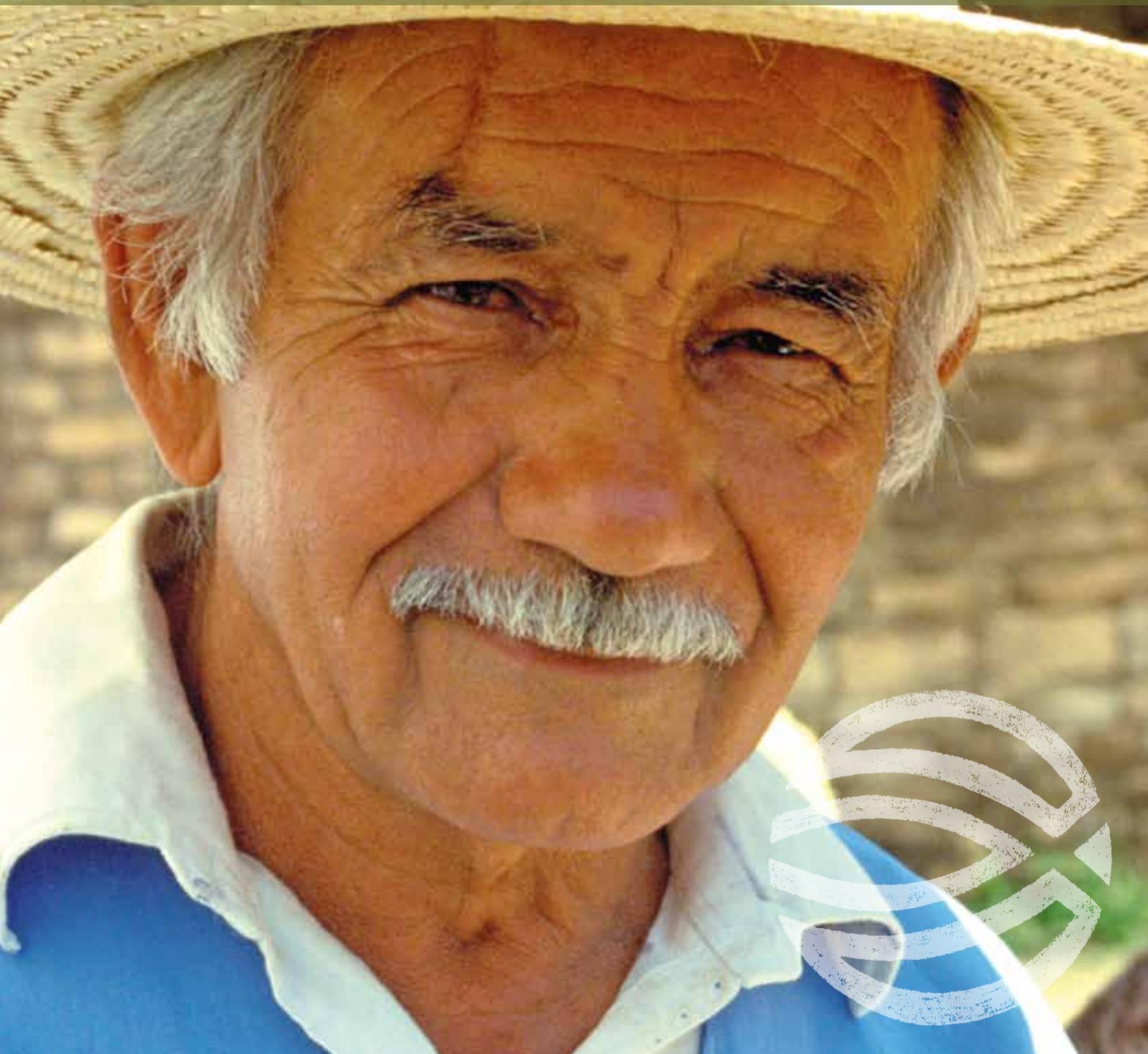


Unfinished

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South America's "harvest time"

Exploring a continent's remarkable spiritual bounty

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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, 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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Back from the future

Visioning mission from a radically different vantage point

I've been thinking a lot about perspective lately. What got my wheels turning was a meeting staff members had with Bill O'Brien, former director of the Global Center at the Beeson Divinity School (at Sanford University, Birmingham). Bill introduced us to a planning method he calls "horizon visioning." Rather than projecting forward from where you are to where you want to go, in horizon visioning you leap forward, say, 25 years, define a radically new "horizon," and then work your way backward to the present, identifying the obstacles you had to overcome and the advancements you had to achieve along the way.

Bill learned this methodology from a NASA scientist who helped accelerate (literally!) the Voyager project so that a space vehicle could reach Jupiter much more quickly than had ever been imagined. When the project began, existing technology made it a 36-month journey from Earth. But Bill's NASA friend set a new "horizon" of reaching Jupiter in one month! When the team said it was impossible, this scientist laid down new ground rules: The objective had already been accomplished, which meant that all their conversation had to be in the past

tense as they identified how they had achieved that goal. There was to be no looking forward, only looking backward from the unbelievable new horizon.

When it was all over, this NASA team of scientists reduced the trip to Jupiter from 36 to 2 months.



Looking toward 2033, The Mission Society is doing long-range visioning with the same planning methods used by NASA scientists.

Future past

Okay, back to my own wheels turning. I started thinking about how God's perspective and ours are so different. We look forward to the future by extrapolating what we know and understand into the future. But God looks "backward" to what we call "future" from what we call "eternity." Think of it like this: Pretend

you are with Abraham and Isaac as they make their way to the mountain where Abraham has been commanded by God to sacrifice his only son. Isaac asks where the sacrificial animal is. Abraham responds, "God will provide a lamb." Even though he doesn't know it, Abraham is prophesying what Jesus will do 2,000 years

later. Now let's pretend that Abraham can see forward all the way to the cross. Jesus as the "Lamb of God" is 2,000 years in Abraham's future. But not when seen from God's perspective. Revelation 13:8 refers to Jesus as "the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. (NIV)" So while Abraham is "looking forward" to the cross, God is "looking backward" at that same moment in history.

"Interesting," you say (at least I hope you do), "but what does that have to do with *Unfinished*, The Mission

Society, and God's mission in the world?" Everything! You see, while we look forward, trying to ascertain where and how to engage unreached people with the Good News of Jesus, God is looking back from a "horizon" that John described this way in Revelation 7:9-10: "...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. ... And they cried out in a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" We see an unfinished task. God looks back from the vantage point of "mission accomplished." What we see as "guidance" is actually God's "back casting" from the future.

Back from 2033 A.D.

Today, The Mission Society is in its 25th year. During this pivotal season we've initiated a "horizon visioning" planning process with our field workers. We're prayerfully seeking to get our hearts and minds around a "new horizon" for The Mission Society in 2033 A.D. (That will be our 50th year, if Jesus tarries.) And we're trying to look backward all the way to 2008 to identify the obstacles and advancements that marked the journey.

Stay tuned. It will be an exciting ride! ✚

***The Rev. Dick McClain** is The Mission Society's vice president of ministry operations and church ministry and has served as a staff member of The Mission Society for 23 years. He is an elder in the North Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Mission Society President Phil Granger, whose writing is usually found here, is recovering from major surgery. Thank you for your prayers for him.*



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Wanted: Laypastor trainers

The fields are white for harvest in Peru. And the Gospel is spreading through the sacrifice of this nation's people for one another.

Beginning with the earliest Spanish conquistadors, Christianity was injected into the communities of South America. It was an imported form of the faith – high on ritual, ordained clergy, and elaborate church garb. Spreading through the mountains and jungles of South America, this European-looking Christianity must have sometimes looked rather conspicuously out of place.

About 50 years ago, many reports began surfacing about sweeping revivals in the Church of South America. In 1973, C. Peter Wagner, himself a former missionary to South America who is perhaps best known for his reporting of worldwide church-growth phenomenon, recorded the details of a start of one such revival:

“On the morning of January 14, 1909,” wrote Wagner, “a Chilean night watchman had fallen into a deep sleep in his home in Vaparaíso. Suddenly, Jesus Christ appeared to him in a dream, as clearly as if He had been standing right there in the bedroom. The sleeping man had been a Christian and a member of the local Methodist Church for some time, but this had never happened before.”

Jesus told this man, “Wake up. ...Go to your pastor, and tell him to gather some of the most spiritual people of the congregation. They are to pray together every day. I intend to baptize them with tongues of fire.”

“The next day,” Wagner continued, “a group of dedicated believers met in the parsonage for prayer. They promised each other that they would continue to pray together at 5:00 each afternoon until the Lord fulfilled His promise. ...Extraordinary things began to happen. ...By mid-April the revival had begun. ...The Pentecostal Movement had come to Chile.”

Stories like this one – about the history of God's workings among the people of South America – is important backdrop for this issue of *Unfinished*. The Mission Society's work began on this southern continent in 1988. By 1997, a field was opened in Peru.

Here, John DeMarco spends time with the two missionary couples presently on the field in Peru. They tell of their call to this South American nation where, they have found, ministries are multiplying so quickly, it won't be *humanly* possible to keep up with them.



By John Michael De Marco

Martin Reeves recalls that God was in hot pursuit for him to become a missionary. For two years he tried “recruiting others to go in his place,” before finally saying, “Yes.”

Now, Martin and his wife Tracy are serving in Peru, a land of extremes where the Andes Mountains separate a desert plain on the west from a cluster of jungles on the east. Many of the more than 28 million Peruvians, particularly those in the rural areas of the Southern Andes, live in poverty and possess a tremendous hunger for the Word of God. The Mission Society’s Peru team is committed to training pastors and church leaders, planting new churches, ministering to youth and children, and doing medical evangelism.

Martin is an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church (New Mexico Annual Conference). He first sensed God’s call for missions during the 1980s, while serving in a short-term music ministry. Tracy was living and working in Seattle when she started noticing missions information at her church, on the radio, and in her readings. When she and Martin met online in a Christian singles chat-room, she was not surprised to find he was a pastor looking to serve overseas. “Accepting God’s call on her life to missions work was very much tied into accepting Martin’s marriage proposal,”

the couple recalls.

“Though Martin had been involved in short-term ministry in several countries, neither of us had ever visited Peru. However, through prayer and counsel with The Mission Society, we felt led to serve as missionaries in Peru,” the Reeveses add.

In Peru, Martin is involved in training local church leaders and pastors, Bible study groups and discipleship. Classes he has taught include a general overview of both the Old and New Testaments and how to lead a cell group Bible study. He also leads the music ministry at the Methodist Church in downtown Trujillo, and preaches when the district superintendent (who also serves as pastor) is out of town.

In addition, the Reeveses lead a cell group in their home during the week and a new home church outside of Trujillo. They also work with children’s ministries in some of the more impoverished areas of the city, and Martin has started an adult Bible study in one location.

“We have many projects in the works, the couple says, “including a children’s music ministry and are looking to take leadership training into the jungle areas of Peru where there are no established churches.”

Earlier this year, the Reeveses sponsored two Vacation Bible School pro-

grams at their satellite churches. “We ministered to 200 children and every available adult from the downtown church helped with the week-long ministry,” observes Martin.

“One of our greatest joys,” he adds, “has been to see the growth of the children’s ministry at the satellite church in Miguel Grau.” In less than a year, we have seen this ministry grow from 20 children to more than 50 children and adults. There are currently five new believers in a discipleship course preparing to be baptized.”

Hungry hearts

Seeing people hungering for God’s Word is a common sight observed regularly by others on The Mission Society’s Peru team, which presently includes the Reeveses; Billy and Laurie Drum; Arthur and Mary Alice Ivey; Ash and Audra McEuen, and Louise Reimer (*see pages 20-21*).

Arthur and Mary Alice Ivey are from Marietta, Georgia. Before serving in full-time missions, Arthur was president of an engineering company, Cerny & Ivey Engineers, Inc., and Mary Alice was a homemaker with a degree in early childhood education and worked as a teacher’s aid.

“Arthur’s call began to be apparent shortly after he received Jesus Christ as



Mission Society missionary Mary Alice Ivey works alongside, trains, and has written curriculum for national believers who organize 12 Kid's Club meetings in Huancaayo, Peru and in the jungle. These Kid's Clubs meet at local parks where almost 1000 children (total) gather together each week

for worship, prayer, and a skit about a Bible story. The children then break into smaller groups (10 – 25 each) for a teaching from the Scripture, during which time the kids give an offering to help support the ministry. Please pray for these children as they hear God's Word and respond to His love.

Lord and Savior in September 1980," the couple recalls. "Through an evangelism program in our local church, we became more convinced of our call to share about the love of Jesus Christ with others around us. In 1986, we participated in our first short-term mission trip at the invitation of a good friend. All of these things were used to strengthen the call to full-time missionary work."

For the next 13 years, the Iveys continued to participate in short-term volunteer mission work and prayed that the Lord would place a personal call on Mary Alice's heart when the time was right.

In late 1998, God called Mary Alice through a Bible Study using the passage from Genesis 12 regarding the call of Abram. During this same time God was confirming the call to work in Peru in Arthur's heart through some short-term work he was doing there, and through the passage in John 11:38-44.

That was 10 years ago. Today the Iveys' ministry includes discipleship groups; micro-enterprise and self-sustaining ministries, such as a soft drink bottling plant and a discipleship book-sales program; evangelistic medical missions; Christian schools; classroom building construction; an agricultural experiment; and a missionary training school.

"We have a great need for help here in

Peru," note the Iveys who, because the size and scope of their ministry, spend about half of their time training Peruvian nationals, and about half of their time doing administration work. "There are thousands hungry to hear about the saving grace of Jesus Christ and the number of messengers is grossly insufficient. We don't even have enough minimally trained pastors for the existing churches; much less for the churches we could easily plant. We need persons who can help with pastoral training, both short and long term."

Dennis E. Brown, The Mission Society's vice president for advancement, and Johnny Winkle, director of advancement activities, visited the Iveys in late April. Notes Brown, "During that time we were able to see firsthand the variety of ministries the Iveys are involved in. Needless to say, their work is effective and expansive. This seems to be possible because of their obedience to the call by God on them to this area and the fact that they are ministering alongside many nationals. They are giving these nationals ownership of the ministry rather than controlling it themselves or feeling obligated to give out money to get things done. In my opinion God has given the Iveys His wisdom for working with and empowering nationals.

Through it all, the Iveys have servants' hearts and believe that God has sent them to Peru in order to bless them."

Ordinary people

"We love serving God here in Peru," say the Reeveses. "The Peruvian people are so beautiful and loving. It is a great joy to be in ministry with them. They hunger to grow in their knowledge of the Bible and in their faith relationship with Jesus Christ."

"We are ordinary people," add the Iveys. "We are not super-spiritual or super-human. We are simply blessed to be called by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to carry the message of his love and saving grace to other persons in another part of the world. The work here is not ours, but is Jesus' work. We are just participants in it, just like you."

Without prayer, the Iveys continue, "we cannot accomplish even the smallest thing. Your prayers are the power behind our work. They open the storehouses of heaven. They defeat the worst the enemy can throw at us." ☩

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



Manuel's church-planting method is to pray and fast, asking the Lord Jesus where He wants Manuel to plant the next church, then he heads out into the jungle on foot. He is shown above with his 104-year-old mother.

Peru's shining stars

Over mountains and through jungles, they share about their Jesus

"There are thousands of Peruvians hungry to hear about the saving grace of Jesus Christ," observes missionary Arthur Ivey, "We don't even have enough minimally trained pastors for the existing churches, much less for the churches we could easily plant."

The story of the Gospel reaching these hungry hearts is one of God's using Peru's people, who are offering their lives to reach their neighbors for Christ.

Pastor Alberto

In April, I was able to visit Mission Society missionaries Arthur and Mary Alice Ivey in Huancayo, Peru and was amazed by how the Lord is moving among them and all the local believers with whom they work.

Among the national workers, one individual in particular grabbed my

attention – Alberto Fernandez, better known as Pastor Alberto. He and his wife, Karen, live in Huancayo.

Once a pastor in a denominational church, Pastor Alberto discovered that the local church leadership was rife with corruption. When he began being pressured by other church leaders to lead a life and ministry of dishonesty, he decided to leave the church, not knowing what might be next for him and his family.

The Lord quickly provided another opportunity for ministry. He and Arthur Ivey connected about developing a discipleship ministry among Peruvian believers and seekers. In this discipleship ministry, participants go through Scripture and 18 other books for two-and-a-half years, a significant

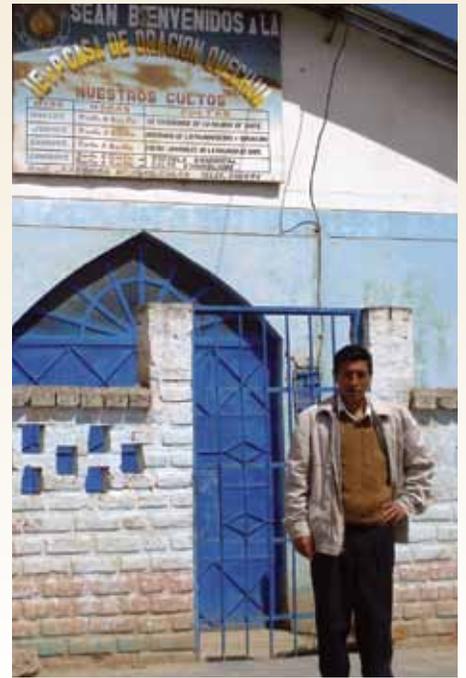
commitment. Arthur mentored and encouraged Pastor Alberto, and these groups began to multiply, without being in any way controlled or even funded by outside sources.

What began three years ago as a handful of groups has grown to more than 150 discipleship groups in a 600 kilometer radius of Huancayo with almost 1700 participants. God is transforming lives through this ministry as the participants study the Bible and share life together. And Pastor Alberto – not missionaries Arthur or Mary Alice – is overseeing these groups and their leaders, teaching them to train disciple-makers.

When I asked Pastor Alberto what difference he felt between his past ministry and the ministry with which he is now involved, he replied with one



Through a discipleship ministry headed by Pastor Alberto (shown here with his wife, Karen), what began three years ago as a handful of groups has grown to more than 150 discipleship groups in a 600 kilometer radius of Huancayo with almost 1700 participants.



Pastor Rudolph is pastor of a Quechua-speaking church in Huancayo, oversees a children's education and feeding program through the church, and is developing a micro-enterprise business model to help generate income for the church and children's ministry.

word: "freedom." I couldn't help but think of the verse "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, this is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17).

– by Johnny Winkle, *Mission Society*
director of advancement activities and
former Mission Society missionary to
Central Asia

Manuel

Manuel Villar Bodoya is 61 years old. He lives with his mother in the house in which he was born – with no water or electricity and about a six-hour walk from the main road.

Manuel, who walks with a notable limp (a condition he has had since birth), has planted more than 300 churches. His church-planting method is to pray and fast, asking the Lord Jesus where He

wants Manuel to plant the next church. "When Manuel receives an answer," reports missionary Arthur Ivey, "he heads out into the jungle on foot, looking for the place he has seen while praying. Once he finds it, he prays and fasts for a week in the place. Afterward he asks permission to preach in the middle of the village.

"As he preaches many begin to give their lives to the Lord Jesus. Manuel then prays and fasts again, asking the Lord to identify who He wants to be the pastor of this new work. Once identified, Manuel works alongside of the man in his fields, all the while teaching him the scriptures and discipling and training him for about six months. Manuel then leaves the church with an organized board and a pastor, and returns periodically to check on the new work until it is well established."

During the civil war in Peru with the Shinning Path terrorists, Manuel continued to plant churches in one of the most heavily terrorist-controlled areas. One evening as he was preaching, terrorists came into the church and began executing people on the spot. When they got to Manuel, they condemned him for being a coward for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They then shot him in the back of the head and left him among the other bodies.

Manuel says he doesn't know if the Lord saved him or resurrected him, but sometime later he regained consciousness. He managed to get home, cleaned the blood off, and went out to begin preaching again. Manuel still has the hole in the back of his head from the bullet entry. †



Luís Wesley de Souza, Ph.D., a Luso-Brazilian born in Sao Paulo, is Arthur J. Moore associate professor of Evangelism at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, Atlanta, Georgia. He is also a founder of and visiting professor at South American Theological Seminary in Londrina, Brazil, and is the founding director of the Jethro Institute, a ministry that focuses on research, ministry management, and leadership training for pastors and leaders serving in local churches and Christian

organizations. In addition, he was president of the board of directors of the Paul Pierson Center for Global Mission, which works with mission agencies from Latin and North America seeking the development of common actions and resources.

Dr. de Souza is an ordained elder of the North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church. His research and writing focus on contextualization of the Gospel, revitalization of the Church, and Wesleyan theology of mission.

Something wonderful

“God is doing something intriguing, surprising, and wonderful in the Latin American Church right now,” notes Brazilian theologian and missiologist, Dr. Luís Wesley de Souza. A writer and researcher on Church revitalization, de Souza explores here the elements contributing to, and important for, South America’s Church renewal.

What do you most wish people understood about what’s happening in the Church in Latin America today?

We are experiencing a huge harvest time. By that, I mean the Church seems to be reaping now what has been sown for so many decades by missionaries, native Christian leaders and “lay” people, who worked hard and faced many personal difficulties and made societal sacrifices. Now new things are happening; we are seeing the harvest. Some would even say revival is taking place. And in many cases, I would agree with that. But I would call this harvest time.

God is doing something intriguing, surprising, and wonderful right now. There is a clear process of revitalization of the Church throughout Latin America. Part of that process is that major groups within the Church are becoming much more approximated to the Latin American cultural forms [rituals, practices] and meanings. The Gospel in Latin America is spreading throughout the poor by the poor.

When you say this is harvest time, what do you suppose makes this time different from maybe 20 years ago in the

Latin American Church?

Cultural Catholicism has historically been very strong in Latin America. This “cultural Catholicism” is not really about experiencing the Gospel, but simply declaring that you are a believer in God and probably attached to a very few Roman Catholic symbols, nothing more than that.

So what is happening differently in the Latin American Church now (than in the past) is that Protestantism, particularly Pentecostalism, is bringing a faith that is highly committed to living out the Gospel and highly identified with the struggles of life.

There are three forms of Pentecostalism: Classical, Deuteron-Classical, and Neo-Classical. And one of Classical Pentecostalism’s main contributions is that it became indigenous [native] immediately (which did not happen with the Catholic Church and with the mainline Protestant Church, both of which still struggle to be fully indigenous). The reasons I think Pentecostals so quickly became indigenous are because: first, Pentecostalism did not have to cross language barriers, and its methodologies

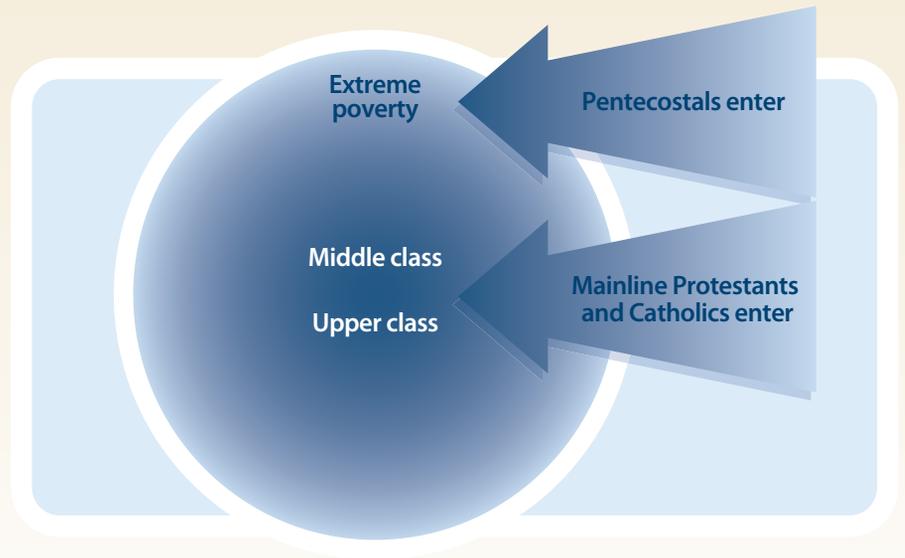
are native by nature; second, it was able to become socially, culturally, spiritually, and emotionally relevant to the Latin American Church; third, it connected with the poor, and has never detached from them; and fourth, Pentecostalism has given an answer to those who struggle economically and socially.

The Catholic Church has also sought to reach out to the poor, hasn’t it? In fact, Catholics created the phrase, “An option for the poor.”

One has to ask, “who ‘opted’ for whom and why?” It is known that non-Pentecostal Brazilian theologians and observers sometimes say, “The Roman Catholic Church and some mainline Protestant churches have made an option for the poor, but the poor have opted for the Pentecostals.” The next question is, “Why?”

The most important fact here is that poor people opted first for Classical Pentecostalism because first, it was born among them; second, it does not seem to be a church that approaches poor people as strangers in the nest, as used to happen within mainline Protestant churches; and third, Pentecostalism is a true home for the poor. At one time, Protestants

Imagine a circle with the border being extreme poverty, and the center being upper and middle class society. Mainline Protestants, and even Catholics, entered Latin America in the center of this circle. Pentecostals arrived on this border.



were persecuted in Latin America. Although those days are mostly gone now, Pentecostals (and, to some extent, mainline Protestants) have learned not only to survive under persecution, but also to grow. They even speak about that. They say, “You keep persecuting. You beat us. And we grow. Just go on, and we will grow even more.” This is a message very relevant to the poor, who know what it is to be constantly working to overcome obstacles. So I think a Church that has suffered, which the Pentecostal Church has, is very attractive to people who suffer.

The Catholic Church has seen the growth of the Pentecostal Church in Latin America, and also that it (the Catholic Church) was losing people, not just to Protestant churches, but also to other religions. So when Pope John Paul II came to Latin America, he decided to allow the charismatic movement within the Catholic Church to “take over” in terms of the Catholic experience in reaching out people through its worship, literature, personal testimony, etc. That is why the Catholic Church now has begun to grow again.

So there is renewal going on also within the Catholic Church in Latin America?

Yes. There are many signs of renewal and revitalization.

Most of us don’t realize that. Most of us think that the real growth is only among Pentecostals.

Pentecostalism, some mainline Protestant churches and the charismatic movement within the Catholic Church are growing. And what is a common denominator between Pentecostalism and the Catholic Church’s charismatic movement? It is the strong belief that the Holy Spirit can enable lay people to do the work. So that’s the phenomenon.

You mentioned earlier that the Pentecostal Church has been able to connect with the poor. What is it specifically about Pentecostalism that makes it so successful in reaching the poor?

Part of it is a matter of trajectory. Imagine a circle, with the border of the circle being extreme poverty, and the center of the circle being middle and upper class society. Mainline Protestants, and even Catholics, entered Latin America in the center of this circle. So the trajectory has been for them from the center outward toward the border. Mainline Protestants have never really arrived there where extreme poverty is. So what makes the difference for the Pentecostal Church? Pentecostals arrived on this border. They are already there. The Pentecostal Church is the church of the poor.

So mainline Protestants in Latin America struggle, because we have an upper and middle-class mentality. We have many in universities, but only the privileged people, mostly white, middle and upper class people go to our universities. Pentecostals don’t have universities. But they do provide micro-community. They do provide the community that rebuilds dignity. They do provide informal education. So that’s a main difference.

So you’re seeing that the mainline Protestant Church is in danger of becoming the church of the middle class or wealthy, and until it becomes the Church among the poor [like is true in Pentecostalism], it will decline?

Absolutely. That shows how important it is for us to be “incarnational” in ministry.

I don’t believe a church has to be a church only of the poor in order to reach the poor and to be catalytic for social transformation. The church is for everybody. As I said earlier, one of the reasons why Pentecostalism is effective is because Pentecostals have a sincere and practical belief that the Holy Spirit can enable lay people to do the work. I believe the emphasis on lay people is one of the reasons we are seeing revitalization in the Church.

In the mainline churches, we do not

Pentecostalism's astounding ascent

A brief historical overview of the Church in South America

The Catholic Church arrived in South America in 1500, when Portuguese colonizers entered Brazil. Protestants didn't arrive in Brazil until 1836 with a couple of Methodist missionaries, but the Methodist Church's solid and permanent work actually began in the late 1860s. In 1856, Presbyterians and Congregationalists arrived there, followed by Classical

Pentecostalism in 1910. In 1936, just 26 years after the establishment of the Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism became the largest Protestant group in Brazil.

Meanwhile, mainline Protestant churches invested in various areas of service that made little or no contribution to their numerical growth or to cultural change and social transformation, depending on the case. Pentecostal churches grew to be bigger in number than all mainline Protestant churches together.

– Dr. Luís Wesley de Souza

give plenty of room for lay people to take over; “clergy mentality” is strong. But we can learn from Pentecostalism that lay people are the most important thing in the Church. Lay voices. Lay work. Lay ministries. (Really living this out would shake some clergy structure, and there is fear there. This is not easy for any of us.)

Let me say something else here. Pentecostals are not primarily concerned about church buildings. They are mostly concerned about people. They know their names; they know their stories; they know where they live, and how they live. Pentecostals may have structures and church facilities, but the building is not their first concern. They meet anywhere – old factories, schools, anywhere.

Here in North America, if someone comes to a church committee with a very good idea, what is the first question we ask? We ask, “Do we have money for that?” That is not the first question in Latin America, especially for Pentecostals. That's the last question. The first question is, “Are we willing to do that?” “Do we have available people to do that?” If we have people, everything else will be in place. And the people bring their resources, even the resources they don't have. And because of that, things happen.

This past January, I was invited to speak at the 10:00 service at a Methodist church of Santiago, a mainline Protestant

church in Chile. With my students – a group of 11 or 12 – there were about 40 people in church that morning.

That same day, I was also invited to speak in another church – the Pentecostal Methodist Church in Santiago. It was an evening service. Guess how many people I found there? Fifteen thousand people in just that one worship service (and the church has more than one worship every Sunday)!

This is what you find all over South America. Am I talking about numbers? Not exactly. I'm talking about relevance. Other churches beside Pentecostal ones are growing if they are relevant, if they are realizing that the people in their need for justice and solidarity – not buildings or the institutions, are the most important thing; if they are providing answers and are responding to the needs of the people. So a church might say that its calling is not to grow numerically. That's valid. But a church of any size that is making a difference in people's lives will somehow also be transformative in society.

What do you think are some of the distinct contributions the Latin American Church is making to the global Church's understanding of the Gospel?

Where it is at its best, the Latin American Church – and the Church in other parts of the world that struggle

with poverty – is a reminder of the relevance of the Gospel for those who suffer. And it is a reminder of the simplicity of the Gospel. By that I mean that to be a follower of Christ, there is no concern about anything else but to lead – by the grace of God – a life that is consistent with Jesus' life.

The churches that make a difference in Latin America are also teaching us that essential to the formation of an indigenous Church is a radical confidence that, under the Holy Spirit's guidance and empowerment, “lay” people are capable of carrying out the work. Strong leadership is also needed in order to facilitate the ministry of the church, but, most importantly, “lay” initiatives must be encouraged, welcomed, and supported.

Also, the Church in Latin America has demonstrated that it is not enough for the proclamations of the Gospel and the ministry of the church to be socially relevant. Message and ministry have also to be culturally, spiritually, and emotionally adapted.

We also learn from the Latin American Church that poverty is not to be ignored or neglected. Instead, the Church is the very community that lives together with the poor. Unless the Church has compassion for the poor, upon whom the community must be built, it will never reflect God's love and mercy. ☩

Seeking the heart of Latin America

Three major theological movements have helped shape the Church in Latin America. What form of Christianity will best take root in the soil of this, one of the most diverse regions in the world? Does this 500-year-old question finally have an answer?

By Mike Hoppe



Roman Catholicism: faith imported for the New World

Christianity arrived in Latin America along with the discovery and conquest of the New World. Beginning in the 16th century,

missions from the Jesuits and Franciscans faced the challenge of introducing Catholic teachings to indigenous populations. Such missions were largely successful in integrating Catholic faith into a Latin American culture. Even today, nearly half of



Liberation Theology: movement to liberate the poor

In the 20th century, Marxist thought made inroads into Latin America. In the 1960's, a movement known as liberation theology combined elements of Marxist political activ-

ism with Catholic teaching. The movement viewed Jesus as a revolutionary, and its aim was to liberate the poor and oppressed in both the Church and in society. Whereas many viewed the Church as perpetuating a system of oppression, liberation theology challenged the Church to reevaluate its theol-



Evangelicalism: accent on Holy Spirit power

Beginning in the 1970's, the Catholic Church began seeing a dramatic decline in membership as evangelical churches began seeing a dramatic increase. The term, "evangelical," used in Latin America to describe the wide array of emerging Christian

movements, including Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal, is the fastest growing religion in Latin America. This movement now accounts for more than 15 percent of the population.

Much of this growth is a result of conversions from the Catholic faith. Several years ago the Latin American Catholic Bishops Conference stated that every day 8,000 Catholics were switching from the Catholic Church to



The future of Latin America's Church: transformative trends to continue

The growth of new evangelical churches is changing the expression of Christianity in Latin America. A continuing growing marketplace of religious ideas and the



Mike Hoppe, a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, is a former Mission Society missionary to Central Asia and is an elder in the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. He begins studies as a Beeson Scholar at Asbury Theological Seminary this summer.

the world's one billion Roman Catholics reside in Latin America.

While large numbers of people have come into the Catholic faith in Latin America, colonialism's intertwined history with Catholic missions has continued to be problematic for

the Church. In many regions, faith that was imposed upon the indigenous populations did not embed itself deeply within the culture. As a result, many people have combined elements of indigenous beliefs and practices with Catholic teaching. In some

cases, the result has been faith practices that barely resemble Catholic teaching or practice. Also, in the linking colonialism and mission, many have viewed the Church as part of the larger structure that imposed economic and political hardships on its people.

ogy and mission with a "preferential option for the poor." However, the link of liberation theology to such Marxist philosophies as the doctrine of class struggle has remained a source of controversy in the larger Church.

In the 1980's, as the political world climate shifted, so too did the influence of liberation

theology in Latin America. Pope John Paul II challenged the Church to greater work on behalf of the poor but condemned the teaching of liberation theology. Likewise, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, strongly characterized its teachings as a "singular heresy." Liberation

theology never became a majority movement within Catholicism; however, its influence remains strong in Latin America. Although its origins are located within the Catholic Church, it has since found a following in many Christian traditions around the world.

evangelical churches. At the same time, evangelicals – particularly Pentecostals – have had an increased emphasis upon working among the poor and marginalized. In many cases, evangelicals are not witnessing to the poor and marginalized, but rather, they *are* the poor and marginalized. (See also pages 10-13.)

While the evangelical movement as a whole is growing, a vast majority of

evangelicals and the fastest-growing segment of this category is among Pentecostals. In 1970, Pentecostals represented a mere four percent of the Latin American population, whereas recent statistics have shown an increase to as much as 13 percent, or approximately 75 million people. Many are drawn to the Pentecostal movement's emphasis upon the work of the

Holy Spirit. Ecstatic experiences in worship and a feeling of direct connection to God have been a big attraction. And the Pentecostal movement has influenced other evangelical and Catholic churches. Christians who describe themselves as "charismatic," believing in the gifts of the Holy Spirit while remaining a member of the Catholic or other evangelical churches, is on the increase well.

success of evangelical mission make it appear that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future. And while Latin America undergoes such a transformation, both

Catholics and evangelicals will be challenged with the commission to reach those growing numbers among them who do not claim any religious affiliation.

God speaks Spanish

Introducing The Mission Society team who are helping proclaim Christ among the people of South America

The Mission Society supports 38 missionaries to six countries in South America. Our work there began in 1988, during which time, the religious and political situation in these areas has changed dramatically. Here, meet your Mission Society team in South America. Note the wide variety of ways in which these men and women minister, addressing needs of body, mind, and spirit.



Len and Betsy Philips
Bolivia



Mark and Leslie Benton
Brazil



Rose Blank
Brazil

Bolivia

Year opened: 2006



Bolivia has endured a tumultuous history, including dozens of coups and long-term political unrest. The citizens of Bolivia also face a shortage of basic needs, as 64 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Despite the challenges Bolivians face, there is also great hope for the nine million residents. Mission Society missionaries, partnering with The Mission Society and World Gospel Mission, are providing leadership development training through the Bolivian Evangelical University in Santa Cruz. Through this ministry these missionaries desire to strengthen and train emerging church leaders who will in turn impact the future of Bolivia.

MISSIONARIES

Len and Betsy Philips

Len and Betsy and their three children work jointly with The Mission Society and World Gospel Mission in Bolivia. They serve in areas of church ministry, discipleship, leadership training, and theological education through the Bolivian Evangelical University and the Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Before moving to Bolivia, the Phillips family ministered in Honduras for 10 years.

Brazil

Year opened: 2006



The world's fifth largest country is home to more than 188 million inhabitants, winning it the position of the largest



Bolivia

POPULATION: 9,247,816

LANGUAGE: Spanish (official), Quechua (official), Aymara (official)

RELIGIOUS GROUPS: Roman Catholic 95%, Protestant (Evangelical Methodist) 5%

MINISTRIES:

- Children's ministry
- Teaching

and most populous country in South America. Brazil is also the leading economic power in South America, despite difficult circumstances that have somewhat crippled the nation since the 1990s. Seventy-three percent of Brazilians consider themselves Roman Catholic, and 15.4 percent are Protestant.

MISSIONARIES

Mark and Leslie Benton

Before joining The Mission Society, Leslie used her master's degree in clinical psychology in her work in behavioral health centers. Mark worked as an account executive for Nova Information Systems. Mark and Leslie are currently raising support to join The Mission Society team in Brazil. The Bentons will be partnering with the Brazilian Methodist Church in northeastern Brazil, working alongside Brazilian national missionaries, initially to assist with church development and youth programs. They will be the first Mission Society missionaries to be working in northeastern Brazil, this nation's most impoverished region, and hope to establish groundwork for many others to follow.

Rose Blank

Rose Blank is a retired illustrator for the Department of the Navy. She is trained as a Stephen Minister, taught Disciple Bible Study and developed the "Widows Walk" ministry in her local church. She will be going to Curitiba July 27 to begin

serving with the Igreja Metodista in the areas of discipleship and leadership development.

Steve and Shannon Mersinger

The Mersingers are currently raising support to serve in Brazil, where they plan to serve in ministries of discipleship in partnership with the local Brazilian Methodist church. Eventually, they hope to also minister among at-risk children and assist in the training and mobilization of Brazilian missionaries.

Ecuador

Year opened: 2005



The more than 13 million inhabitants of Ecuador have seen seven presidents in the past nine years. Political instability has rocked the nation since the economic collapse of the 1990s that devastated the economy. Due to changing world market, petroleum prices combined with political instability, the economy of Ecuador was left demolished in 1999, and 41 percent of the residents continue to live below the poverty line.

Opened in late 2005, Ecuador is a new field for The Mission Society. The growth of the evangelical church in this nation has been astounding in the past several years, and the Methodist Church of Ecuador has extended an invitation for missionaries to help with the work. The Mission Society is currently recruiting families to work in pastoral training, leadership development, and other ministry areas in Ecuador.



Steve and Shannon Mersinger
Brazil



Tim and Daina Datwyler
Ecuador



Graham and Sharon Nichols
Ecuador



Ed and Linda Baker
Paraguay



Brazil

POPULATION: 191,908,598

LANGUAGE: Portuguese (official), Spanish, English, German, Italian, Japanese

RELIGIOUS GROUPS: Roman Catholic 73.6%, Protestant 15.4%, Spiritualist 1.3%, Bantu/voodoo 0.3%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.2%, none 7.4%

MINISTRIES:

- Children's ministry
- Church planting
- Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Leadership development training
- Mission mobilization



Liz Boggess
Paraguay



John and Sandra Carrick
Paraguay



Christian and Angelica
Dickson
Paraguay



John and Colleen Eisenberg
Paraguay

MISSIONARIES

Tim and Daina Datwyler

After serving with The Mission Society in Mexico for four years, the Datwylers opened a new field in Ecuador. Tim and Daina work with short-term teams to build churches and pastor’s housing, as well as coordinate agricultural projects.

Graham and Sharon Nichols

Graham and Sharon both worked in management for a number of years before joining The Mission Society team. They are currently raising support to move to Ecuador where they will minister through discipleship, evangelism, community outreach, and coordinating short-term mission teams.

Paraguay

Year opened: 1988



Paraguay has been ravaged by two centuries of war and governmental strife that continue to impact this nation. The War of the Triple Alliance from 1865-1870 wiped out two-thirds of the nation’s adult male population. Paraguay also endured a military dictatorship from 1954-1989. Due to these elements, 32 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

From the beginning, the team of missionaries and nationals in Paraguay has been wonderfully diverse. Initially led by a Brazilian lawyer, the missionaries have come from Brazil, the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Netherlands. Servants of Christ from Chile and Argentina were also

among the earliest pastors who led the growing number of churches.

Strong in both evangelism and ministries of compassion, The Mission Society’s work in Paraguay is illustrative of the agency’s emphasis on holistic ministry. Ministries today includes vocational training, elementary and secondary education, a day-care center, evangelism and church-planting, a Bible school, well-drilling, medical care, agricultural ministries and a variety of other endeavors. There are also outreach ministries to the Toba Indians, an Indian minority people-group that is largely unreached. (See more about The Mission Society’s ministry in Paraguay on pages 22-24.)

MISSIONARIES

Ed and Linda Baker

Ed and Linda Baker are “second career missionaries” in their seventh year of service in Paraguay. They serve in a remote area where there are a growing number of rural churches, and have assisted the local church leaders to expand from 6 to 11 churches. Through their primary ministry of drilling water wells and developing sanitation facilities, they are able to strengthen existing churches, reach new areas, and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Ed and Linda also help provide micro-loans and medical assistance and have administered the expansion of the Susannah Wesley School (grades 1-6) from 3 to 9 classrooms with more than 200 students from an impoverished rural area.



Ecuador

POPULATION: 13,927,650

LANGUAGE: Spanish (official), Amerindian languages (especially Quechua)

RELIGIOUS GROUPS: Roman Catholic 95%, other 5%

MINISTRIES:

- Agricultural ministry
- Community development
- Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Short-term mission team coordination

Liz Boggess

Liz is skilled in a variety of areas concerning music and crafts and uses her talents for God's glory and to build relationships with others. She is serving in Paraguay with The Mission Society team.

John and Sandra Carrick

John serves as a pastor and teaches in the Biblical Institute in Ascuncion, through which he trains pastors to serve in the Methodist Church in Paraguay. He also teaches in another Bible Institute in Coronel Oviedo. Sandra has been leading a multi-denominational women's Bible study, coordinated short-term teams, participated with the United Methodist Women in Paraguay, tutored ESL students, and taught in the local school.

Christian and Angelica Dickson

Christian and Angelica minister in Paraguay through construction projects and children's ministries. Angelica, a native of Paraguay, is fluent in the Guarani language, and she and Christian have ministries in the rural interior of the country.

John and Colleen Eisenberg

John, Colleen, and their three children have served as missionaries in Africa and South America since 1990. In Paraguay they work with the local National Methodist Youth Commission which organizes camps and retreats. They also have helped implement agricultural development programs for pastors in

rural areas, taught in the Methodist Bible Institute, and developed a carpentry program for the Toba Indians.

Alicia Grey

Alicia is involved in the ESL program for elementary students at Escuela Nuevo Horizonte. Her other ministry involvement includes teaching Sunday school, co-leading a youth group, and running a praise and worship dance group.

Jonathan and Amy Killen

Before joining The Mission Society, Jonathan worked in software development, and Amy was a preschool teacher. They are currently raising support to join The Mission Society team in Paraguay.

Donald and Carol Paige

Donald and Carol joined The Mission Society team in Paraguay earlier this summer. Donald has a degree in history and is a journeyman silversmith. Carol has a master's degree in social work with a certification in school social work. She will be working with families and school personnel as part of the educational outreach of The Mission Society.

Ben and Jenny Reyes

Ben and Jenny have ministered in Brazil and Paraguay since their marriage in 1989. Jenny teaches at the Methodist Bible Institute in Ascuncion, Paraguay. She also works at the district level to teach ESL to Muslim children.



Alicia Grey
Paraguay



Jonathan and Amy Killen
Paraguay



Donald and Carol Paige
Paraguay



Ben and Jenny Reyes
Paraguay/Latin America
regional coordinator



Paraguay

POPULATION: 6,831,306

LANGUAGE: Spanish (official), Guarani (official)

RELIGIOUS GROUPS: Roman Catholic 90%, Protestant 6.2%, other Christian 1.1%, unspecified 1.9%, none 1.1%

MINISTRIES:

- Children's ministry
- Discipleship

- Evangelism
- Leadership development training
- Medical ministries
- Music ministry
- Teaching
- Water sanitation issues and treatment



Mark and Johanna Waltz
Paraguay

“The mystery of ministry is that the Lord is to be found where we minister. That is what Jesus tells us when he says: ‘Insofar as you did this to one of the least of these [sisters or] brothers of mine, you did it to me’ (Matthew 25:40). Our care for people thus becomes the way to meet the Lord.... The goal of education and formation for the ministry is continually to recognize the Lord’s voice, his face, and his touch in every person we meet.”

– From *Gracias: a Latin American Journal*, by Henri J.M. Nouwen



Billy and Laurie Drum
Peru

Ben serves as The Mission Society’s regional coordinator for Latin America; in addition, he teaches leadership development at conferences and seminars and assists in planting churches.

unfavorable conditions, the Church is growing in Peru as Mission Society missionaries – along with other Christian workers – reach out to the marginalized of this nation.

The Mission Society has ministered in Peru since 1997 in a variety of areas. Some ministries are developed to invest in the national leadership by providing pastoral training and lay leadership training. Other ministries focus on children and youth ministry and offer an alternative to gangs and street violence. Others provide medical care to remote areas that have little access to clinics. Evangelism, discipleship and church-planting are a portion of each ministry in Peru.

Mark and Johanna Waltz

The Waltzes have retired in the United States after serving several terms with The Mission Society in Paraguay, working with The Mission Society’s mobile medical clinic and founding the New Horizons Christian School in Lambare. They are currently still actively involved in the ministries on that field and are continuing to raise support for the school which they founded.



Arthur and Mary Alice Ivey
Peru

Peru

Year opened: 1997



Of the 28 million people residing in Peru, 54 percent live in poverty. Due to an unstable political situation during recent decades, the economy of Peru has been significantly damaged. Despite

MISSIONARIES

Billy and Laurie Drum

Billy and Laurie are trained short-term mission project coordinators and have been leading mission trips to Mexico for several years. In Peru, the Drums work with short-term mission teams, discipleship, and community outreach.



Ash and Audra McEuen
Peru



Peru

POPULATION: 29,180,899

LANGUAGE: Spanish (official), Quechua (official), Aymara, and a large number of minor Amazonian languages

RELIGIOUS GROUPS: Roman Catholic 81%, Seventh Day Adventist 1.4%, other Christian 0.7%, other 0.6%, unspecified or none 16.3%

MINISTRIES:

- Children’s ministry
- Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Short-term mission team coordination
- Teaching
- Youth ministry

Arthur and Mary Alice Ivey

The Iveys and their three children are serving with The Mission Society team in Peru. Arthur ministers in church planting, evangelism and discipleship, as well as in assisting short-term mission teams. Mary Alice is a former teacher and works in children's and youth ministry.

Ash and Audra McEuen

Ash and Audra are currently raising support to serve with The Mission Society team in Peru. In Peru they will train pastors and church leaders from a variety of denominations. They also hope to work closely with the Quechua people living in the community.

Martin and Tracy Reeves

Martin is a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary and an elder in the New Mexico Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The Reeves' vision is to train and disciple Peruvian nationals, equipping and empowering them for ministry. In addition, they are actively involved in the ministries of three local Methodist churches teaching, preaching, and participating in youth and children's ministries.

Louise Reimer

Having taught in the public school for more than 20 years, Louise was led to begin a second career with The Mission Society in Huancaayo, Peru. She has a master's degree in elementary education

and is a certified special education teacher. Her ministry in Peru will include teaching English to primary and secondary school students, thereby establishing relationships with them for evangelism. Louise also seeks to reach out to women by creating discipleship groups centered on Bible study and prayer, to share Christ, and to cultivate individual spiritual growth.

Venezuela

Year opened: 2005



Although slowly recovering from economic depression that has left 38 percent of the country below the poverty line, Venezuelans have hope that their situation is improving. Of the more than 26 million inhabitants, only two percent attend a Protestant church.

MISSIONARIES

David and Carol Cosby

David is the academic dean of Wesleyan Seminary of Venezuela. He also serves as the director and professor of the Church Planting Institute with more than 40 students in two locations (Barquisimeto and Puerto Ordaz). Carol is in ministry to pastors' wives and other missionary families, hostess to visiting professors, and treasurer of the seminary and institute. The Cosbys have been in missionary service full-time since 1975, having served previously in Colombia, Hungary, and Mexico.



Martin and Tracy Reeves
Peru



Louise Reimer
Peru



David and Carol Cosby
Venezuela

The Mission Society missionaries to Central America will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Unfinished*.



Venezuela

POPULATION: 26,414,815

LANGUAGE: Spanish (official), numerous indigenous dialects

RELIGIOUS GROUPS: nominally Roman Catholic 96%, Protestant 2%, other 2%

MINISTRIES:

- Teaching
- Women's ministry



Against all odds

Church raised up from the ashes in the war-torn heart of South America celebrates milestone

Twenty years ago the Evangelical Methodist Church of Paraguay came into existence as a joint effort of The Mission Society and the Brazilian Methodist Church. In April, more than 1000 people came out to celebrate the Paraguayan church's 20th anniversary, and I had the privilege of being there.

Before I left for Paraguay, I found a trip report in our files from a visit to Paraguay in late 1987 made by Julia McLean Williams, then Mission Society vice president. She had traveled to Paraguay along with Norival Trindade, a lawyer and leader in the Brazilian Methodist Church. Julia recorded that, by the end of their exploratory trip, she and Norival had stood on a hill overlooking the city of Asuncion, and prayed for the Lord's blessing on this new cooperative work to share the Good News of God's Kingdom with the people of Paraguay.

In the ensuing years, many missionaries from Brazil and the United States have worked alongside this newly formed church. As leaders developed among the Paraguayans, they were appointed also as pastors and leaders of the church. Since 2000, the church has been led by Pablo and Claudette Mora. Pablo, a Paraguayan, was part of the ministry team from the beginning.

They came to help

The Mission Society's involvement in Paraguay has taken, and continues to take, many forms (*see pages 18-20*). In the rural area of Yrybucua, Christian Dickson, our field leader for Paraguay, helps manage construction projects and



Since 2000, Paraguay's Evangelical Methodist Church has been led by Pablo and Claudette Mora. Pablo is a Paraguayan who has been part of the ministry team from the church's beginning.

the development of an agricultural center. His wife, Angelica, works with a school there. Ed and Linda Baker have drilled wells throughout the region, providing needed water to the communities and support to the rural churches that have been established. Liz Boggess teaches at an international school and works with a church in a poor area of Asuncion. John and Sandra Carrick serve in the area of theological education and discipleship. Alicia Grey works with a church and a school in an impoverished community. John and

Colleen Eisenberg, currently on home leave, served as field leaders for the team for several years and have also worked with the Methodist Church and the international school. And Ben and Jenny Reyes serve the ministry in Ciudad de Este – a place that is home to thousands of Muslim immigrants. These missionaries stand on the shoulders of others who have served over the past 20 years.

As is the case in Kingdom work everywhere, although we celebrate what God has done in the past, we know that He always desires to do something new in the present and in the future. The Methodist Church in Paraguay faces many challenges. There is a need for new leadership to grow among the Paraguayans. They wish to move away from heavy dependency on outside funding in the face of poverty in many of the areas where the churches are located. There is need for creative ways of discipling believers, so that they grow and themselves become lights to others.

Many more know Him

In her trip report of 1987, Julia Williams wrote, "As we enter this work, we are reminded of those among us who first had the vision and passed it on throughout several years and through the lives of people. Virgil Maybray looking at a map with Norival Trindade

back in 1982, first passed on the vision of this work – then Paul Morell, H.T. Maclin, Al Vom Steeg and others. [Maybray, Morell, Maclin and VomSteeg are former Mission Society board or staff members.] Now we stand ready to move into the unknown, but armed with the solid knowledge that God gave us this task. As we praise Him for it, let us move with certainty into 1988!”

“At the celebration service, I looked around at the 1000+ people gathered together from across Paraguay. The joy on their faces was contagious.”

At the celebration service I attended in Asuncion on April 12, I looked around at the 1000+ people gathered together from across Paraguay. The joy on their faces was contagious. It was truly a celebration of God’s moving in their lives. Most of them would not know any of the names of those people from the early years. But they know Jesus as their Lord. That is an incredible testimony to the Lord’s grace and to the obedience of His servants, those who were there in the early days, as well as those who continue to serve now. That makes us able to “move with certainty” now 20 years later, into 2008 and beyond. †

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



Nearly 150 years ago in Paraguay, The War of the Triple Alliance wiped out two-thirds of the nation’s adult male population. The country still struggles to recover from that and other governmental conflicts. Today, Paraguay ranks the second poorest country in South America.



Approximately 30 (mostly rural) congregations now make up the Evangelical Methodist Community of Paraguay, a church founded in 1988 as a joint effort of the Brazilian Methodist Church and The Mission Society. (*The Mission Society missionaries now serving in Paraguay are featured on pages 18-20.*)



Today, the Methodist Church of Paraguay’s ministries include includes vocational training, elementary and secondary education, a day-care center, evangelism and church-planting, a Bible school, well-drilling, medical care, and a variety of other endeavors. There are also outreach ministries to the Toba Indians, an Indian minority people-group that is largely unreached.



No running, please

How to avoid the chicken-house approach to church outreach

As a teenager, I worked for a period of time in my uncle's chicken house. I recall preparing for the arrival of the chicks by spreading fresh pine wood shavings over the entire floor of the chicken house. Heaters were lowered from the rafters to keep the chicks warm, and circular tin walls about two feet high were put in place to keep the chicks under the heaters. After they were safely put in these brooders, I took much pleasure in playing with these cuddly, yellow-down chicks.

After about six weeks, the heaters were raised, the tin walls were removed, and the yellow down had given way to white feathers. The chicks were now free to roam the entire expanse of the chicken house. It was at this stage of their development that I noticed a behavior of these chickens that still fascinates me to this day.

The chickens spent their days pecking around in the wood shavings. As they did, they would cluster in groups of 10 to 15 chickens. Every once in a while, one of the chickens, for no apparent reason, would look up, then break and run about 20 feet from where it had been. Immediately, the other chickens in the group would, en masse, dash off in hot pursuit. By the time they caught up, the lead chicken was pecking away in the shavings again. The other chickens, for a moment, would look all around as if they were trying to determine what that was all about. They then joined the first chicken in pecking in the wood shavings. This scene was played out over and over again as one group after another would break, run, stop, and peck.

Don't chase the lead chicken

Over the years, I have learned that this behavior is not confined to chickens in a chicken house. During my time in the corporate world, I would observe a company break out of its box and do something different. Then company after company would fall in lock-step attempting to do the same thing as the



Churches sometimes chase after other churches' "successful" ministry models like chickens chasing after the lead chicken. But no two churches are exactly alike. So how can you determine the outreach plan for your church?

first, all the while hoping for the same results. Rarely did the success of the first company pass on to the wannabes, and soon they were back to pecking in the wood shavings.

This chicken-house mentality is not limited to the business world. We see it in the Christian world as well. How many churches have sought to be the next Ginghamburg or Saddleback (megachurches in Ohio and California)? That's not to say that some important insights cannot be had by looking at the models and practices being used by these

churches. However, there is only one Ginghamburg and only one Saddleback. These churches didn't get to where they are today by chasing the lead chicken.

Know where you're going

So if the chicken-house approach to ministry, especially outreach ministry, is not the most useful method for a church, how do we determine what our approach should be? To answer that question, consider the following three points.

1. You are unique.

Let's face it; there is no other church exactly like yours. The combination of location, size, culture, personalities, giftings, resources, etc., makes you unlike all other churches. In God's eyes, you have your own fingerprint, your own distinctive DNA.

2. You have a unique calling.

It is true that all churches have a general calling to make disciples. However, God doesn't call us all to do the same thing in the same manner. With respect to global outreach, we believe that God has a purpose for every local church and that purpose is different from every other church in your community, city, and state.

3. You need a unique plan.

To fulfill your unique calling to the world, you need a unique plan. That plan must include where God is calling you, who He is calling you to reach, and how He wants you to reach them. This approach requires focus and discernment.

Stopped to listen

The Rev. Steve Ackerman, pastor of Mariner's Bethel United Methodist Church in Ocean View, Delaware recently attended The Mission Society's Developing a Global Outreach Plan workshop. In the workshop, he related how Mariner's Bethel felt led to be more intentional about international ministry. Several of the members decided to seek God's will in the matter and entered into a season of prayer. They prayed for some seven months. Then God began to reveal the where to each of them in various yet distinct ways. When they compared notes about what God was telling them, all but one agreed it was the North African country of Chad. Most of them knew nothing about Chad, and some had never heard of it. Today, they have a ministry partnership in Chad.

Think of that. Seven months of discerning God's will to identify one place on the map where they are called to minister. That is a lot of time and a lot of work. Oh, but there is so much more joy, blessings, and fulfillment in doing that rather than chasing after the lead chicken. †

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

Mariner's Bethel United Methodist Church felt led to be more intentional about international ministry. Several of the members decided to seek God's will in the matter. ... They prayed for some seven months.

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 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.

Equipping Short-Term Mission Leaders September 19-20; December 5-6, 2008

Norcross, GA

This interactive training will equip leaders to develop and execute an effective short-term missions plan and to train and disciple the members of your short-term mission teams.

Cost is \$30 per person.

Conducting a Global Impact Celebration September 5-6, 2008

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 cm@themissionsociety.org.



Are you called to learn, go, give, pray or connect? Your search starts here.

The Great Commission is for all of us. Some are called to go. Others to pray or to give. No matter what your call, The Mission Society's new website features a variety of ways to help you explore – or discover – your call.



Highlights of www.themissionsociety.org:

- Gain easier access to missionaries and ministries, including an interactive map under “Where We Serve”
- View more photos, videos, and documents than ever before in the “Media Library”
- Access all issues of our quarterly magazine, *Unfinished*
- Subscribe to our new podcast, “Not if, but how?”

Discover more in-depth information
about The Mission Society at
www.themissionsociety.org.





Legends of the call

Stories to help you recognize God's leading

In my last article (“The wrong question”), I tried to address a misconception about missions. I said that every follower of Christ – not just certain ones – is called to missions. Of course, it naturally follows that our physically going to another part of the world is not the only way to fulfill this call on our lives.

Having said that, let's suppose you sense that God may be calling you to cross-cultural missions (to live and serve full-time in another country or region), but you are uncertain about the call to go. How can you know if you have been called? Does God call everyone in the same manner?

Although much more could be said than space allows here, I hope a couple of stories will be helpful.

Sherry: a voice out of nowhere

Sherry, a 38-year-old medical worker with no missions experience, went to a local gym one day and hopped onto the treadmill. She put on her earphones and listened to some music. A few minutes later, she heard a voice: “Go to West Africa to teach the Bible to the Arab Muslims in their language.” Sherry took off her earphones and looked around, thinking that someone in the gym was talking to her. Not seeing anyone, she stepped off the treadmill and started praying. The voice instructed her to pray for Mali, even though Sherry didn't know where Mali was. Later she looked in a missions

handbook and found that Mali was a 98.5 percent Islamic republic in West Africa. Sherry spoke with the missions director at her church, signed up with a missions agency, received some training, and served a four-year term in Liberia, West Africa (seeing this as a stepping stone to where



Jeremiah was called before he was born. Nehemiah was compelled simply by the need. Moses had the burning bush; Paul had the blinding light. Modern-day stories of God's call are just as diverse. So how can you know yours?

she would eventually serve). Ten years later, after being redirected to Ghana and after a bout with cancer, Sherry is now preparing to serve in Mali.

Jim: an interest that surfaced

Jim had never met a missionary while he was growing up. It wasn't until he attended a family reunion at the age of 21 that he heard about mission service. It was at this reunion that he learned several of his older relatives had been missionaries. Already having a strong liking for other cultures and languages, and now having learned about missions, he knew he wanted to be a missionary.

Jim couldn't articulate a “theology of missions,” nor did he, at that time, have an intense passion for reaching people. However, these both developed through his relationship with InterVarsity and his graduate school studies. Finally, at the age of 36, Jim, a father of four, joined a mission agency, received training, and went with his family to Central Asia, where he would serve for 10 years.

Figuring it all out

God does not call all missionaries in the same manner. Some, like Sherry, are called through supernatural events. Some, like Jim, are compelled to go by a simple interest that develops into something more. Still others are inspired to go because of suffering and needs they see in the world.

Whatever the case, if you are wondering whether you are called to serve as a cross-cultural missionary, there are some practical things you can do: (1) pray and ask God to confirm your calling; (2) talk with a church leader or a godly friend; (3) talk with a missionary or a missions agency representative, and (4) take a missions class or read a book about missions. If we here at The Mission Society can help you to discern your call, please contact us! ✚

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

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

¡Bienvenidos! You are welcome to serve in South America! The Lord is doing marvelous things in this part of the world. Join Him and get involved with what He is doing there. Whether you would like to serve as a teacher, agriculture specialist, medical worker, or administrative assistant, we have quite a few positions available. Remember, you do not have to be a professional minister in order to be an effective cross-cultural witness.

For a complete listing of personnel needs, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org

BOLIVIA

Teachers, coaches, and school workers – 1 - 5 years

Teachers and other school workers are needed at the Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center (an English-speaking school, grades K-12). Present needs include: high school English teacher; first-grade teacher; sixth-grade teacher; coaches for volleyball, basketball, soccer, and track; boys' physical education teacher for both junior high and high school; elementary school chaplain. For more information, visit www.scccl.org.

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.

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).

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

With the good news of Jesus, 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, Otto Arango, Ari Arfaras, Ed & Linda Baker, Jose & Audrey Banales, Chris and Dora Barbee, Erica Beeles, Jim & Angela Beise, Mark & Leslie Benton, 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, Adam & Jennifer Dalenburg, Tim & Daina Datwyler, Christian & Angelica Dickson, Caren Dilts, John & Colleen Eisenberg, Sue Fuller, Cam & Anne Gongwer, James & Barbara Gray, Dave & Beth Greenawalt, Alicia Grey, Rebecca Griffith, Florencio & Maria Guzman, Charlie & Chris Hanak, John & Katheryn Heinz, Jill

Henderson, 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, Jonathan & Amy Killen, Esaho & Beatrice Kipuke, Clay & Deborah Kirkland, Sue Kolljeski, Joetta Lehman, Kristen Matveia, Nicole McCoy, Ash & Audra McEuen, Steve & Shannon Mersinger, Grant Miller, Mike & Claire Mozley, Katie Nash, Doug & Becky Neel, Marshall Neely, Laura Newton, Graham and Sharon Nichols, Steve Nikkel, Ron & Michelle Olson, Donald & Carol Paige, Peter & Esther Pereira, Len & Betsy Phillips, Martin & Tracy Reeves, Leon & Vicki Reich, Louise Reimer, John & Rosalie Rentz, Ben & Jenny Reyes, Ruben

Rodriguez, John & Bess Russell, Michael & Jannike Seward, Kirk & Nicole Sims, Rick & Debra Slingluff, Amanda Smith, Robert and Linda Spitaleri, Tim Sprunger, Bryan & Beth Tatum, Ron & Belinda Tyler, Bill & Beth Ury, Mark & Johanna Waltz, Tate Welling, Bill & Linda Williams, Larry Williams, Steve & Heather Wilson, Dai & Neva Wysong

In addition to those listed above, 44 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.