - 5 years

Put your medical skills to use in a village setting. Doctors, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners are needed at clinics around Peru. Experience an open atmosphere in which staff members are encouraged to pray with patients.

To express interest in any of these positions go online to www.themissionsociety.org/go/interestform and complete and return the interest form. For more information, visit www.themissionsociety.org or call 1.800.478.8963, ext. 9025.

With the good news of the Christ child born among us, 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!

The Mission Society missionaries:

Michael Agwanda, Ari Arfaras, Sandra August, Ed & Linda Baker, Jose & Audrey Banales, Erica Beeles, Jim & Angela Beise, Rose Blank, 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, Jennie Clements, 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, McLean & Colleen Hawthorne. 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, Jonathan & Amy Killen, Esaho & Beatrice Kipuke, Clay & Deborah Kirkland, Sue Kolljeski, Joetta Lehman, Kristen Matveia, Nicole McCoy, Ash & Audra McEuen, Cheryl McGraw, Steve & Shannon Mersinger, Grant Miller, Mike & Claire Mozley, Dondee Nations, Doug & Becky Neel, Steve Nikkel, Ron & Michelle Olson, Donald & Carol Paige, Peter & Esther Pereira, Len & Betsy Phillips, Jamey & Sharon Prickett, Martin & Tracy Reeves, Leon & Vicki Reich, Louise Reimer, John & Rosalie Rentz, Ben & Jenny Reyes, Kathy Roark, Ruben Rodriguez, John & Bess Russell, Wendi Schambach, Michael & Jannike Seward, Kirk & Nicole Sims, Rick &

Debra Slingluff, Amanda Smith, Mike & Valerie Smith, Nancy Stelow, Bryan & Beth Tatum, David Thagana, David & Jennifer Thompson, Ron & Belinda Tyler, Bill & Beth Ury, Reed Walters, David Walton, Mark & Johanna Waltz, Tate Welling, Larry Williams, Steve & Heather Wilson, Dai & Neva Wysong

In addition to those listed above, 38 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.