

Unfinished

A publication of The Mission Society

Winter 2015 | 61



Find your place

Offering Jesus has never been more important.

UNFINISHED
Winter 2015, Issue 61

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Cover photo:
The Mission Society announces new service opportunities designed to help you find your place in missions. (See pages 18, 19, and 31.) Your "place" may be anywhere—including your prayer room.

Unlock your church's missional potential.

WE HAVE THE KEY.

Scores of churches have discovered that our **Global Outreach Process** has been the **catalyst** for transforming their church to align with God's mission to **'go and make disciples.'**

You too can **discover principles, plans, and tools** that will set your congregation on a path of increasingly **fruitful ministry** locally and around the world.

The **end results?** Greater **personal engagement** of your congregation, more **strategic outreach**, **deeper mission partnerships**, and **increased funds for outreach.**

For more information or to schedule a workshop at your church, contact the church ministry department at The Mission Society at **800.478.8963, ext. 9048** or email us at cm@themissionsociety.org.

"It's been 13 years since God in His sovereignty brought the Global Outreach Workshop and The Mission Society into our congregation. The seed planted in that one weekend is still bearing kingdom fruit in Grace Church these years later. It will change your church and your life!"

Jorge Acevedo, Lead Pastor
Grace Church, Cape Coral, FL



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—Proverbs 3:5-6, ESV*



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Grateful for the witness of Virgil E. Maybray

At age 96, the Rev. Virgil E. Maybray, The Mission Society's founding vice president, passed away on November 4, 2015. Prior to joining the founding staff of The Mission Society, Maybray had served for 30 years in the pastorate in the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and led the Evangelical Missions Council (which preceded The Mission Society) as its first executive secretary. From 1975-1983, he ministered in more than 350 United Methodist churches in some 35 states. Dr. Gerald Anderson, the emeritus director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut and one of the founders of The Mission Society, writes, "Virgil prepared the way, and his prayerful support made a significant contribution to the early success of The Mission Society. ... Virgil was one of my heroes."

The Mission Society is deeply indebted to the Rev. Maybray for his indefatigable work and witness. It would be impossible to calculate the number of missionaries who serve today and the number of pastors and congregations throughout the United States and in other parts of the world who would point to Virgil Maybray as the reason for their saying *yes* to God's calling on their lives.

The Rev. Dick McClain, former president of The Mission Society, says "Virgil Maybray has been a dear friend and mentor for decades." After having met Virgil one summer in Pennsylvania at age 18, Dick would later ask Virgil to preach in mission conferences in churches Dick served in West Michigan. Through Virgil's invitation, Dick would eventually join the staff

of The Mission Society, where he would serve for 28 years.

"Virgil was passionate about the supreme task of the Church, which is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus in all the world. No career missionary ever had a greater passion for world mission than Virgil, a man who himself never served cross-culturally. As a pastor and church leader, he understood and totally committed himself to the global mission of the Church.

"I shall always be grateful for his life and for his witness, which lives on in the lives of countless spiritual children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren across the US and around the world. May God raise up 10 others to take his place, for it will take that many to equal the impact of this one man."

In addition to his wife, Jane, Virgil is survived by three children and their spouses; a daughter-in-law; three step-children and spouses, 33 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren. All of these he prayed for by name every day. How grateful we are that The Mission Society is marked by the witness of this great man of God, whose life points to the same message with which he—an avid letter writer—signed all of his correspondence: "He is Risen!"

Missionaries gather in Albania for formation and renewal

In October, The Mission Society held its biannual regional gathering of workers from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Held in the Republic of Albania, the event was attended by 78 missionaries and 34 missionary kids, along with several staff and volunteers.

Bringing together personnel from 20 different countries



From left to right: The Rev. Virgil E. Maybray; attendees of the regional gathering in Albania; Jon Stallsmith, lead pastor of Grace Fellowship Church, Snellville, GA, bringing daily Bible teaching at Albania gathering; staffer Richard Coleman presenting Perspectives lectures in the Clive Davis Theatre in Los Angeles; van packed with items for refugees in Europe. See *special report on page 30*.

and a variety of ministries, the gathering focused on the theme of “FORM”—being formed in the image of Christ and becoming more aware of one’s role in the formation of others.

These working events are designed for intentional growth, both professionally and personally. Breakout sessions included teaching on such topics as church leadership, marriage, parenting, Sabbath-keeping, and language learning.

Time for rest and renewal was integral to this gathering. Missionaries were provided resources and teaching in spiritual formation and Bible study to encourage their spiritual growth. Counselors, coaches, and member-care personnel were available for a listening ear or for prayer.

During the gathering, the 34 missionary kids in attendance enjoyed days designed especially for them by MK staffers. These young missionaries processed together their cross-cultural experiences, connected with others in similar life situations, and better grounded their faith and identity in Christ.

Jim Ramsay, vice president for mission ministries, said, “I could not have been more pleased with how things went. All the people who had roles at the gathering performed them with excellence. My greatest joy was seeing how all of our missionaries and missionary kids made new connections and deepened existing ones. That is what being formed in community under God is all about.”

The Mission Society’s Richard Coleman selected for ‘Perspectives’ video recordings

Richard Coleman, The Mission Society’s senior director of mobilization and candidacy, was recently selected by Frontier

Ventures to present six short lectures for “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement” at the Grammy Museum’s Clive Davis Theatre in Los Angeles. Frontier Ventures will use Coleman’s contribution for a newly revised online and DVD format of the Perspectives course.

Frontier Ventures was formerly the US Center for World Mission, founded by Ralph D. Winter, who issued a challenge at the 1974 Lausanne International Congress for World Evangelization to the modern church to reach all people groups, even those in the “last frontier.”

Since 1974, more than 200,000 students have taken Perspectives’ 15-week course either online or via DVD to learn about God’s redemptive work among “every tribe, tongue and nation.” The creation of the online and DVD format will make this course more accessible to people worldwide.

Coleman leads The Mission Society’s recruiting and candidate screening efforts. He also helps mobilize churches, especially African-American churches, for missions. This was his sixth year serving as a Perspectives instructor, a role he has assumed outside of his responsibilities with The Mission Society.

Receive undergraduate or graduate credit in missions

Perspectives on the World Christian Movement is a 15-week course designed to instruct on the biblical, historical, cultural, and strategic aspects of God’s mission purpose. Students taking the Perspectives course can receive undergraduate or graduate credit, or a certificate level of study. Learn more or find a class near you at <http://www.perspectives.org/>.



How to find your place

In case it all seems complicated, begin by remembering this one thing.



Purple has been associated with royalty, power, and wealth for centuries. The color's elite status stems from the rarity and cost of the dye originally used to produce it. As children of God, we also have elite status. The Apostle Peter says we are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." (NRSV)

My wife and I have just changed churches. It was not an easy decision. We had been living in Atlanta for many months and attending a local church we both liked a lot. But there was a problem. One day Dee Dee summed it up this way: "The church is fine. The people are nice. The pastor preaches great messages, and I enjoy the music. The problem is I just can't seem to be able to find my place there." We visited another church where Dee Dee and I both, very quickly, found our "place."

Many times when people come to The Mission Society to talk about a call to fulltime cross-cultural work, one of the big questions in their lives is geographical: where in the world will we serve? And, of course, as each of us asks questions about our "place,"

geography is a factor. But I think there is a more important level of finding our place. Before we even consider the question of *where*, I think believers should consider the question of *who we are* and *whose we are*.

Royal

A few centuries ago, when the kings of France were absolute monarchs, the tutors of the royal princes had a number of challenges with discipline. Corporal punishment was not allowed, nor was strong language. One day, while trying to instill some sense into a particularly unruly young prince, the tutor hit upon an idea.

He took a royal garment made of purple velvet and cut a strip of cloth from it. Pinning that cloth to the noble pupil's

tunic right over his heart, he said, "Young man, this is The Royal Purple of France. It represents everything your forefathers bled and died for. It is your heritage, your birthright, and it represents who you are. And you must never forget that everything you do is a reflection on The Royal Purple of France."

From that day forward, it is said the young prince's behavior changed. He had discovered who he was, and whose he was. He was finding his place.

Chosen

I often wonder how many Christians today need to be reminded of our identity in Christ. Jesus says that He chose us. He says He now calls us friends. Imagine that. You are a friend of God! He says that we have been given the right

to become children of God! He also says we are the light of the world, the salt of the earth. We are the ones who carry His light and His glory to the nations!

The Apostle Paul says we are “joint-heirs” with Jesus. Have you ever thought about what that means? Talk about being a noble prince! One day we will share kingdom dominion with Jesus. And in the interim we are “ambassadors” of Christ. We are representing Him in the world. Likewise, the Apostle Peter says we are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.” He reminds us that “Once [we] were not a people, but now [we] are God’s [special] people,” “called out of the darkness into His marvelous light.” (NRSV)

Called

It’s important to note that our having new identity in Christ is for a purpose. Jesus says He chooses us “to bear fruit,

fruit that will last.” (NRSV) Paul says we are His “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (ESV) Peter says we are God’s special people so that we may “proclaim the excellencies of him who called [us].” (ESV)

“Once we accept who we are in Jesus, we’ve really begun to find our place.”

But we will never be effective in any fruit bearing, in any good works that glorify God, in proclaiming the excellencies of Him who called us, until we begin to live and love and act in accordance with who we are in Christ, and whose we are in Christ. As we take on our new identities in Jesus, we realize our

place in the divine drama. This is everything our Lord bled and died for. It is our heritage, our birthright. It represents who we are. And we must never forget that everything we do is a reflection on our Lord! Once we accept who we are in Jesus, we’ve really begun to find our place—a place that shines the light of His glory wherever we are.

In this issue of *Unfinished* you will read stories of the possibilities and challenges of finding our place in the mission of Jesus. You will be blessed by the witness of men and women who have believed that they are, in fact, the light of the world because Jesus says they are, and believing that, are glorifying His name wherever they are. They have found their place. I hope you know the Lord has a place for you as well! ✝

The Rev. Max Wilkins is president and CEO of The Mission Society.

It’s easier than ever to honor a loved one.

The Mission Society’s new website beautifully displays ways you can find your place in Jesus’ mission—through serving, giving, volunteering, or better equipping your church for missions.

Our new website also makes it easy to give in honor or memory of a loved one. Your part takes just minutes. After that, the person you specify will receive a letter telling of your gift. During this holy season, consider helping make Jesus known around the world while honoring those dearest to you. Visit www.themissionsociety.org/give.



WHAT'S GETTING IN YOUR WAY?

Having a hard time figuring out your place in God's kingdom work? Surprisingly, the obstruction may be the messages you tell yourself.

By Stephen Seamands, Ph.D.

I was with Tammy when she first set foot on Indian soil. Having just graduated from seminary, she was sensing a call to minister to orphaned and abandoned children there. So this was an initial, exploratory mission trip for her. She wanted to experience the sights and sounds of India and confirm the direction God was leading her.

However, after several days in India, Tammy was overwhelmed. The grinding poverty, endless rows of squatter houses, street children and beggars, corruption, idolatry, hopelessness and spiritual darkness was beyond anything she had imagined. "Lord," she prayed, "I don't really like this country. It's too hard. Yet I believe I've felt Your call here. I'm confused. What am I going to do?"

Tammy realized that all the human love and compassion she could muster would soon be depleted in India. If God wanted her to serve there, she would need His love and compassion to sustain her. In a home where she was staying, a large map of India hung on the wall. Each time she would look at it, Tammy prayed, "Lord, please give me Your heart of love for India."

One day as she was praying, the Lord spoke to her clearly. "How can I give you My heart of love for India," he asked, "when you don't even know My heart of love for you?" At first Tammy was evasive: "God, you don't understand. I want Your heart for India. I didn't come on this mission trip for myself. I just want Your heart for India so I can serve you

here." But the Lord persisted, "Tammy, how can I give you My heart of love for India when you don't even know My heart of love for you?"

During the rest of her time in India, God gave Tammy a deeper revelation and experience of His heart of love for her. And as she received what she hadn't asked for—God's heart for her, she also received what she had asked for—God's heart for India. As she described it,

He began to pour out His love for me in fresh ways! Early on in my walk with Christ, I had known in my mind that Jesus loved me. Over the past three years at seminary, He has revealed the depths of His love for me in my *heart*. During my month in India, He poured out His love in a new measure. I experienced His love for me in the innermost part of my being. . . I started out praying for God's heart for India. He revealed the realness of His heart for me, and because of this incredible truth, He is giving me the very thing I asked for; His heart for India.

Six months later, Tammy returned to India and has been ministering there ever since. For 17 years now, God has been using her in amazing ways to communicate His unfailing love to the despised and unwanted. But during that initial trip, the foundation of her ministry was properly established. As she explains when she tells her story: "Before you can have God's heart for others, you must know His heart for you."

you aren't
enough of a
leader



Realizing our self-rejection

“To participate in mission,” said missiologist David Bosch, “is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love.” But what if we who are called to participate in mission by serving as channels of the flow of God’s love toward people haven’t first been grasped by that love ourselves? Before we know God’s heart of love for those to whom we are sent, don’t we first need to know and experience God’s love for us? And isn’t our growing awareness and experience of the “breadth and length and height and depth” of God’s love for us (Eph 3:18-19) what continues to renew and sustain us in mission?

But what if there are barriers that block the inflow of God’s love into our lives, factors that make it difficult for us to experience the depths of God’s love for us? All the water in the ocean can’t sink a ship unless it gets inside it. What if there are barriers that prevent us from experiencing more of the ocean of God’s love for us? I believe there are such barriers and in what follows I want to focus on one of them: self-rejection. Time and again, in my own life and in the lives of those I’ve prayed with, I’ve seen how it prevents God’s love from getting inside of us.

For the past 20 years, as I’ve engaged in spiritual counsel with seminary students, especially in the ministry of healing prayer, I have come to realize how deeply rooted self-rejection

Before we know God’s heart of love for those to whom we are sent, don’t we first need to know and experience God’s love for us?

is in so many of us. When I first read his *Life of the Beloved*, I was surprised when author Henri Nouwen insisted that self-rejection is “the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the truth that we are beloved of God.” Over the years, however, I have come to believe he is right. So often, as I have sought to help someone experience more deeply their belovedness in Christ, we have bumped up against walls and barriers preventing that, which were rooted in the person’s unwillingness to accept and embrace themselves.

Similar to Nouwen, Leanne Payne considers our inability to accept ourselves one of the three main barriers (along with an inability to receive God’s forgiveness and an inability to forgive others) to spiritual and emotional wholeness in Christ. She considers self-acceptance to be a Christian virtue and quotes Romano Guardini, the Catholic philosopher-theologian: “The act of self-acceptance is the root of all things. I must agree to be the person who I am. Agree to have the qualifications which I have. Agree to live within the limitations set for me. ... The clarity and the courageousness of this acceptance is the foundation of all existence.”

Of course, there is a fallen, sinful self, which scripture says must be denied (Mk 8:34) and put to death (Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22-3). But there is also a new self, our authentic human self, which is beloved of God and is therefore to be accepted and nourished (Eph 4:24). However, as Payne suggests, “If we are

I wonder which of your limitations—physical, intellectual, emotional, familial, social, racial, cultural—have you been ashamed of or despised?

busy hating that soul that God loves and is in the process of straightening out, we cannot help others—our minds will be riveted on ourselves—not on Christ who is our wholeness.”

The true self, which God loves and we too must accept and love, is a finite, embodied human self with limitations, boundaries, qualifications, weaknesses, and inadequacies. That self, however, is often the very self we despise and reject.

Tim expressed it to me like this: “I have always seen myself as ‘slightly less than,’ like being the second fiddle in the orchestra. So I didn’t like myself and believed there was something wrong with me. But is there anything inherently wrong with playing second fiddle? Isn’t that a good and necessary role that contributes to the well-being of the orchestra?”

“Because I could never believe that about the particular part I was destined to play, I have struggled to embrace the completely unique and gifted person God has created me to be. I’ve rejected and hated myself because of my human limitations and because I wasn’t someone else.”

Receiving God’s love

I wonder which of your limitations—physical, intellectual, emotional, familial, social, racial, cultural—have you been ashamed of or despised? What about yourself have you called “unclean” that God has called “clean”? Would you let God love

you—even in those parts of yourself and your life-story you have hated and looked down upon?

I’ll never forget praying with a student whom we’ll call Leslie. She was ashamed of and, more than that, she despised her femininity. When she was a child, it had often been the cause of ridicule and hurt. “My father was stern. He would scold me and humiliate me for crying so much,” she told me. “‘You’re too sensitive,’ he would chide. ‘Quit crying and get control of yourself.’”

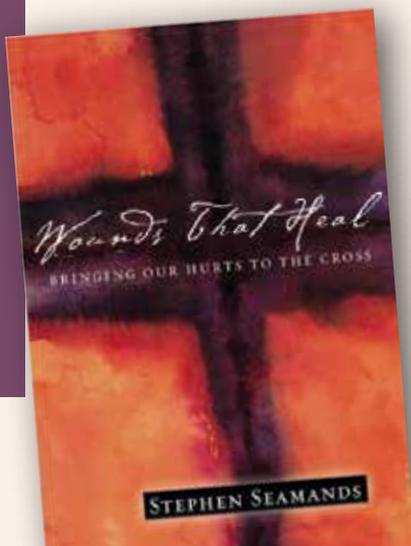
“There were also several boys at school who bullied me constantly. Compared to them I was so small. There was no way I could defend myself. And then when I would burst into tears, they would tease and torment me all the more. It was all because I was a girl and so small, so weak and overly emotional. If I had been a boy, I could have handled it and wouldn’t have been so hurt. I grew up despising those things about myself and was determined to suppress my emotional side. I vowed that I would never appear weak, and I would never let myself feel or express my emotions. I hated those things about myself and was mad at God for making me that way.”

Leslie was very intelligent and a straight-A student. She became an expert at “living out of her head” and suppressing her emotions. That was how she maintained control and kept herself from getting hurt. But her self-protective

**Perfect for your next
small-group study:**

Wounds That Heal: Bringing Our Hurts to the Cross

By Stephen Seamands



We are wounded people. In this fallen world, people are hurt and exploited. Tragedies of all kinds afflict us and the ones we love. But we are not alone in our suffering. Despite our emotional, psychological and physical injuries, God has not abandoned us. Balancing sound biblical exposition with sensitive pastoral care, Stephen Seamands examines the profound implications of Jesus’ crucifixion for our healing and restoration. Filled with

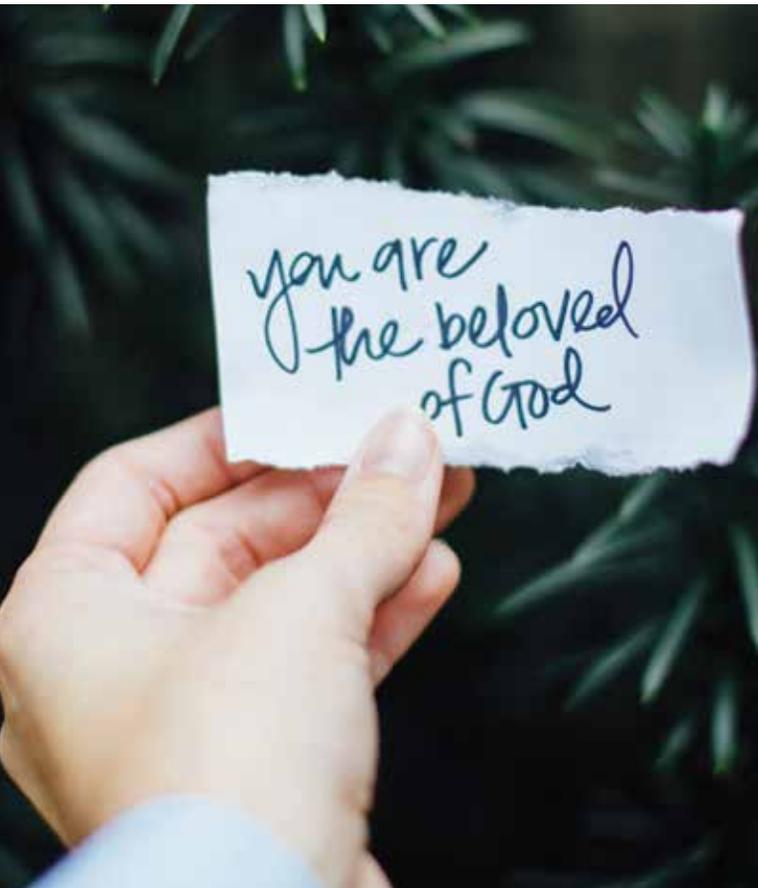
real-life stories of people’s brokenness and healing, *Wounds That Heal* offers comfort for our wounded souls. “I used this book as a study guide for a small group,” writes one online reviewer. “It was so inspiring that I look forward to using it again. I have recommended this book to individuals and married couples who are struggling. It answers the question: *where is God when we are hurting?* This is a book I will re-read and recommend again and again.”

The truth about yourself

“First of all, you have to keep unmasking the world about you for what it is: manipulative, controlling, power-hungry, and, in the long run, destructive. The world tells you many lies about who you are, and you simply have to be realistic enough to remind yourself of this. Every time you feel hurt, offended, or rejected, you have to dare to say to yourself:

‘These feelings, strong as they may be, are not telling me the truth about myself. The truth, even though I cannot feel it right now, is that I am the chosen child of God, precious in God’s eyes, called the Beloved from all eternity.’

—**Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World***



strategy prevented her from forming close relationships and experiencing deep emotions.

One day in my office, my prayer partner and I witnessed a wonderful time of transformation and healing in Leslie. As she prayed, she renounced the vows she had made and repented for calling “unclean” those things about herself which God had called “clean.” Then, as we led her, she positively chose to embrace the person she had been created to be: a woman with great gifts and strengths, but also a woman with limitations and sensitivities that made her susceptible to pain and suffering. In response to her prayer, I found myself praying authoritatively over her the words Jesus

had spoken to Jairus’ daughter, “Little girl, arise!” (Mk 5:41).

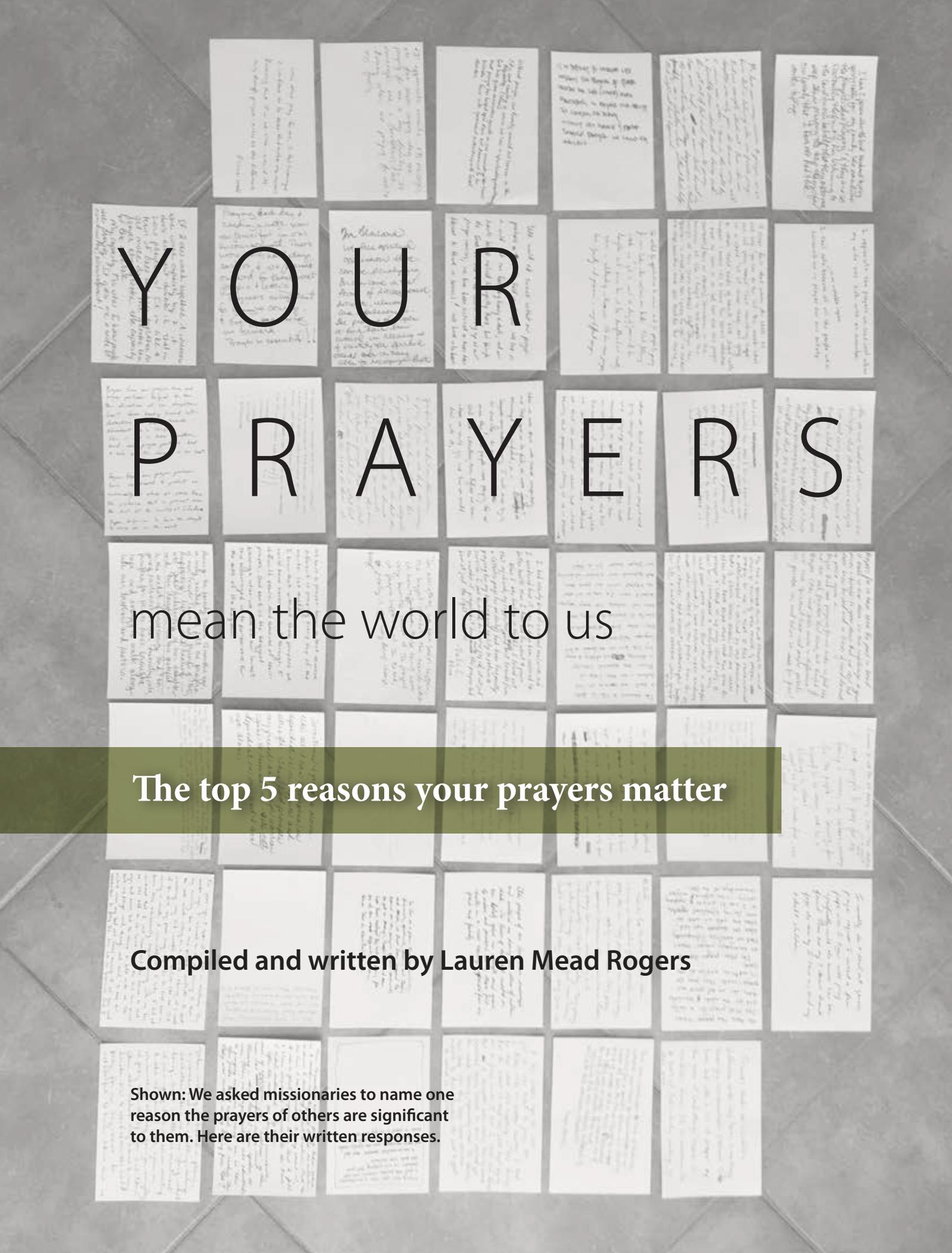
As we watched, something shifted in Leslie. She began to connect with parts of herself from which she had cut herself off. Hard and cold places in her heart seemed to soften and melt before our eyes. Broken cords began to vibrate. There was richer color in her face, and a deeper joy in her eyes. Leslie experienced God’s love flowing into places of her heart and soul and yes, even her body, that she had never experienced before. The Lord was surely in our midst, and we could only praise and thank Him for what he was doing for His beloved child.

Preparing for mission

As you prepare for mission, or as you seek to be renewed and sustained in the work of mission, do you need a fresh inflow from the fountain of God’s sending love? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any areas of self-hatred and self-rejection that are blocking that flow. Where is your voice contradicting the voice of the Beloved? Turn away and repent of those things. Ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to love yourself and those parts of yourself as God loves you. The Father calls you His beloved. It’s time for you to call yourself “beloved” too. Believe the truth about yourself. Receive His love for you. Invite the Holy Spirit to pour God’s love in your heart (Rom 5:5).

That’s where mission always begins and is renewed. Before you can have God’s loving heart for others, you must have His loving heart for you.

Stephen Seamands is professor of Christian doctrine at Asbury Theological Seminary. He has authored six books and frequently leads retreats and seminars on such issues as emotional healing and spiritual renewal. Some of the material included in this article will appear in a forthcoming book published by Seedbed. Dr. Seamands’ childhood years were spent on the mission field in India, where his family served for 16 years.



YOUR PRAYERS

mean the world to us

The top 5 reasons your prayers matter

Compiled and written by Lauren Mead Rogers

Shown: We asked missionaries to name one reason the prayers of others are significant to them. Here are their written responses.

The top 5 reasons

YOUR PRAYERS MATTER

At a recent event, we asked missionaries to name one reason why the prayers of others are significant to them. The question struck a nerve. Their responses, which tended to fall into five categories, painted a picture of a community in need of people who pray. If you find yourself saying, "All I can do is pray," don't miss this article—and commit to find your place through prayer.

1 Safety

So many Mission Society missionaries live and work in unstable countries. Some countries manifest a political climate that is dangerous for Christians. In these places, your prayers help to open doors and provide favor with government authorities. Your prayers provide missionaries safety and security amidst civil unrest, knowing that they are shielded in love.

Health

One missionary nearly died of cerebral malaria less than a year ago. In questioning how it was that she feels better now than she has in the last four years, she learned that her church, those who support her, The Mission Society staff, and close friends prayed tirelessly for healing. Another family returning home from the hospital with their newborn after a difficult delivery found their inbox flooded with prayers stamped with the time of the exact moments when mother and child were in the greatest danger. "We were so overwhelmed at how God preserved our baby's life and so comforted by the presence of the people with us."

2

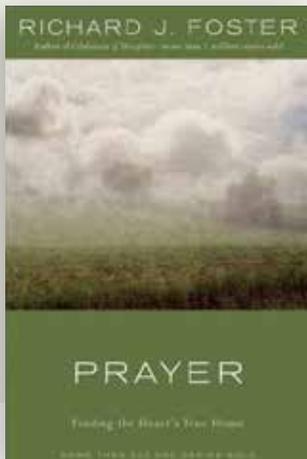
3 Culture Shock

The first months, even years, in a new country can be beyond difficult. "The Holy Spirit sustains us, even when we feel we are running dry, separated from friends and family," writes one missionary. Your prayers give them the courage to endure—and peace that keeps homesickness at bay.

Your prayers do so much

"Your prayers have sustained us, strengthened us, empowered us, and kept us safe and healthy in the presence of God. Your prayers have opened closed doors, and paved the way upon which God is leading us. Your prayers mean the world to us."

Find your place through prayer



For your 2016 reading

Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home

By Richard Foster

Best-selling author Richard J. Foster offers a warm, compelling, and sensitive primer on prayer. He clarifies the prayer process, answers common misconceptions, and shows the way into prayers of contemplation, healing, blessing, forgiveness, and rest.

Coming to prayer is like coming home, Foster says. "Nothing feels more right, more like what we are created to be and to do."

One reviewer writes, "Foster does not

merely talk of prayer in this book. Each page seeps with insights that can only come by living a life of prayer."

Foster shows how prayer can move us inward into personal transformation, upward toward intimacy with God, and outward to minister to others. He leads us beyond questions to a deeper understanding and practice of prayer, bringing us closer to God, to ourselves, and to our community.

Spiritual Protection

"We feel how close God is when they pray," is how one missionary expressed the importance of prayer in the face of spiritual warfare. Least-reached areas can feel heavy, dark, and hopeless without a community of believers to surround you. But your prayers are critical, helping to thwart spiritual attacks and enable workers to recognize the power of Christ in and around them.

4

Encouragement

As with the experience of culture shock, living overseas can feel isolating. Prayers create encouragement and community. "It is the knowledge that people back home are praying for us that reminds us that we are not alone or forgotten."

5



Lauren Mead Rogers is The Mission Society's donor administration coordinator and is pursuing her master's in public administration.

"I felt like a failure"

The next time you wonder if your prayers matter, consider the words of this missionary.

"Two years ago, I spoke at a Global Impact Celebration in Alabama. Two months ago, I returned to the US after leaving my ministry due to very painful conflicts. I spent the next month wondering why God wanted a failure like me. Out of the blue, my phone rang. A lady I did not know very well began sharing with me her excitement that I was home and her desire to meet me. She told me she had heard me at the Global Impact Celebration two years before, but had never had the chance to talk to me. She had taken my prayer card, though, and said, 'I keep your picture near my bed, and every morning I see you and I remember to pray for you. You are so precious, and I know God's hand is on you. I pray every day for Him to walk with you!' She spoke life into me. Her daily prayers were powerful in God providing me strength when I fell. Her prayers, the prayers of a stranger, were a mantle of protection in my moments of weakness."

SERVING

Finding your place, when your place seems

Unclear



The tale of a sometimes-hazy call that would take a Midwestern family to South Asia

David* and I had been working in youth ministry for about 15 years, which is what we assumed we would do “forever.” I served as a licensed local pastor for 12 of those years, and he taught middle school math for almost 8 years. I started to feel that God was leading us out of youth ministry and into missions several years before we accepted our call as missionaries. My passion for youth ministry was beginning to wane, and I was really struggling with these feelings.

Callings differed.

When I first shared them with David, he was very resistant. He told me he was doing what he was called to do. If I wanted to do something different, he said, I would have to make the same salary and in the same city, because he wasn't going anywhere or changing anything.

Then came counsel.

After that conversation, I spoke to my senior pastor. Very supportive, he suggested that we change my job description to reflect this shift in calling.

I also spoke to significant spiritual mentors in my life. God spoke to me through them, affirming our call to missions, yet telling me not to go looking for doors to walk through—that everything would happen in His time.

So I worked with my senior pastor to change my job description to an administrative role in youth ministry while creating a position for me as the missions pastor of our church. After remaining in this role for a year, I broke down in front of David. I told him I could not continue like this anymore. But this time his response was much different.

Hearts united.

God had been working on his heart to unite our hearts for the work He had planned for us. I stepped away from youth ministry completely in October 2012, and two weeks later I led a vision trip to Ethiopia to visit church ministry partners.

When I got back from the trip, David sat me down and told me God had spoken to him, and he was ready to start exploring a call to missions. He said he had been praying for three years that God would change my heart or his. Now our hearts were united.

Then, came confusion.

We began looking into mission agencies and exploring opportunities to serve in Ethiopia. We were certain that Ethiopia was where we would end up. We had adopted our daughter from Ethiopia and our church had been ministering there for years. So we had a strong love

and burden for that country.

We explored many agencies but didn't feel like any were a great fit. We even considered trying to go to Ethiopia on our own.

Thoughts kept resurfacing.

The Mission Society kept coming up in our hearts and conversations with others. When we were still considering which agency would be best, my parents came to our house for a visit. They didn't know what we had been struggling with, but my mom handed me a folder from The Mission Society and said she thought we might want to work with this agency.

Don't go looking for doors to walk through. Everything will happen in His time.

For those who want clarity

A word from Mother Teresa (and Brennan Manning)

When the brilliant ethicist John Kavanaugh went to work for three months at the “house of the dying” in Calcutta, he was seeking a clear answer as to how best to spend the rest of his life. On the first morning there he met Mother Teresa. She asked, “And what can I do for you?” Kavanaugh asked her to pray for him.

“What do you want me to pray for?” she asked. He voiced the request that he had borne thousands of miles from the United States. “Pray that I have clarity.”

She said firmly, “No, I will not do that.” When he asked her why, she said, “Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of.” When Kavanaugh commented that she always seemed to have the clarity he longed for, she laughed and said, “I have never had clarity, what I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God.”

—*From Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin’s Path to God, by Brennan Manning*

Confirmation!

We received that as confirmation from God and began the process to apply with The Mission Society. We attended the March 2013 candidate event and were blown away by the way God confirmed our call. David, who had been struggling with tremendous fear after the initial excitement wore off, received a word from God in Psalm 34:4, “I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears.” (NIV)

From that day forward, he never again struggled with fear.

Discouragement came.

We returned to The Mission Society in May 2013 for more training and started fundraising. I felt really discouraged, though, because we didn’t have any real direction regarding our placement. Things were not working out, and no doors were opening for us in Ethiopia.

“We are doing so many things we had no idea we would be doing, and it’s all so much better than we could have envisioned.”

Counsel came.

After this training, we received a call from The Mission Society headquarters about a couple who would be serving in South Asia and who shared our same vision and passion. We Skyped with them and had a great conversation. We decided to spend a few extra days in South Asia after The Mission Society training to spend time getting to know this couple and their ministry.

Before leaving for our training in South Asia, I had another conversation with one of my spiritual mentors and again God spoke to me through them. He said that adopting our daughter from Ethiopia had fulfilled our love for that country, because God had other plans for us. That was hard to hear, but I received it.

Then came certainty.

Our time with them was great, and our entire month in South Asia opened our eyes and confirmed for us that this was indeed where God was leading us. We were so certain of this leading that, even after that couple called us to tell us they were returning to the US, we held firmly to what God had put in our hearts.

Our funding came in very quickly. We were at 60 percent of our target budget after only two months of fundraising. We stepped away from our jobs, sold our house and car, put a few keepsakes in storage in our friend’s basement, and

were house-hopping by the end of 2013. After more training, fundraising, and getting everything in order, we departed for South Asia in May 2014.

After six months at a language school in one city, our plan was to relocate to another city.

Then came uncertainty.

While at language school, we learned that two other missionary couples would be leaving from the city where we anticipated serving. This shook us for a while and caused us to even question if this were indeed where we were supposed to be.

But after visiting the new city to prayerfully consider this question and to search for housing, God gave us peace.

We decided to trust.

While we visited this new city, He reminded us that we did not need to be like waves tossed in the ocean by doubt, but that we needed to trust Him and hold tightly to the plan

Listening to God

How can we discern God's guidance? Dallas Willard and James Dobson offer advice.

James Dobson has given some of the best practical advice I have ever heard on how someone who really wants the will of God and who has a basically correct understanding of how it should proceed. Describing he does it himself, he says, "I get down on my knees and say, 'Lord, I need to know what you want me to do, and I am listening. Please speak to me through my friends, books, magazines I pick up and read, and through circumstances.'"

The simplicity of this should not mislead us.

When we are in a proper, well-functioning relationship with God, this is exactly what we are to do. And then we are, as Dobson says, to *listen*. This means that we should pay a special kind of attention both to what is going on within us and to our surrounding circumstances.

—**from Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*, p 199.**

***James Dobson, "The Will of God," radio broadcast (December 3, 1982).**

He had already given us. Two months later, we returned to settle in and begin our work there.

We had some fabulous training while at language school about how to use business to help make disciples. We are currently working on learning language, building relationships in our community, and opening a construction business.

Finally, came clear vision.

In so many ways, we are not doing what we thought we would be doing when we first agreed to explore this call to missions. We are not in the country we thought we would be. We are not working with any of the people with whom we thought we would work. We aren't even opening the business we thought we would open. But God is so good. We are doing so many things we had no idea we would be doing, and it's all so much better than we could have envisioned.

This calling has truly not been just for us as adults, but for our entire family. Our children love living in South Asia, and they see this as their call too. That is important to us. We are building true and meaningful relationships with so many precious people who don't know the good news of Jesus Christ. And, we have a clear vision for how we can use our gifts and our business to make disciples and to bless our community.

David and Amy Hunter* are launching a business in South Asia, where they have served since May 2014. If you sense God's leading you to find your place through cross-cultural ministry, see pages 18 and 19.

What you should know if you are called to serve

"If you sense a call to serve as a missionary, hold tightly to God and loosely to your own plans," say the Hunters. "Trust God to make every step clear as you walk with Him and follow His lead. The road ahead is difficult and often lonely, so being confident of your call and God's leading is essential. Also, get as much training now as you can. We value every bit of training we received from The Mission Society, Mission Training Institute, and other resources. It doesn't keep you from experiencing hard times, but it does enable you to stand strong and persevere. We praise God for the call He has on our lives. We are incredibly blessed by the overwhelming support that we receive from our family, our friends, and The Mission Society."

Because of you

180 missionaries offer Christ in 35 countries. Thank you!

The Mission Society connects those called to cross-cultural ministry with areas of need in the world.

We'll help you find your place.

Introducing The Mission Society's new terms of service—tailored to fit your calling



GREENLIGHT: GATEWAY

GreenLight: Gateway gives young adults ages 18-23 the go-ahead to explore ministry, culture, and calling. This unique, six-week experience includes two weeks of training. You will join a group of 5-10, led by a mentor who will help you explore what it looks like to live, work, and do ministry cross-culturally. See details below about an opportunity this summer.

Join us in India! Opportunity for summer 2016

- Opportunities available for up to seven people.
- Approximate dates June 22 – Aug 2, 2016.
- Approximate cost is \$3,300. (Could vary, according to airfare.)

The Mission Society currently has the following opportunity available for those interested in the GreenLight: Gateway program.

Participate in two weeks of immersion training to live and share the gospel across cultures. You will train along-

side other North Americans preparing for missions, Indian missionaries, and Indian students.

Afterwards, spend four weeks in North India's tea country alongside a ministry reaching out to young adults through a coffee-shop business. Experience living in community cross-culturally with fellow GreenLighters and the team leader, an experienced missionary.



COLAB

CoLab is an opportunity for growing leaders ages 22-35 to be mentored within a team setting for two years, incorporating practical cross-cultural ministry skills, spiritual formation, and personal experience. The first CoLab teams will be formed in North India, South Africa, and Spain under the leadership of seasoned Mission Society missionaries with gifts and skills for team leading.



COWORK

CoWork matches your job skills and calling to cross-cultural ministry with a Mission Society team or project. This two-year term is ideal for those with some life and vocational experience that can strengthen long-term ministry and teams.



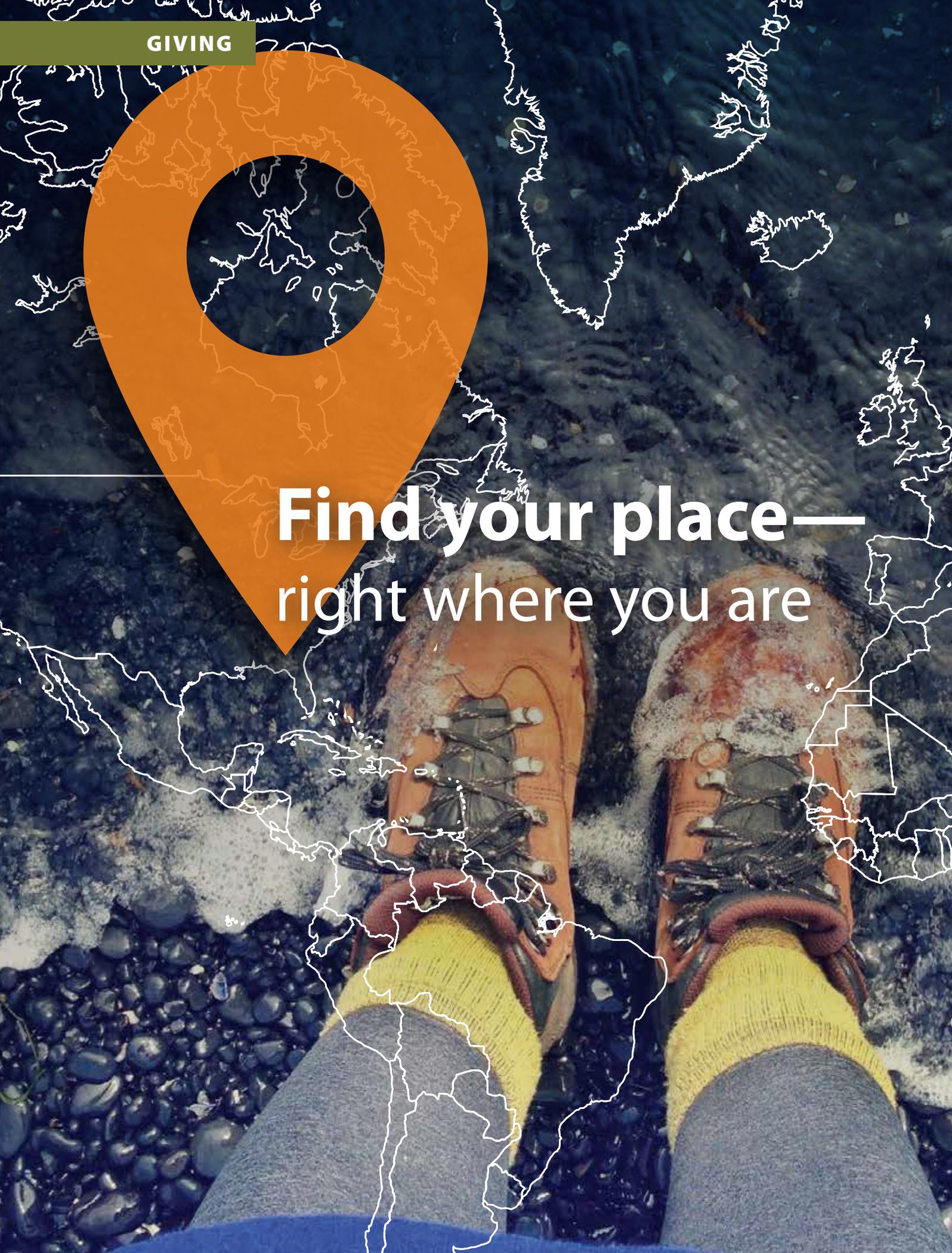
CORE

Core is a commitment to a four-year term, joining Mission Society teams and/or national partners in focused and strategic ministry. The minimum age for applying is 21.



Ready to get started? Visit www.themissionsociety.org and complete a no-obligation interest form, or call us at 800.478.8963.

GIVING



**Find your place—
right where you are**

Just say yes.

You hear it all the time. Nod when God calls—even if all seems outlandish. It will all work out. But is that true? If you've been wondering about that, this dentist's story might be for you.

By Betsy Phillips

How could God use me in a fulltime ministry position that has nothing to do with my training or profession? I'm a dentist. That was the question Marsha Mullett asked herself when her pastor offered her the opportunity to serve as director of missions at her Clearwater, Florida church.

It wasn't like missions wasn't already on her radar screen. In fact, she and her husband, Dan, also a dentist, had been pursuing missions since their days in dental school. In addition, Marsha had served on many mission teams—internationally and nationally—with the church youth group.

But now the Mulletts' pastor was casting a vision—that their church not just be one with a mission committee, but a church that would be truly missional. To lead that effort, he called on Marsha (who had earlier sold her dentistry practice due to injuries sustained in a car accident). This would be a fulltime, unpaid position, but the Mission Society would be a resource for her, her pastor suggested.

Find your place in this day

"The only opportunity you will ever have to live by faith is in the circumstances you are provided this very day: this house you live in, this family you find yourself in, this job you have been given, the weather conditions that prevail at the ...moment."

—Eugene H. Peterson



Living missionally

Top left: The Mulletts were always passionate about missions. But after a Global Outreach Weekend, their interest intensified. That was the beginning of a journey that continues.

Top right: Marsha, who suddenly found herself serving in a ministry position she never expected, would organize many short-term mission teams. In Zambia, a team from two Florida churches helped to host a “Holy Spirit Encounter.” An annual event begun by Florida missionaries to Zambia, the Holy Spirit Encounter is a time of refreshment and training for Zambian pastors and church leaders. “About 200 participants traveled for days on public transportation to attend this four-day event,” Marsha remembers. The focus was reaching the uttermost parts of their country for Christ.

Bottom: Global Impact Celebrations are still held annually at Heritage United Methodist Church to celebrate the mission impact of the church and to cast a renewed vision for members to become personally involved.

God’s show of strength

So despite her feeling inadequate, Marsha said yes. She organized a Global Outreach Weekend. And then, with further training from The Mission Society, she and her mission team of Heritage United Methodist Church (HUMC) developed a Global Outreach Plan. Soon, HUMC would extend its mission reach by partnering with missionaries serving nationally and internationally—and with eight local mission organizations.

For the next five years, Marsha recruited, trained, and led numerous short-term mission teams, including teams who would serve in Haiti, Cost Rica, Zambia, India, and Brazil, and in other national and local areas. Under her leadership, HUMC hosted its first Global Impact Celebration, which now has become an annual event.

“It is amazing to see how God can use us just as we are,” says Marsha. She tells how those five years in a ministry

“Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”
—Jer 39:13 (NIV)

position led her to rely completely on the Holy Spirit every day. She knew she couldn’t do it; God showed His strength through her weakness. So much was accomplished.

Then you will call on Me

Dan continues to touch the lives of those he interacts with in his practice in Clearwater—which he sees as a mission field right before him. His priorities each day are to be present to the activity of God and to listen to His guidance. Joshua 1:9 reminds him of God’s faithfulness to be with him in meeting life’s challenges, whether sharing Christ in his practice, at home, or traveling around the world. (“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” NIV)

Together with their three sons, the Mulletts are very engaged in missions. As they’ve sought to make an impact on

others, Marsha and Dan have been surprised to find that they themselves are also transformed. Marsha's life verse is Jeremiah 29:11-13, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." (NIV)

As she encourages others to find their place in missions, Marsha insists that God's plan is always the best. "If God calls you to missions, either through giving or going, He will not leave you alone until you obey. And if you obey and say, 'yes,' He will provide everything you need to give or to go, overcoming every obstacle you may think is in your way. Just watch the miracles happen!"

After having served for 20 years in Latin America with The Mission Society and World Gospel Mission, Len and Betsy Phillips now serve on The Mission Society's Global Resource Team.

Find your place as a ministry partner

In 2012, Marsha was invited to share her story at a Mission Society event. It was an inspiring event, she remembers. "All the ways The Mission Society is involved in missions and in the lives of missionaries became evident to us. We wanted to be a part of that!"

Since that time, Marsha and Dan have attended annual Mission Society events and have generously partnered with The Mission Society in reaching the world for Christ. They join thousands of others, like you, who are making Jesus known. Thank you for being part of this worldwide network of believers. People in places all over the world know Him today because of you.

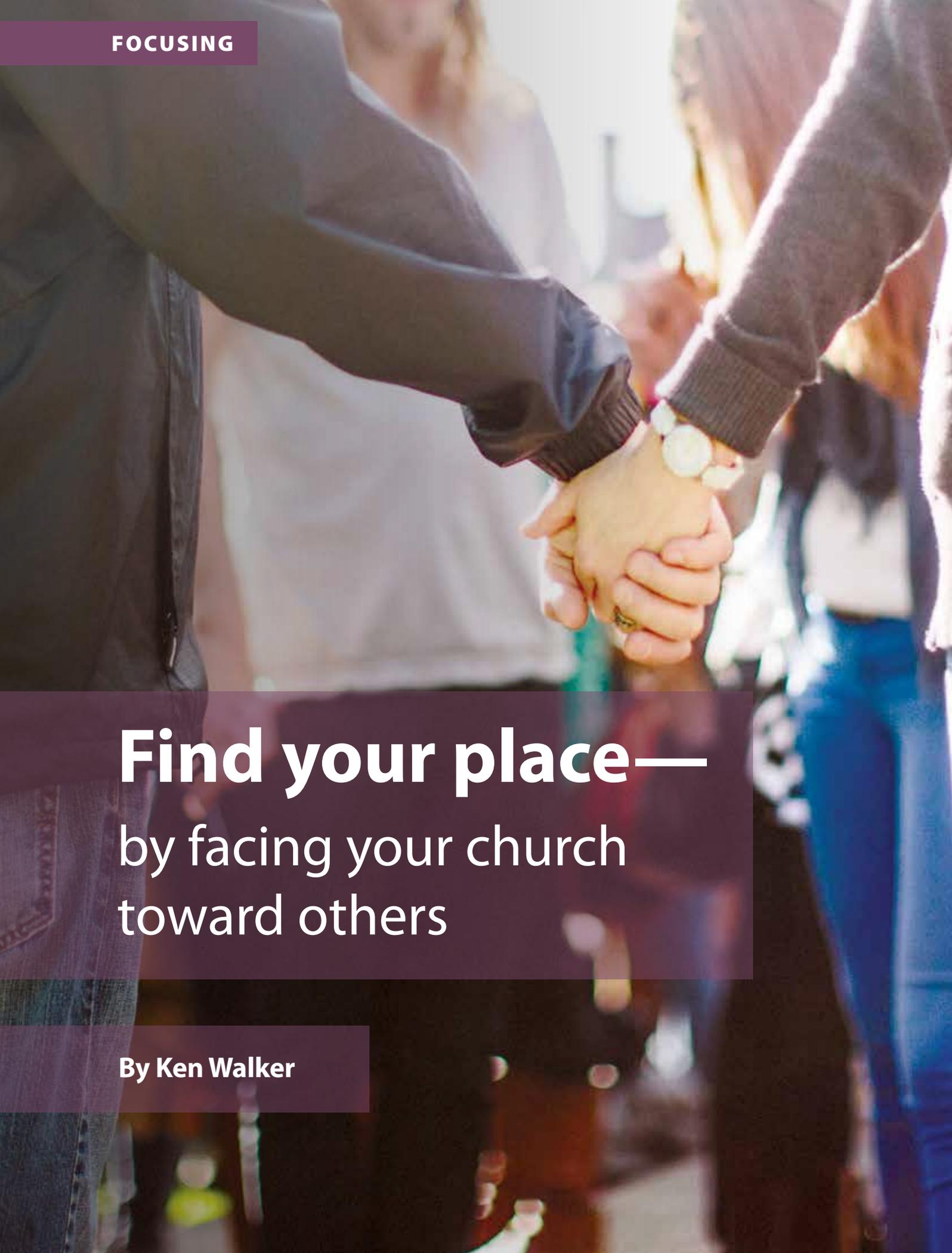


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twice as far

All gifts to The Mission Society's global mission fund given before December 31 will be matched by our board, up to \$155,000.

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FOCUSING



Find your place—
by facing your church
toward others

By Ken Walker

In 2013, author Thom S. Rainer itemized 11 things that he had learned from an in-depth look at a dying church. Most of the signs of the impending death he described had to do with the church's becoming inwardly focused.

Central United Protestant Church in Richland, Washington, shows a different way. Being outwardly focused is how it and its people have discovered their unique place. This church's focus on missions is, says one member, how "everyone finds how they can be used of God."

This is a story of how the transformation happened— and how this West Coast congregation found help through The Mission Society.

Central United Protestant Church's long-standing missions program included an initiative started more than 30 years ago that helped build seven churches in Kenya and later launched a university.

Yet, until it partnered with The Mission Society and began hosting annual Global Impact Celebrations (GIC), missional living didn't occupy center stage at the Richland, Washington church. Today, Central United Protestant devotes nearly 10 percent of its budget to missions, while members do everything from traveling overseas to packing back-to-school goodie bags for students at the University of Idaho.

The GIC is one of the best "catalytic converters" churches can choose to help deepen and expand missional living and learning, says longtime Pastor David Parker.

Although Central United Protestant (CUP) had a missions program, GIC helped energize it and elevate it to the top of members' awareness, Julie McDonald says.

"Our vision is that everyone gets involved," says McDonald, the elected director of the Central Outreach Ministry that oversees CUP's multifaceted missions endeavors. "Everyone in the church has something they can do to participate. That has been elevated through meeting with missionaries and hearing all the stories about what God is doing through them."



Above: Central Church's congregation packs World Vision hygiene kits during the annual Global Impact Celebration.

When Mike Caron and his wife, Suzanne, joined Central in 2005, they sensed an inwardly-focused congregation with little vision for more involvement with existing international mission partners. National missions weren't even on the radar screen and local outreach was limited to a few individuals, he says.

"That has all changed," says the retired geologist, who over the past six years has been on six international mission trips. "In retrospect, this was clearly due to the leading and working of the Holy Spirit as we had certainly not changed."

An evangelical church with roots in The United Methodist Church, Central United launched its first GIC in 2009. This was two years after former Mission Society president Dick McClain led a seminar at CUP to introduce the missional concept to the church.

Marilyn Robinson, part of the group that brought McClain in for coaching sessions prior to the first GIC, also directed planning for the second conference. Interacting with missionaries touches people's hearts, she says, challenges thinking and priorities, and helps everyone learn from each other.

"The impact on Central Church has been enormous," Robinson says. "Our outreach faith has been greatly and wonderfully enlarged and strengthened."

"Now seniors, instead of just having a monthly potluck, have adopted missional projects they support."

Missional lifestyle

The origins of GIC at the Richland church go back a decade, when several members heard a Mission Society representative speak at another church. Parker recalls being "riveted" as then-vice president Rick Roberts described how this emphasis could help a congregation develop a missional focus.

That led to another trip to a seminar in Spokane. After hearing McClain speak, leaders decided to contract with The Mission Society for a year of coaching.

"We decided we were going to do that," Parker says. "McClain was careful to define 'global' as across the street and around the world. He emphasized that churches have a balanced approach."

Today, CUP's annual GICs are held the last weekend of February. These events continue the church's mission and vision; offer members the opportunity to volunteer with or pledge to missions; and emphasize the integration of missions into every church program.

"Every department must discover how they will incorporate missions into their program—missions, discipleship, evangelism, small groups," the pastor says. "Children and youth do projects. Now seniors, instead of just having a monthly potluck, have adopted missional projects they support."

To fulfill the Acts 1:8 directive to take the gospel into its

“Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth,” CUP established three mission teams focused on local, national, and international projects.

The current roster includes 15 local mission projects, three national—defined as anywhere beyond the Richland area—and nine international. CUP members participate in five-to-ten mission projects annually. They also give \$120,000 a year to missions.

“That’s a bit much for a church our size,” Parker says of the 800-member church. “But we have generous people. Every year we try to create mission trips, projects, and opportunities.”

Among its local projects are Habitat for Humanity, Second Harvest, a food bank, a free medical clinic, a crisis pregnancy center, and a Teen Challenge center in a neighboring community. The church’s Martha’s Cupboard has “gone viral” in the Richland area, Parker says. It provides household goods, toiletries and items like backpacks and school supplies that can’t be purchased with food stamps.

One of CUP’s favorite national projects is sending mission teams to downtown Portland, Oregon. There the Bridgetown Ministry hosts “Night Strike” every Thursday. Services available to the homeless then include food distribution, foot washing, haircuts, a mobile medical clinic, and other services.

Patty Hubbard, co-chair of the national outreach team, took her first mission trip to Portland two years ago for a youth-group-oriented “Transformation” week. Her teenage son was part of the team, whose immersive experience included living as a homeless person for a day and sleeping on a concrete floor.

In the past, the writer and editor for a science laboratory never thought of herself as an evangelist, which is how she defined “missionary.” Today, Hubbard sees herself as part of Christ’s hands and feet.

“I think the key to that is realizing it’s not about being an evangelist,” Hubbard says. “It’s about using the stories in your life to share with others appropriately so they know they’re not alone—and that God has a great plan for each of us. It’s about relationships. If you’re not in relationship, you’re going it alone. God doesn’t want us going it alone.”

Unexpected benefits

The church supports nine international missionaries with \$5,000 apiece in annual financial supports and also sends teams to various places, with a group slated to travel to Kenya again this year.

Last April it sent a 14-member group to Copper Canyon, Mexico. The volunteers built and furnished two apartments in a building that houses teachers at a boarding school for poor children in the mountainous region. The team will return

Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 11 Things I Learned

1. The church refused to look like the community.
2. The church had no community-focused ministries.
3. Members became more focused on memorials.
4. The percentage of the budget for members’ needs kept increasing.
5. There were no evangelistic emphases.
6. The members had more and more arguments about what they wanted.
7. With few exceptions, pastoral tenure grew shorter and shorter.
8. The church rarely prayed together. Prayers were always limited to members, their friends and families, and their physical needs.
9. The church had no clarity as to why it existed.
10. The members idolized another era.
11. The facilities continued to deteriorate. (The members no longer had “outsider eyes.”)

This is abbreviated from an online article by Thom S. Rainer, author of Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive



After a missionary to Mexico spoke at CUP's Global Impact Celebration, church members were inspired to get involved. So last April, the church sent a team to minister among an impoverished Tarahumara community in remote Copper Canyon area of northern Mexico. Another team will go next spring.



Last May Lanning and her husband, Don, joined four other people for a trip to Kenya, where they encouraged members from four of the churches CUP helped build in years past. Among the outgrowth of those efforts was the founding of Kenya Methodist University in 2000; the school now operates independently.

"I think it puts the heart of the gospel into the heart of each person," Lanning says of how adopting a missional outlook can benefit other churches. "We say there are 'goers' and 'senders.' The ratio is about 9:1; it takes nine senders for every goer. Participation makes people come alive, putting their faith into the tracks."

And although the church expected increased financial giving and more active participation from its involvement in GIC, Pastor Parker says they didn't expect other benefits that accrued from its celebrations.

"I think this was a rekindling of a long past story of great mission work in Kenya, but this new work has broadened the scope of our portfolio and diversified our reach," Parker says. "We didn't necessarily expect our church's reputation in the community to be so enhanced in the sight of many mission agencies. They see us as a 'tarmac' body, with boots on the ground."

This February's GIC, the theme of which is "Generation to Generation," marks McDonald's third year for coordinating the event.

"We find that God has a place for all of us in how He calls us," Julie says. "It helps people find their talents and skills, be inspired in their own journey, and step out of their comfort zone. Everyone finds how they can be used of God." †

Ken Walker is a freelance writer and book editor from Huntington, West Virginia. He has co-authored, edited or contributed to more than three dozen books, and written more than 3,700 magazine, web site, and newspaper articles.

next spring to finish two more apartments.

This emphasis originated with a GIC where a missionary from Mexico spoke with such passion and directness, it inspired formation of the first team. Hubbard was among those he touched; when she mentioned her desire to go, several other members said they had it too.

"It put chills up and down my spine," Hubbard says. "It was like a fire was lit; our theme that year was 'Catching Fire.' I literally felt the Holy Spirit's fire moving through the church that weekend."

Barb Lanning, longtime missions participant and director of the international team for several years, says the church has sponsored about 40 mission trips since two people traveled to Louisiana to help with Hurricane Katrina relief a decade ago.

She took her first international trip to the Philippines in 2013 as part of a 10-member team that came from around the US. The group spent two weeks in Manila and an area north of the city.

What happened at Central United Protestant Church can happen at yours

God's primary agent for missions is the local church—your church. At The Mission Society, it's our privilege to walk with congregations as they come alive to their unique calling in God's mission. If you would like to know more about how your church can strategically and intentionally engage in outreach, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org or call us at **800.478.8963**. We are here to help you.

The Mission Society's Global Outreach Process

Step 1: Global Outreach Workshop

The Global Outreach Workshop is a 6.5-hour instructor-led, interactive teaching session interspersed with video segments. The workshop brings a deeper understanding of the biblical basis of global missions, a greater awareness of the world, and a challenge to greater involvement in outreach.

Step 2: Global Outreach Plan

The specifics of the plan are developed by the local church's mission team, assisted by guidance provided by a Mission Society coach.

Step 3: Global Impact Celebration

A Global Impact Celebration (GIC) is an annual event designed to celebrate the outreach ministries of the local church while casting a greater vision and challenge for global outreach and involvement. The Mission Society team guides your church leaders step-by-step in the organizing of this event. For many congregations, the GIC has become the primary mobilization tool for both people and funding for the outreach of the church.

Step 4: Global Mission Engagement

Global Mission Engagement is the goal of this process—that the local church be actively engaged in its work of fulfilling the command of Jesus found in Acts 1:8 to be His witnesses in their communities, regions, nations, and in the world.

Welcoming refugees

Mission Society missionary family travels 3,700-mile journey to help migrants in Europe

Mission Society missionaries Charlie and Miki Chastain and their three children serve in Estonia. Charlie works in the arts, and Miki coordinates a prayer center and leads healing prayer workshops.

While making plans to attend The Mission Society gathering in Albania (see page 2), news of the refugee crisis in Europe began to make headlines. “Miki and I felt very strongly that we needed to try to do something to help out. We decided, instead of flying, to drive from Estonia to Albania, because that route basically goes straight through the heart of all of the refugee migration heading toward Western Europe,” said Charlie.

The Chastains loaded up their mini-van and drove the roughly 3,700 miles to Albania and back. Donations from individuals and churches from eight countries provided the funds for Charlie and Miki to purchase blankets, clothes, food, and heaters to distribute.

“We stopped in Belgrade, Serbia, near the main train station. A lot of refugees were in the parks there. One German organization was set up to assist refugees, so we just asked, ‘How can we help?’ They were in need of bread, so my daughter and I walked from bakery to bakery and bought as much bread as we could,” said Charlie.

“We traveled on to Preshevo, near the Macedonian border, where there were 8,000 refugees waiting for a bus to take them to Croatia. Ten thousand more refugees were expected to arrive that same night.”

Because buses are not allowed to transport refugees across international

borders, refugees are let out at the Serbian-Macedonian border. They then have to walk seven kilometers to a camp. Once they have been registered at the camp, they walk 15 kilometers to another bus stop. The children are either being carried or having to walk with their parents, who are also carrying all of their supplies.

“When we were in Preshevo,” remember the Chastains, “it was cold and pouring rain. When everyone got off of the bus, they had to walk through the mud and rain to get to the camp. We saw children without shoes, families sleeping under storefronts, and everyone was soaking wet.”

Charlie said, “One of the volunteer coordinators in Belgrade asked me, ‘Why are you doing this?’ I looked at him and said, ‘Well, why are you doing this?’ He said, ‘Because I believe that God is alive.’ I said, ‘That’s my answer, too, my friend.’”

“A lot of talk in mission circles is the importance of trying to reach least-reached peoples. Most of the time that means trying to reach those who live



Jedediah Smith/Genesis Photos

in Asian or Muslim contexts. But for those of us who are working in Europe, the least reached are coming to us. We would love nothing more than the opportunity to show Christ’s love to them.”

How you can help

To help refugees, prayer is essential, says Charlie. “My prayer has been ‘Lord, show me how You love them, and help me to love them in the same manner in which You would.’”

You can give to help the Middle East and Europe Refugee Crisis through The Mission Society. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/o5yujus>.

All proceeds go to missionaries working directly with refugees in the Middle East and Europe.

Raise up disciple-makers in your congregation

Ministry consultants are available to mentor your church

The Rev. Denny and Cindy Heiberg are ministry resource consultants with The Mission Society. They come alongside pastors and church leaders

to assist them with practical training to mobilize their churches to become disciple-making congregations. To learn more about how this training could happen at your church, you may email Denny Heiberg at dch2tim2.2@gmail.com.

The Rev. Denny Heiberg and his wife, Cindy, train pastors, missionaries, and church leaders in making disciples. Prior to his work with The Mission Society, Denny served for 22 years in the pastorate in The United Methodist Church.



Find your place

Cross-cultural ministry opportunities are available now



India

Bring your administrative or finance training and join a team of social entrepreneurs in India.

Work with two couples to develop a business that provides jobs and economic opportunities. In an impoverished Muslim area, build relationships that open the door for communicating the gospel.



Germany

Assist a growing international church in Hamburg as an administrator. Hamburg International Church

is a melting pot of people from five continents. Use your gifts as an administrator to help this church grow.



Ghana

Join a one-year storytelling or evangelism team in Ghana. You will join or create a team of 2-4 to

train in storying the gospel in six villages in Northern Ghana, where most people are illiterate. One couple or two single men can also join Ghanaian evangelists as a traveling team in Western Ghana.



Ecuador

Join a team working among unreached peoples in remote

Ecuador. Help plant a church that expresses the culture of the people in their unique style of worship.

CoLab: A two-year, mentoring experience

In two years, you will integrate culture and language learning with hands-on experience to create a collaborative project that will contribute to your team's long-term goals. #CoLab is a unique way for growing leaders to join Jesus in His mission. For more information, see page 19.

CoLab - North India

Help start and run a coffeehouse to reach youth in North India with #CoLab. You will work with a family to establish a coffee business, which will also serve as an outreach to young musicians in Northern India.



CoLab - South Africa

Join a couple in South Africa who serve among a diverse population, working in youth ministry, elementary education, and micro-finance. Dive into South Africa with this unique #CoLab opportunity.



CoLab - Spain

Work on a multicultural team planting churches in an unreached region of Spain with #CoLab. Join a local church developing cell groups and discipling new believers and seekers.

They are on their way!

Keri Ward – Costa Rica

(August 2015)

Keri joined a Mission Society team in Costa Rica who serve others through acts of radical hospitality.

Unnamed missionary family – India

(July 2015)

This family ministers to college students and leads discipleship groups with people from Hindu and Muslim backgrounds.

Carolyn Goodwin – South Sudan

(October 2015)

Carolyn, a registered nurse, serves with a Mission Society team in South Sudan. She provides training for hospital staff and people in the community, increasing their degree of overall health. Her position helps her form discipling relationships with the South Sudanese people.

For more information on these and other opportunities, see www.themissionsociety.org/how-could-you-serve.



Find your place on the globe

In a world of enormous needs, how can missionaries determine where they will serve? If you are considering full-time mission service, don't miss this article.



Years ago, The Mission Society identified three general pathways to discern placement for missionaries. But with so many believers now scattered around the globe, there emerges another way of “placing” missionaries—by equipping those already living in a cross-cultural context.

Let's say you are called to serve as a long-term missionary. Once you start telling people, the first question you will hear is, “Where will you serve?” followed by “What will you do?” Hefty questions.

It is a big world out there! The needs and opportunities are immense, so the process of determining where and how a person will serve can seem overwhelming.

At The Mission Society, placement is a process that involves a conversation between the missionary candidate, our leadership, and people in the potential receiving locations, all covered in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to grant discernment. We don't simply assign people to a “mission station,” telling them, “Take it or leave it.” We work to be sure it is a good fit for the missionaries and that the location and the focus is in alignment with the mission we perceive that God has given us as an organization.

Some years ago, my colleague Frank Decker identified three ways a new Mission Society ministry location is deter-

mined: Macedonian Call, Providential Circumstances, Needs Analysis. These categories, plus a fourth I have added, figure into the process of discerning a missionary's placement.

For missionaries who go

The phrase “**Macedonian Call**” refers to the dream Paul had of a Macedonian urging the apostle to come preach the gospel to the Macedonian people (Acts 16:9-10). In the same way, The Mission Society sometimes receives specific requests for personnel from indigenous leadership. For example, in a partnership we are developing in the country of Kosovo, the leader of a growing ministry there has a vision and had requested for workers to come alongside to assist. Several people have responded to that invitation and are serving—or soon will be serving—there. (Some of these people could not have placed Kosovo on a map just a few years ago.)

“**Providential Circumstances**” refers

to cases where people come to us often having already connected with a person or ministry in a particular place and have a strong sense of calling to serve there. In this case, we take time to learn about the ministry to see if it aligns with The Mission Society's mission and vision. Can we affirm this ministry's practices and its approaches to mission? Will the person desiring to serve there be able to thrive in ministry? In many cases, the answer is yes.

We have a couple serving in South Sudan who are an example of this. They had already made the connections with their ministry partner and asked if this vision would fit within the overall work of The Mission Society. After a process, we were able to affirm this direction.

In some cases, it works differently. Maybe the circumstances were simply used by God to get a person's attention and stir up a call to mission. But he or she may actually be better suited to serve elsewhere. For example, those



Among the world's seven billion people, an estimated two billion have no access to the gospel—no Bible in their language, no church in their culture, no Christian in their life.

How many is that? Just one billion is estimated to be double the population of North and South America combined.

who have gone on a short-term mission trip frequently come to us desiring to return to that same location to serve. Often we find that their desire to return there is simply because they have not been exposed to other possibilities.

“Needs Analysis” refers to times when mission research shows an area of great need, often with limited exposure to the gospel. In Romans 15:20, we see Paul apply this in his desire to preach where the gospel has not yet been preached. Our most recent application of this has resulted in several people serving in an area of Central Asia that has very little access to the gospel. We were made aware of the need in discus-

sions with leaders of another agency. Two from our leadership paid an exploratory visit to the area, and then we began seeking partners and contexts where we could send people.

For those already there

With recent attention given to believers scattered across the globe due to immigration, we might add a fourth category: “Diaspora Believers.” Think how in Acts 8, a scattering of the church due to persecution landed Philip in Samaria where he began to preach. Opportunities like these are on the increase as believers often find themselves living cross-culturally for various economic, social,

or political reasons. Already we have teachers in a couple places that would fit this “Diaspora Believers” category, and a young couple is preparing to go to a closed country, where the husband has secured a job as an engineer.

While these classifications help us identify common pathways by which we place missionaries, each individual has a unique story of how the Lord reveals his or her place in His mission. As one missionary said some years ago, “It’s our job to put our *yes* on the table; it’s God’s job to put it on the map!” †

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

Kazakh-what?! Never heard of it.

Sometimes God calls people to places unknown to them. Jim Ramsay tells his own story.

From day one of our relationship, my wife, Shawn, and I knew we were called into cross-cultural mission work. But the location was not clear. She had served in the Philippines for several weeks on a summer teen mission experience. I had interest in Eastern Europe.

When we came to The Mission Society, staff members simply worked with us through the discernment process. The first time they mentioned Kazakhstan, our response was, “Where is

it?” Those were pre-Google days, so it was quite a challenge to find out much about this country.

We explored other possibilities, but nothing worked out. Kazakhstan kept being put in front of us. So we prayed about it and began to feel a peace that that was where we should go, even though we had never been there. Interestingly, some months after making the decision to go, we realized that Kazakhstan is about halfway between Europe and Southeast Asia. The population at that time was about half Kazakh—an Asian people (to whom Shawn felt called), and half Russian—an Eastern European people (to whom I felt drawn).

We certainly found our place in Kazakhstan. The peace we experienced in the decision to go carried us through our 10 years there. And now nine years after our return to the States, the country and its people continue to occupy a place in our hearts.



The kingdom approach

The face of missions in your neighborhood is changing. If your church is struggling to find its place, these three simple questions can help you line up your efforts.



Mission fields are like golf courses. They are all different, and they are always changing. Think about your own community. Situations, needs, and even people have changed, creating the need for new and different outreach approaches. Our church ministry team is here to help you develop an outreach plan tailored to the needs surrounding you. Contact us at cm@themissionsociety.org and let us know how we can help.

I was watching the President's Cup Golf Tournament when a commercial grabbed my attention. The ad explained how a professional basketball court is always 94 X 50 feet; an Olympic swimming pool is always 50 X 25 meters; a tennis court is always 78 X 36 feet, but a golf course is different. No two are exactly alike. In other words, no matter the city in which LeBron James plays, he can count on the court being the same as all of the other courts he plays. Whether Serena Williams is at the US Open, Wimbledon, or any other venue, the tennis court size will be constant. However, if you are Phil Mickelson, Jordan Spieth, or Lexi Thompson, every golf course you play will be different. Not only that, but the course will change every day as tee boxes and pin locations are moved.

Mission fields are like golf courses.

They are all different, and they are always changing. Consider Europe and the change that has occurred just in the past few months with the influx of large numbers of refugees. A recent report from one of our cross-cultural workers in Europe indicates some 7,000 refugees are arriving in Greece daily to begin an uncertain trek across the eastern continent on their way to Germany. As for issues closer to home, I heard this week of a growing community of Haitians in a rural part of northwest Georgia known more for its poultry farms and fine granite than as a haven for refugees. All over the world, the face of doing mission is changing. In your own community, situations, needs, and even people have changed, creating the need for new and different outreach approaches.

The challenge

This can present a challenge to a local church as it identifies and pursues its mission. Methodologies of old will not be adequate to address current situations. And cookie-cutter approaches to missions will not be as effective as ones that take into account the distinct characteristics, context, and culture of the people and places in which you minister. Additionally, finding and pursuing your mission (as a church and as an individual) will not be a simple, speedy undertaking. Given that, delving a bit deeper into this golf metaphor may be helpful.

1 *Do you have a plan?*
If you have watched any golf at all, you have seen the professionals frequently refer to a book they carry in

Reaching the local skateboarders

University Church in San Antonio, Texas, reaches out to a group of skateboarders who were perceived as a menace to community businesses and their patrons. Twice weekly, the church converts its multipurpose building into a haven for skateboarders. And during the church's non-use times, it allows skateboarding in the parking lot. By identifying a specific group and by using the proper tools, the congregation provided a venue whereby many unchurched young people are coming to faith in Christ.

their back pocket. This is the yardage book, and it contains a great deal of data collected in preparation for the match. The golfer and caddy have walked and played the course and made copious notes as to sand traps, hazards, sprinkler heads, slope of fairways, and distance to green from any point on each hole. Additionally, the book contains pin sheets that provide information on each green including pin placement, ridges, slope, and more. In other words, before the match begins, every golfer will have extensive data on the characteristics of the course he will play. Using this data, he will determine a game plan for the match. In like manner, a local church needs to diligently prepare for engaging in cross-cultural missions. Such preparation is even more critical given the eternal significance of the church's efforts.

2 *Are you properly aligned?*

Professional golfers know the importance of lining up each shot. You have probably watched them stand behind the ball, viewing their target in light of all the surrounding area. This helps them aim the ball exactly where they want it to go.

This simple act can teach us much about doing missions well. First, we need to know and see our target. Blind golf shots lead to wasted strokes. Blind mission shots can lead to wasted personnel, material, and financial resources. Granted,

accurately assessing the felt needs of a community can sometimes be impossible. But by getting a broad perspective on all that surrounds the community, we can often avoid obstacles that may get in the way of ministry. We also can seize opportunities that will enhance our effectiveness. For example, in golf we may realize that using the slope of a bank near the green, though not in line with the green, would guide the ball nearer the hole. In mission, we may

Cookie-cutter approaches to missions will not be as effective as ones that take into account the distinct characteristics, context, and culture of the people and places in which you minister.

realize that engaging non-believers as partners would allow ministry to those partners as well as to the group we hope to reach. Proper alignment provides the broader perspective from which more effective ministry can come.

3 *Are you using the right club?*

Most amateur golfers use the rule: the shorter the distance to the pin, the shorter the club selected. Professionals know there is more to picking the right club than that. Many factors come into play when deciding

which club to use. In mission, we do not use golf clubs, but we do use tools. And selecting the right tools is important.

This reminds me of the story of a missionary who used an airplane to reach a remote island tribe in the South Pacific to drop gospel leaflets on the villages. The airplane was probably a good choice of a tool; leaflets printed in English and scattered to the winds was not.

The challenge

Remember, mission fields are like golf courses. A "golf course approach" to finding a church's mission will require the church to get specific in its overall planning, align to its mission goals, and choose the right tools for outreach. Doing otherwise will risk having the church fly in circles and scattering the precious and powerful good news of Jesus in a manner that is not accessible or understandable. †

The Mission Society's church ministry department offers training and mentoring for churches. Please contact us by email at cm@themissionsociety.org, or call us at 678.542.9046, and we can discuss your church's needs.

Stan Self, retired senior director of church ministry, serves as a training consultant for The Mission Society.



The key to finding true status

In the confusing array of career options, you can help young people discover their place.



"The decision to be in God's will is not the choice between Memphis or Fargo or engineering or art; it's the daily decision we face to seek God's kingdom or ours, submit to His lordship or not, live according to His rules or our own."

—Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will*

Imagine a group of parents and students sitting in a circle. The students are asked the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The first child speaks: "When I grow up, I want to be a teacher." The parents smile and nod their heads. The second child speaks: "When I grow up, I want to be a gastroenterologist." The parents burst into applause. The third child speaks: "When I grow up, I want to be a lawyer." Once again, the parents clap with glee. The fourth child speaks: "I want to be a social worker." No applause. Just a smile and a nod. And so it goes until each child has spoken.

Does this scene sound familiar? For me, this is an experience I've encountered several times in my middle-class, African-American upbringing. The students who had career ambitions that would lead to money and status received the greatest applause, while the kids who hoped for less prestigious jobs got minimal response. I suspect the reason

wasn't that the parents didn't place value on the "noble" occupations, just that they wanted their kids to "be something" and not make their struggle for equality to be in vain. The kids, therefore, got the message that they should pursue status and not purpose. What a tragedy! This scenario is not limited to the

The Mission Society believes strongly in helping those of the next generation to find their place in God's great story.

African-American experience. Parents everywhere want their children to be successful and not to have to struggle. Parents want their family to flourish.

True identity

As I reflect on such experiences, I realize the best thing we can do to encourage young people to find their place is

to help them discover who they are in Christ and how their identity in Him connects them with the biblical mandate to be a blessing to the nations (Gen 12:1-3; Gal 3). As they get to know the Lord and His heart for the world, these emerging leaders will make life decisions based on God's glory and not on the American dream.

Full potential

The Mission Society believes strongly in helping those of the next generation to find their place in God's great story. That is why we are launching two new terms of service: **CoLab** and **GreenLight: Gateway**. CoLab gives people ages 22-35 the opportunity to apprentice under the leadership of veteran missionaries. Participants will be mentored and given opportunities to grow in cultural competencies, spiritual depth/disciplines, and ministry skills. The Greenlight: Gateway program provides people ages 18-23 a 4-6-week experience. Led by a mentor, 5-10 people will explore what it looks like to live, work, and minister cross-culturally. (See pages 18-19). Do you know of a person who could benefit from such an experience? Encourage him or her to visit us at www.themissionsociety.org and complete a no-obligation interest form. Our place in God's kingdom work is helping others find theirs. †

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

BE BOLD IN YOUR GIVING.



Your gift this Christmas will be matched!

Play a part in reaching the nations with the gospel.

- Train one (1) indigenous Christian leader to reach unreached people within his or her own country **\$500**
Project ID #: 0113
- Fund one (1) Global Outreach Weekend at a US church, mobilizing it for global mission **\$1,250**
Project ID #: 0112
- Train one (1) US missionary to multiply his or her ministry through strategic cross-cultural partnerships **\$3,750**
Project ID #: 0111

The Mission Society
6234 Crooked Creek Rd
Norcross, GA 30092-3106

Find your place



Join a CoLab team

Pack your passion and come find your place on a Mission Society team with CoLab. Develop cross-cultural ministry skills, receive mentoring and experience formation in community. Integrate culture and language learning with hands-on experience to create a collaborative project that will contribute to your team's long-term goals. Discover the unique ways God is equipping you to join Jesus in His mission.

CoLab is a two-year term for growing leaders, ages 22-35. Find your place at www.themissionsociety.org/go