

SETTING THE PACE

~ Part Three in the “Window to the World” Resource Series ~



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SETTING THE PACE

The first choice in any journey is determining the direction. When that decision is not a deliberate one, the journey is really more like a stroll: there is no clear destination. But when the goal is clear and the journey is underway, the group looks to the leaders to set the pace.

Similarly, a church's mission ministry may or may not have a clear direction. If not, the articles in *Laying the Foundation* and *Setting Your Sights* will be helpful. Once churches have determined the direction for their missions ministry, they will want to mobilize their members towards that goal. However, many churches find that the number of members engaged in world missions is relatively few. Perhaps missions is seen as a distinct department, an annual event, or a ministry to be started in the future. The challenge facing these churches is inspiration. The articles in *Setting the Pace* are designed to help missions leaders engage their members in the Great Commission. While there are many ways to motivate members in missions, they will include efforts to educate, involve and focus your members.

EDUCATION

For Christians to have a heart for missions, they must know God's heart. In the Bible we discover God's passion to bring glory to himself through his eternal plan to bring people to salvation. Indeed, the Great Commission is not a New Testament afterthought, given to the disciples moments before the Resurrection. Rather, the entire Bible resonates with the theme of God drawing people from every corner of the earth to himself. God is a missional God. As church members see the biblical foundations for missions, they will be motivated to join him in his Great Commission. Create ways to teach members about these truths, through classes, seminars, materials, and sermons. Suggested resources for this and other educational topics are included in the article on resources.

The Great Commission is also a *Gracious* Commission. Some have incorrectly concluded that Reformed theology is a discouragement to missions, with its emphasis on God's initiative. A proper understanding of Reformed theology, however, has had the opposite effect: countless numbers of Christians have committed their lives to missions, in response to the gracious love God has shown them and in the security they have that God is working in the lives of the people they serve. The article on *Global Missions* encourages Christians to stand on the theological foundations of the Great Commission.

Do not limit missions education to formal teaching, however. It has often been said that the gospel is more caught than taught. Thus, create opportunities for members to talk with missionaries, hear of the power of the gospel to change lives, and learn more about other cultures and what God is doing there. The article in *Laying the Foundation* on planning a missions conference may also be helpful.

PARTICIPATION

A critical element for missions mobilization is congregational participation. Church members cannot be allowed to drift into the error that missions is for a select few or a department of the church. Missions leadership must encourage every member to see missions as their personal responsibility, through praying, giving and going.

Praying: Help your members understand that through their prayers, they are sincerely and meaningfully engaging in world missions. The article on prayer will help you encourage prayer for missions throughout your church.

Giving: Your members should also be challenged to support missionaries financially. Giving through faith promise or other means will deeply connect your members to world missions.

Going: Short-term missions projects can have a transforming effect on your entire congregation, as participants return with stories of how God worked in and through their lives. Select projects in keeping with your overall vision, as the participants will develop a heart for the people and ministry. And in keeping with Acts 15:4, be sure to create ways for returning participants to tell the congregation how God worked in and through their lives.

FOCUS

Missions is all about relationship. And the more lasting the relationship, the more members will get behind efforts to develop those ministries. To that end, missions ministries have increasingly discovered the motivating power of selecting one or more sites for on-going emphasis and involvement. Many missions leaders desire a greater impact for their efforts and have found a long-term focus helps accomplish this goal. This direction can take many forms. For example, churches may choose to send members on short-term trips to the same site for several years. Missionaries and national leaders from these sites may be able to visit the church, increasing the direct relationship. Giving and education may be more concentrated. Finally, many churches are joining with other churches to coordinate and collaborate their efforts towards a shared vision. The articles on partnership will introduce your ministry to such initiatives.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Under the titles of the following articles, the “theme” refers to one of the essential elements of successful missions ministries listed in *Window to the World*. This list is included in the following pages. A fruitful exercise for your missions committee would be to evaluate your ministry according to each of the twenty themes and begin to strengthen undeveloped areas. You may also want to refer to the articles in the rest of the *Window to the World* series:

Laying the Foundation encourages churches to focus on the essentials: developing their missions leadership, creating a vision for the ministry, and developing a missions conference to mobilize their members.

Setting Your Sights explores the importance of the Church and national church planting movements as the visible goal of a missions ministry.

Reaching the Summit helps more established ministries integrate their efforts with the entire church and with key principles for maximizing long-term impact.

EDUCATION LEADS TO MOBILIZATION

Theme: Education

The starting point in mobilizing a church for missions is education. All Christians should be aware of the biblical imperative of cross-cultural missions, how God is working through missionaries, and what other cultures are like. The Holy Spirit uses this information to draw his people into service and support of world evangelization. The following are some of the many ways missions leaders can encourage their congregations to become more educated about the Great Commission. Using a creative variety of topics and venues throughout the year will keep missions education fresh.

Biblical Basis for Missions

A missions ministry that glorifies God must be biblically grounded. Further, there is no better way to capture people's hearts for missions than to show them from the Bible how passionate God is towards extending his kingdom. The article in the *Laying The Foundation* series entitled *The Great Commission in the Scriptures or Global Missions—Our Theological Foundations* that follows here are good places to begin. This material could be copied and distributed to Sunday Schools, small groups, session members, etc. or adapted for a sermon.

Mission to the World has also prepared an introductory missions curriculum called *The Gracious Commission*. This is a series of four interactive lessons on the biblical basis for missions, written from the perspective of grace rather than guilt or need. You can use just one or all four of the lessons in a small group or Sunday school.

Missionary Stories

People relate more to a person than a concept, so you will want to introduce your members to current and former missionaries. Such relationships will help them see that missionaries are just normal people, with similar struggles and weaknesses. Their stories of life and ministry in a different culture will help make missions real to your church. As you introduce your congregation to missionaries, be sure to identify those whose purpose and placement you endorse, as you are implicitly affirming their particular work by arranging a presentation.

Cultural Awareness

The world is a fascinating place, and every missions minded person has a God-given sense of adventure. Develop events that showcase particular cultures through a variety of senses, including visual presentations that depict people and places, meals that introduce members to local tastes and smells, and cultural objects that people can touch. Showing foreign movies is an excellent way to provide insights into other cultures. You can also promote homestay visits, where people from other countries stay in members' homes for a brief period.

Cross-cultural Issues

Members will be interested in hearing about issues that missionaries face in another culture, and how national Christians live out their faith. Arrange presentations on topics such as how missionaries adjust to living in a new culture, how honor and shame dominate Asian and Middle Eastern values, or how Christians are oppressed or persecuted in many countries.

Forums

Most successful missions ministries host an annual missions conference, with the primary purpose of educating and mobilizing the church for missions. In addition, keep missions in front of members throughout the year by arranging various forums that are smaller and/or a single meeting. Open up a home for an evening with a missionary, arrange a panel discussion on a particular topic, pray for the persecuted church in a special service, or direct members to regional missions conferences. Or arrange a “Meeting For Better Understanding” (see *Muslims and Christians at the Table* below for more information) with local Muslims.

Missions Books

The following books are some of the excellent material on missions. Make these available to your members, give them to leaders, and/or host a missions book club.

A Mind for Missions, Paul Borthwick

The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life, Os Guinness

Cities: Missions New Frontier, Roger Greenway and Timothy Monsma

Eternity in Their Hearts, Don Richardson

Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace, Harvie Conn

From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya, Ruth Tucker

Go and Make Disciples! An Introduction to Christian Missions, Roger Greenway

The Great Omission, Robertson McQuilken

He Gave Us a Valley, Helen Roseveare

Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Journal, Hudson Taylor

Let the Nations Be Glad, John Piper

Ministering Cross-Culturally, Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers

Ministries of Mercy: The Call of the Jericho Road, Tim Keller, 2nd Edition

Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours, Roland Allen

Muslims and Christians at the Table, Bruce McDowell and Anees Zaka

The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission, Leslie Newbigin

Operation World: When We Pray God Works, Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk

Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, A Reader, Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne

Reaching Muslims for Christ, William Saal

Serving As Senders, Neal Pirollo

Shadow of the Almighty, Elisabeth Elliot

Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, David Bosch

Window on the World, Daphne Spruggett

GLOBAL MISSIONS—OUR THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Theme: Education

DR. PAUL D. KOOISTRA

REFORMED THEOLOGY

Mission to the World, as an arm of the Presbyterian Church in America, a confessional church, does Reformed and covenantal missions around the world. The Reformed faith, in its simplest definition, is God-centered faith. God alone is the source of all that exists and everything that exists does so for the glory of Him alone.

At the heart of what it means to be Reformed are the doctrines of grace. Central to these doctrines are the utter helplessness of man and the absolute trustworthiness of God. We should not forget that the doctrines of grace produce the virtues of the Christian life—love, humility, understanding, and compassion. By emphasizing these Christian virtues as an important aspect of what it means to be Reformed, we can develop a posture of being Reformed in theology and character in a warm and winsome way.

The great doctrine of sovereign grace, the truth that God saves men, is foundational to a theological understanding of missions. Neglect of this truth, which is found in the Scriptures and summarized in our confessional standards, cripples missions and reduces it to a human enterprise, seeking to “help” God. Missions is a divine enterprise, wherein God commands and graciously accepts the obedient participation of man. When people respond to the gospel, it is neither because of their responsiveness nor because of the obedience of the missionary; it is because God found them that they are responsive. The truth that God chooses His people, some believe, discourages missions. On the contrary, this truth is the only real ground for missions.

The Reformed faith also teaches the finitude and sinfulness of our estate. It underlines our absolute dependence on the Spirit of God to bring regeneration to those we long to see embrace Christ. Nothing is more exciting than to see someone come to faith. When God is pleased to use us as His instruments to bring about new life in His people, we are well aware of the fact that it is God’s Spirit alone that can bring regeneration, repentance, and faith.

We believe that man is totally depraved, that is, that he cannot produce any spiritual life that would move him toward God. We shall, therefore, marvel far more in our own salvation, which is beyond our comprehension and is fully a gracious act from a loving God. We also understand in a deeper way that disobedience characterizes every part of a culture: politics, art, and social life as well as religious life. Total depravity underlines the importance of understanding a culture and all of its parts in order to bring the gospel to the people of that culture. We do not, however, put our faith in our strategic plans, but are open to what God will do with us and through us as His ambassadors.

We believe in unconditional election. We, therefore, look more to Christ and His gospel message for our mission activity and far less to the gifts that He has given us or to the environment in which we work.

We believe in limited atonement. We, therefore, have a far greater sense of belonging to God and believing that the One who created the universe also created us and saved us to be His kingdom instruments in this world. Rather than limiting our efforts to bring the gospel to others, acceptance of this truth compels us to scatter the seed wherever we can, believing that God has chosen His people in every tongue, tribe and nation.

We believe in irresistible grace. We do not, therefore, run from those places where missionary activity seems very difficult. God calls some to plow in concrete and others to turn fertile soil that was prepared in the past by others. Reliance on His Spirit's guidance is an antidote to our fleshly desire only to concentrate our efforts where it is easy to plant churches and where we see a large response to the gospel.

We believe in the perseverance of the saints. Our activities, therefore, have a great measure of the joy of eternity and the everlasting fellowship we share with God. We entrust those whom God has brought to faith far more into His hands and less into our programs. We do not see the Church as a fortress in which to hide, but rather a training school from which to send those whom God has brought to faith out into the world to continue His great redemptive plan.

Our commitment to Reformed theology is based on the fact that it is biblical. It is drawn from the heart of God to us, and without it there can be no lasting blessing from God. When we speak of the Reformed faith, we are talking about those truths of God and man, sin and grace, love and judgment, which find their basis in Scripture and which we as a denomination embrace in our *Westminster Confession of Faith* and its Larger and Shorter catechisms.

The effects of sin are pervasive; men and women are not only harmed by sin, they are dead in it. Many will not embrace the biblical doctrines of election, calling, and regeneration, but evidence for the complete lostness of mankind, and therefore the absolute necessity of these doctrines, is everywhere. Our emphasis is one of full conviction that the doctrines of the Reformed faith are the truest expression of biblical faith and what the world needs to hear. We shall stress a faith that grips all of life, and we shall encourage all stations in life as a sacred calling.

We will admit that there have been times when the Reformed faith has been held in an unloving and critical fashion. If we are going to build a Reformed church in the world, there must be within that movement a tolerance for diversity. We must resist going beyond Scripture and imposing our own definitions on what it means to be Reformed. We know that we do not have the final word on every issue.

Finally, the way our theology is applied and expressed is a measure of the biblicalness of its content. We hold firmly to our positions while embracing other godly men and women who disagree with us. Simply put, if the Reformed faith is biblical faith, then any theology that is not expressed in love is neither Reformed nor biblical!

COVENANT THEOLOGY

To emphasize covenant theology is to emphasize the grace-conceived, grace-established, and grace-perfected reality of the Church and the Church's mission activity.

When God chose Israel, and therefore the Church, He did so for no reason that was conditional in or inherent in His people (Deuteronomy 7:7). The covenant established with Abraham in Genesis 15 was in all of its outward manifestations an ancient, Mideastern contract, but in fact it was not a typical transaction of that day. Only God passed through the aisle between the animals. In other words, God was saying, "I alone am making and can make this covenant with my people." If we can drink deeply from the truth of covenant theology, we shall be able to reorganize our priorities, so that the glory of God becomes the single most important passion in the life and work of the Church. The driving force of our ministry will not be a market-driven strategic plan, but rather the vision that God may be glorified among the people of all nations (Romans 1:5).

Seen from a covenant perspective, the doctrines of grace—especially election—are not viewed as a privileged position of safety from those who are lost, but rather a grace-centered relationship which empowers God's people to engage in mission service to the world. The arena of God's saving work is all of His creation. God has called His people by His covenant into a special relationship with Him in order to bring all of creation back from its broken state to its right relationship with God.

The Presbyterian Church in America, through its mission agency, Mission to the World, focuses on church planting because the Church is the corporate body that God has brought into being by His covenant. The saving work of God cannot be reduced to only a personalized salvation between God and individuals. It is within the covenant community of the Church that we experience one of the most dynamic living realities of the power of Christ. As Lord of the Church, He lives within the corporate body as Prophet, Priest, and King. He is the God-revealer, God-savior, and God-ruler over His people.

Mission activity does not end with conversion. Our goal is always the establishment of a vibrant, worshiping community, the church—a body of believers that is able to reproduce itself through mission activity of its own, and one that is able to make a life-changing impact within the lost and fallen culture in which God has placed it.

The covenant God has made with His people always has a two-fold purpose. God has called His people for worship, and that worship motivates the Church for ministry. We must avoid the temptation to focus only on nurture at the expense of ministry or vice versa. The life of the covenant community must always be balanced with the Church's responsibility for the needs of the world.

Who belongs to the covenant community of God? There is great debate on this matter within evangelical Christianity. We believe, however, that the teaching of Scripture on this matter is very clear. All who believe by faith alone on Christ for salvation, and their children, are participants in the covenant promises. We do not believe in baptismal regeneration or in

presumptive regeneration. That is, we do not believe that because a child has been baptized, or because his parents are believers in Christ, the child is automatically a member of the elect of God. On the other hand, the covenant promises have always been for those who have believed and their children. This is true in the Old Testament (Genesis 17:7), and what is true in the Old Testament, we believe must be true in the New Testament. At no time does God say that He has changed the extent of the covenant, although He does tell us that He has changed the sign. To remove the covenant promises from the children of believers would be to reduce the covenant in the New Testament, when in fact the New Testament is the fullness or fulfillment of that which was first promised to Abraham.

The covenant commission of the Old Testament was that the people of God were to teach faithfully the commandments of God to their children at all times and in all experiences of life (Deuteronomy 6:6-8). The covenant commission of the New Testament is just as one would expect—an expansion or a fulfillment of the Commission in the Old Testament. The people of God are to reach out to the peoples of all nations, baptizing them into the Church and teaching them to apply the commandments of God to all of life (Matthew 28:19-20).

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ENCOURAGING PRAYER FOR MISSIONS

Theme: Prayer

Devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly as I should.

Colossians 4:2-4

The Apostle Paul knew how much his ministry depended on the prayer of others. He actively enlisted the prayer support of as many people as possible, confident that unless God worked, his labors were in vain. His friends knew they were a meaningful and vital part of his ministry through their prayers. In the same way, our church members can “do the work of missions” without even leaving their home, by praying on behalf of missionaries.

The following suggestions for encouraging prayer will help your members become active participants in world missions:

1. Model prayer. Others will see and follow your example of praying for missions as part of your regular life.
2. Create a prayer book or pamphlet listing all the missionaries your church supports. Include basic information about them and their ministry and general prayer goals. As you produce this material, be mindful of any security guidelines for missionaries serving in sensitive contexts.
3. Encourage regular prayer for missions and missionaries in the worship service. Provide worship leaders with information on the missionary and prayer requests.
4. Plan a church-wide prayer emphasis. These could include a month or a week of praying through a prepared guide, an all-night prayer meeting, or a 24-hour prayer time with members signing up for a 30 to 60 minute commitment.
5. Schedule special times of congregational prayer.
6. Participate in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. More information on this worldwide event can be found at www.idop.org.
7. Encourage existing groups to include prayer for missions. Such groups include Sunday school classes, men’s and women’s ministries, youth groups, and home Bible studies.
8. Teach people how to pray for missionaries. The topics on the following page will help people expand their prayers. Feel free to copy and distribute them.

PRAYING FOR MISSIONARIES

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

- 2 Thessalonians 1:11

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

- Matthew 9:37,38

☀ **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Delight in God's Word
Walk in repentance, faith, and obedience
Protection from flesh, world, and devil
Holy Spirit renewal
Greater dependence upon God in prayer

☀ **FAMILY**

Husband and wife relationship
Parents and children relationships
Children's growth in grace
Contentment in singleness

☀ **TEAM RELATIONSHIPS**

Fellowship with other missionaries
Relationship with leaders
Humility and submission to one another
Spirit of peace and unity
Patience
Understanding in differences
God to raise up laborers

☀ **CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

Language learning
Cross-cultural insight

☀ **NATIONAL PARTNERS**

Growth of national church
Development of leaders
Relationship of church to community
Safety and protection

☀ **RELATIONSHIPS WITH NON-BELIEVERS**

Depth of relationships
Boldness in evangelism
Words of truth and love

☀ **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL NEEDS**

Safety in travel
Protection against illness
Financial support

☀ **DAILY MINISTRY**

Heart of love for all people
God-given insight into other's needs
Wisdom and discernment
Open doors for discipleship

☀ **COUNTRY OF SERVICE**

Political stability
Currency exchange rate

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS: BLESSING OR BOTHER?

Theme: Short Term

REV. AND MRS. DAN IVERSON

“It’s not worth the money to send short-term missionaries!” some have said. “Send career missionaries or give it to indigenous church planters.” Others have said, “Send only those who are fully trained and committed for the long haul.”

We hear these concerns. However, as MTW church-planting missionaries working with many two-week and two-year short-term missionaries, we could not be more enthusiastic about their role in kingdom advancement. Sure, there is a cost—to the career team receiving them, to the ones coming, and to the sending church. But the great benefits to the ministry, to the receiving team, to the sending church, and to the short-term missionary himself far outweigh the cost.

A GREAT BLESSING TO THE MINISTRY

From the beginning of our Japan ministry, one- and two-year missionaries have been helping us throw wide the evangelistic net, making hundreds of contacts through our English school, hospitality, concerts, and college ministry. They have also been the workhorses on the field, carrying strategic support roles in finances and in teaching missionary children. Short-term teams have helped us in broad sowing of the gospel and making new contacts through everything from concerts to English, sports, fun, and friendship. As Mr. Seima Aoyagi, our team’s director for the Chiba college ministry, has said: “Since Japanese students love to meet and talk to Americans, the short-term missionaries and teams bring us many, many contacts that we Japanese staff could never gather ourselves. They also model a commitment to Christ and His ministry that impacts the new Christian students deeply.”

From darkness to light through short-term workers

Mr. Katsuya Shina came to learn English, but instead got the gospel from MTW two-year worker Dave. Katsuya had never been to church in his life, like most Japanese people. He says, “I endured the Bible time for several years at the end of each English class, studying it as literature.” But God’s Word did not return void in Katsuya’s life. He testifies now with great thanksgiving how God used Dave’s love, hospitality, and witness to bring him to Christ. Katsuya now leads worship at one church plant. And Dave went on to seminary. He is now the MTW team leader in Thailand.

Follow-up by email: Hudson Taylor could have never imagined!

“I am so thankful for Bart and Judy from Orlando,” says Mrs. Harumi Soneda, who came to Christ through our team. “They came on a two-week mission trip, and did a ‘home-stay’ at our house. I was the only Christian in my family then, but they showed such warmth and love to my husband, my two college daughters, and to me. They invited my daughters to visit them in America the next year. While there, God really opened the eyes of my older daughter, Yoriko, to the gospel through Bart and Judy and the love they experienced at Orangewood Church.” Harumi tells with great joy how Yoriko came back to Japan eager to study the Bible. For months, Yoriko emailed questions about the gospel to Bart and Judy in

Florida, and they sent answers bathed in prayer. She joined a Japanese Bible study, began coming to worship, and professed faith some months later. These are Yoriko's words to Bart and Judy:

God heard your prayers. Thank you so much. I am very, very thankful....My confirmation to live with Him is getting stronger each day. Isn't it great? He is really working in me. It is so thankful. I know now that He is with me throughout my life (and even more), no matter what happens and no matter what I do....I just wanted share this joy with you two. I cannot wait to see you in June!! YORIKO

By the way, Bart and Judy were reluctant ten-day missionaries, "dragged" to Japan the first time. Half way through the trip, God gave them a heart for missions as they saw the false worship in the Buddhist temples, and so many towns with no church of any kind. They now bring a team every year to help share the gospel. They are passionate mobilizers of people, money, and prayer, all because of that first ten-day trip.

Out of the mouths of babes—or sixteen-year-olds!

Who would have ever imagined, in this culture where age is so highly venerated, that the life of a sixteen-year-old short-term worker would model the believer's use of the means of grace for a late-forties Japanese believer? Toshiko, the first believer in our team's history, was three years into her new faith when 16-year-old Laura came to do a two-week home-stay toward the end of her year in Japan. Toshiko had already observed from a distance the maturity and wisdom of this covenant child. She saw "up close and personal" Laura's daily walk with Christ that including prayer, undivided time in God's Word, and uncompromising commitment to make worship joyfully central to her week. Toshiko began to experience the joy and value of appropriating those same means of grace in her own life, and she continues to walk with Christ, mentoring others in the disciplines of grace.

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS RAISES UP CAREER MISSIONARIES

Eighteen-year-old Judith was our first short-term missionary 13 years ago. Right out of high school, Judith helped home-school our children while Carol met with Japanese ladies. As she also did outreach with Japanese high school girls and helped Dan with team administrative chores, Judith developed a heart for Japan. During college she managed the team's prayer mobilization ministry. She returned to Japan after college for two years, stayed for three, and now is back as a proven, able career missionary with a passion to reach Japan—and with great language ability since she started young!

Two-week to two-year to long-term (and a sprinkling of romance)

- **Daniel** came to Japan for a year, came back for two more to teach missionary children, and later to help run our team's English outreach ministry to 300 non-Christian Japanese. He married Mako, one of our first Japanese church members, and recently graduated from seminary.
- **Robert** came for a year at **Daniel's** invitation to teach our team's missionary children, stayed for two years, and now is long-term.

- **Lisa** came for ten days with **Bart and Judy** on their second trip, came back two months later for two years to teach MKs, and is now married to **Robert**. They have a child and now serve together as long-term missionaries.
- **Roberta** came on a short-term trip for ten days, came back for two years, but stayed for three. She ran the team finances as the church-planting budget grew by more than 25% every year, and did evangelism through our English outreach ministry. She is now in her second term as a career missionary.
- **Sally** came to Japan for a summer, returned for a year with another mission, and now is a second-term MTW team member.
- **Craig and Ree** came for a summer, then back for two years, but stayed for three. They are now serving long-term with Rev. Hirohashi in the Makuhari church plant, and Craig serves as our assistant team leader.
- **Jon** came for a summer, returned for two years of college ministry, and now is raising support for long-term in order to start our MTW college ministry on another campus.
- **Anne Marie** joined our team for a year at age 66 and stayed four years.

There just isn't space to tell all the stories and their impact for the gospel in Japan. Investment in short-term workers is an investment in long-term kingdom work because many return to the field and the others return to their home churches aflame with a mission vision.

STRENGTHENS THE MISSIONS VISION OF THE SENDING CHURCH

America may be spiritually needy, but it is one of the most gospel-rich countries on earth. So many who serve short-term with our team are gripped by the lostness of Japan and become passionate mobilizers of prayer, finances, and new workers for the harvest.

Short-term trips mobilize prayer

One short-term team came to help with pre-church plant outreach activities in a new Tokyo suburb with no church of any kind. The team was a great help, and we made many new friends and contacts through the special music, English, and outreach events. The team was especially impacted through their participation in our team's monthly four-hour concert of prayer in which we plead with God to pour out His Spirit, "...that the desert (of Japan) would become a fertile field, and the fertile field a forest" (Isa. 32:15). We told them about other teams that had gone back to the USA with a new vision to pray, and challenged them to do the same. God worked in their hearts. For several years they have gathered monthly to pray for an hour for our team and for Japan. We have seen this over and over again as God uses the two-week or two-year experience to mobilize fervent, informed prayer for kingdom advancement.

GREAT SPIRITUAL BENEFIT TO THE MISSIONARIES' FAMILIES

We are eternally grateful for the friendship and blessing that so many short-term missionaries have brought to us. We are especially thankful for the impact on our children.

Raising children on the mission field has been a great blessing. Much of that blessing has come from God via these precious short-term partners in ministry. Often in their late teens or in their twenties, the short-term workers have loved our children and been godly models who were also “cooler” than dad and mom. They talked to them of Christ, ministry, and purity. They have given much to our children.

THE COST OF SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

Worker bees that take more work?

The cost of short-term missions is much greater than dollars and cents. The sending church, the short-term missionary, and the receiving team each expend time, energy, and effort, and have expectations and commitments to one another. Our needs encompass the physical, emotional/mental, and spiritual “whole people” we are. It goes without saying that smooth transition into another culture requires tremendous logistical help, as well as training, ongoing spiritual stimulation, and consistent emotional and mental encouragement. This adjustment period and the more important continuing nurture takes varying amounts of patience, energy, and time on the expatriate members’ part. Our experience, overall, has been well worth any investment that’s been made! The amount of kingdom fruit may only be known in eternity. But we would be dishonest if we stopped here. There have been cases where the cost to our team has outweighed the benefit of the worker, sadly necessitating their being sent back earlier than expected. There have been times when their needs have far exceeded our capacities, or where we, as a team, have failed to give the necessary time and energy to these brothers and sisters because of ever-increasing ministry demands. Those times have stretched us to develop greater dependence on Christ, as well as to model for the new Japanese believers the power of the gospel in broken lives.

THE ONGOING BENEFIT OF SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIPS

It has been said that World War II was the greatest short-term missions trip in Church history. Thousands of soldiers, sailors, and Marines returned to the places they had gone on their “short-term trip,” armed the second time as long-term workers with the sword of the Spirit. They led a great wave of new mission efforts to the end that God be worshiped in every tongue and tribe.

The growing wave today of short-term missions zeal will certainly have even more impact on the world as tens of thousands of short-termers fan out in missions service around the world. They help move the work forward, doing frontline evangelism and discipleship, serving in support roles behind the scenes, and teaching missionary children. God often does much *through* them, but even more *to* them through the struggles and blessings they experience. God often uses the experience to call many of them to return long-term in the places where they served short-term. And God sends most back to their homes deeply affected by what they experienced, much more ready in heart and head than most other Christians to mobilize the Church to pray, give, and partner with the work on the field.

Rev. Dan Iverson and his wife Carol are MTW long-term missionaries to Japan, having served more than twelve years. Dan serves as team leader for the Chiba/Tokyo church-planting team.

FAITH PROMISE GIVING

Theme: Giving

The grace of giving is one of the most amazing blessings of the Christian life. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, God reveals that He intends His redeemed people—those bought by the blood of Christ—to be the channel for His gospel to be extended to all the nations of the earth.

How, then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.”

- Romans 10:14-15

It is both the privilege and the duty of the Christian to send missionaries by way of generous financial gifts. In ways beyond all human understanding of logic or of math, God takes our gifts, multiplies them, uses them, and repays the giver with blessing. As a spirit of selfless generosity is a mark of a healthy Christian, so the practice of collective benevolence is indicative of a vital church. The adage, “Show me your wallet and I’ll show you your heart,” is as applicable to the church as a whole as it is to the individual.

Funds designated for world missions are called by a variety of terms, the most commonly-used being *Faith Promise*. However, the nomenclature used is far less important than the fact that these gifts flow from the hearts of God’s people through the local congregations and denomination to the various ministries around the globe.

WHAT IS FAITH PROMISE GIVING?

- 1) A method of giving which grows out of first giving ourselves to the Lord and then to His servants. “They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will” (2 Corinthians 8:5).
- 2) A method which encourages voluntary, purposeful giving. “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- 3) A method which encourages generous, sacrificial giving. “We want you to know about the grace of God that has been given to the Macedonian churches. Out of their most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability” (2 Corinthians 8:1-3). “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously” (2 Corinthians 9:6).
- 4) A method in which we trust God to provide our material needs and to give us spiritual blessings. “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8). “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus”(Philippians 4:19).

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

How can Faith Promise giving be implemented in a church which presently gives a percentage of its general budget to missions?

Plan for a transition

- Consider bringing someone in to explain Faith Promise and answer concerns
- Begin with the pastor/missions leader
- Make a list of key people
- Informally meet with key decision makers (missions leaders, finance/administrative leaders, influential members)
- Meet with elders and deacons

Important ingredients in bringing change

1. Information
2. Discussion
3. Making a decision
4. Creating a plan for how to implement over a period of time

A FAITH PROMISE CHALLENGE

If we ignore the privilege and joy of giving, who is hurt?

Remember this: *“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously”* (2 Corinthians 9:6).

During the Roaring Twenties a man named Arthur Berry became quite notorious as a jewel thief—and a good one. He only stole from the rich and famous, and it became a mark of prestige to have been hit by Mr. Berry. Eventually he was apprehended, shot three times in a gun battle with police, and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

After his release, reporters were clamoring to interview him. One insightful young man inquired, “Mr. Berry, you robbed an awful lot of wealthy people in your life as a jewel thief. From whom did you steal the most?”

Without a moment’s hesitation Berry replied, “The man from whom I stole the *most* was Arthur Berry.”

When *we* fall down in our stewardship, some say we are stealing from God. God, however, doesn’t need our money. Others indicate that Christian work will be handicapped, but God cannot and does not fail. When we fail in our giving, we rob *ourselves* of the privilege, the joy and the blessing that come to those who *“excel in the grace of giving”* (2 Corinthians 8:7).

FAITH PROMISE GIVING FOR YOUR CONGREGATION

Where does the money come from?

Here are three possible sources to consider for Faith Promise:

1) Change your spending priorities

Look at your expenditures and ask, “What am I willing to give up, or sacrifice, so that the Good News can be proclaimed and churches planted?” This reordering of priorities is likely to pinch, but it is fully biblical. The Macedonian Christians gave out of their poverty and beyond their ability.

2) Be creative

You might make an investment and dedicate all the proceeds to Faith Promise. You might take on a second job for a few hours, a week or month. You might use carpool income. You might make and sell crafts. The point is that if giving for missions becomes a priority, you can think creatively of ways to have more money available for the purpose.

3) Through serendipity income

Many of us receive income we didn’t really expect throughout the year. It may come in the form of gifts, overtime, an investment that pays off beyond expectations, an inheritance or a tax refund. This extra income could be committed, all or in part, to missions. Instead of using it to buy something for ourselves, we commit to giving it so that we may make Christ known.

How Do I Do It?

- Pray about your desire to give more to the support of missions.
- Determine what you would like to do for the Lord in the next year in support of missions, and indicate that intention by filling out a Faith Promise card.
- Give not to a particular missionary, but to the work of missionaries, looking to the missions team to give leadership in your support of missions and church planters.

FOCUSING FOR GREATER MISSIONS IMPACT

Theme: Emphasis

A MAJOR TREND IN MISSIONS

One of the most significant trends in missions today is the increasing number of churches that are focusing their ministry participation. The reasons for this direction include the following motivations:

- Desire for greater long-term impact in missions
- Desire to identify God's unique calling for their church in missions
- Commitment to greater coherence and alignment in ministry involvement
- Interest in supporting fewer missionaries with more funds
- Desire for deeper relationships with the field
- Interest in collaboration with other sending churches

THE NEED FOR FOCUS

Developing a missions ministry is a bit like digging a well. To reach water, one must dig a well with the proper dimensions: it must be deeper than it is wide. Not only will such a well more likely reach water, the water will be fresh and plentiful.

Many churches are discovering that to have a lasting impact in missions, their missions ministry must have the right dimensions. It must be deep: the investment of prayers, energy, and finances should be significant. And while they may support people all over the world, their primary emphasis must not be too wide, perhaps focusing on one or two areas of commitment. No matter what size, all churches would do well to identify as precisely as possible the Lord's missions direction for their congregation.

Through prayer and study, the following issues can help churches develop the right dimensions for going deep in their missions ministry:

Existing relationships

Does your church currently support a missionary? Is a church member serving as a missionary? Do you have other connections to an ongoing ministry? If so, you may want to deepen an existing relationship rather than start a new one.

Church members' vision

Are there members or leaders of your church who have experience and/or a desire to work with a particular people group or area of the world? Have members of your church participated in short-term projects that have given them a heart for a certain group of people? God very often uses the vision of a few people to lead an entire church in the same direction.

Unique Connections

Does your church have a unique relationship to a region? Perhaps people from a particular country live near your church, and members have developed an interest in working with them locally and overseas. Or perhaps the nationality of a church member could serve as a natural bridge to a part of the world.

Church relationship

Do you have a close relationship with another church that is already working with a particular people group? Developing a partnership for ministry may be a natural and effective way to go forward.

Ministry emphasis

Do you desire to participate with a particular type of ministry? Or do members of your church have certain skills or occupations that could be used most effectively in a specific field?

Some churches have developed a small committee to explore these and other issues in order to bring a recommendation to church leaders. Selecting a missions focus is no small task and one that must be supported by much prayer, study, and time. This investment on the front end will help determine God's leading for a significant long-term commitment.

PARTNERSHIPS: A NEW MODEL FOR MISSIONS

Once an emphasis is determined, your church may want to explore joining others who share your commitment. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says a “cord of three strands is not easily broken.” Historically, the three strands of missions ministry have been churches, agencies, and field workers—though each has had to work fairly independently. Today, however, advancements in communications and transportation have appropriately given churches a desire for more direct involvement in field ministry. Mission to the World affirms this development, and is committed to facilitating churches in deeper connection to the field. Effective field ministry requires that this connection be coordinated, so that churches, MTW, and the field are working closely together and in a common direction. In order to accomplish this, Mission to the World is establishing partnerships for the development and support of ministry teams all over the world. The partnership would work closely with the field team to devise a common strategy for such responsibilities as:

- promoting the ministry in the U.S.
- recruiting and assessing short- and long-term personnel
- praying for the work and workers
- providing pastoral care
- determining what resources are needed in the field and working to provide them
- advocating for the persecuted Church
- providing financial support to a team ministry account
- helping connect field work with related people groups in the U.S.

If your church has determined a missions focus, please inform MTW by completing the following information.

May also be completed online at www.mtw.org

Geographic/People Group Emphasis *(Please be as specific as possible)*

Ministry Focus

- Relational evangelism—developing genuine friendships and discussing the gospel
- Church-planting—establishing fellowships of believers
- Discipleship and training—equipping Christians, especially emerging leaders
- English—teaching English as a platform for relationships
- Medical—offering medical assistance
- Street children—extending mercy to children at risk
- University ministry—reaching college students with the gospel
- Other _____
- Uncertain

Church Information

Church Name _____

City _____ State _____

Contact Information

Primary Contact _____

Church Role _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone w) _____ h) _____ c) _____

Please return this form to MTW at 1600 N. Brown Road, Lawrenceville, GA, 30043; fax to 678-823-0027; or email the information to churchrelations@mtw.org.

FROM PATRON TO PARTNER

Theme: Partnership

REV. SCOTT SEATON

THE UNTRADITIONAL BECOMES TRADITION

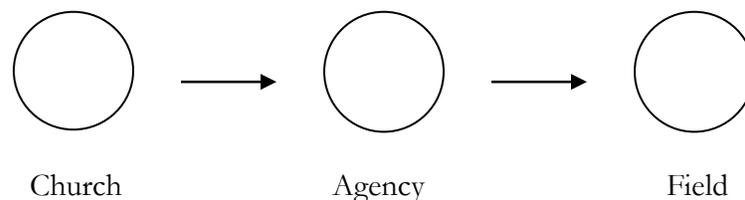
Shortly after the publication of his “Enquiry Into the Obligation of Christians” in 1792, William Carey addressed ministers of the Baptist Association at a meeting in Nottingham, England. After encouraging them from Isaiah 54:2-3 to commit themselves to world evangelization, he exhorted them to demonstrate faith: “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.” The next day, at great financial sacrifice to themselves, the Baptist ministers formed a missions board, the Baptist Missionary Society. With this commitment, the modern missions movement was born. While the current of missions runs all the way back to Eden, so influential were Carey’s writings, model, and methods that a truly new channel had been opened.

Much has changed since Carey’s day. The increased emphasis on indigenous leadership, the evolving role of the missionary, and the concept of unreached people groups are some of the many ways missions has matured in the last two hundred years. Yet the basic method for sending and supporting missionaries remains largely untouched. Simply stated, churches that share a passion for missions entrust their members and resources to a mission agency, which oversees all aspects of field ministry. The Baptist Missionary Society served not only as the means to support these early missionaries to India, it became a model for all subsequent efforts. It remains the dominant model today.

This approach tends to be very linear and one-directional, with the church laying the foundation for missions in education, prayer, and support, but then essentially turning over all further responsibility to the sending agency. In turn, the agency would—hopefully—provide a well-developed system of oversight and support, a breadth of ministry opportunities and experience, a coherent philosophy of ministry, and a mechanism to pool resources. As a model, it was straightforward, uncomplicated, and directly responsible for the expansion of world missions to this day.

The following diagram portrays that relationship:

Traditional Model



Agency: “Here's what we're doing. Come be a part of it.”

For all that was gained in this approach, two significant weaknesses emerged. First, the local church largely delegated its ownership of missions to the agency—and along with it a significant amount of passion and vision for the work in the field. The local church was rarely involved in field ministry, except through praying for the work and hearing from the missionaries. The actual ministry became the province of the agency. The downside of this approach is that the local church was effectively relegated to the role of patron, rarely questioning its ownership of actual missions work. Both the church and the agency accepted this relationship as unassailable.

Second, this passivity inevitably led to churches having little direction for their missions ministry—a purposelessness rarely shared by other ministries of the church. The church rightfully expects its children’s ministry to have a philosophy and structure. Same for adult education or worship. But in many churches, the missions ministry has no such focus. The primary role of the missions committee is sadly reduced to that of a foundation distributing grant money to applicants. It’s simply assumed that this is all that missions committees do. No wonder there’s not much passion for world missions in many of our churches.

As a missions pastor for 14 years, I would often receive calls from both missionaries and agencies, seeking support for their ministry. The conversation always went something like this: “Here’s what we’re doing in missions. God is opening a strategic door for ministry, and we’d like you to be part of it—by giving us your money and your people.” I often felt like I was being sold something, with no concern whether we had a prior interest in the “product.” Until we began to be intentional about our involvement, we would passively receive many such requests, making decisions on little more than the quality of the presentation and the availability of funds. We were not much more than patrons.

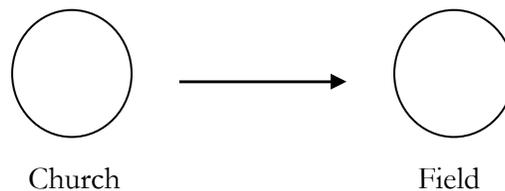
A DEMAND FOR MORE OWNERSHIP

Today, however, people expect more involvement. Younger generations are less willing to entrust others with their resources and loyalty, instead demanding hands-on experience and ownership. Further, in a day of rapid travel and instant communication, church missions leaders and members are now able to participate directly in cross-cultural missions with little inconvenience or sacrifice. Short-term projects and instant connection to the field via email are common examples of this trend. When coupled with greater resources to sustain that interest, it’s no surprise that the traditional model is being rejected in many churches. Rather than passively responding to a variety of requests and strategies, these churches are thoughtfully developing a missions emphasis that uniquely suits their congregations. Based on its philosophical commitments and personal relationships, for example, a church may want to focus on church planting among a certain people group. Such a focus invariably means concentrating on a few places, in order to have greater impact and involvement. Depth rather than breadth becomes the overriding consideration. This commitment often involves taking the initiative in helping to develop the ministry, and thus more ownership in its success or failure. In this way, churches begin to assume more of the responsibilities traditionally reserved for the sending agency. From the recruitment of missionaries to the development of strategy, some churches are becoming, in theory and sometimes in practice, their own mission agencies.

This approach is one of the most significant trends in missions today, and many churches in the PCA have taken steps in this direction. Some of this momentum stems from the churches' perception of sending agencies as bureaucratic and staid, unable or unwilling to involve the local church and its missions priorities—even unaware it might have any. In that climate, the church feels it has no choice but to go it alone. The dominant message in this model is the church saying, in effect, “We don't want to delegate all the exciting stuff to an agency. We can do it ourselves.”

The following diagram portrays that relationship, where the missions agency is bypassed altogether:

Church as Sending Agency



Church: “We'll do it ourselves.”

But as with the traditional model, there are downsides, for with all that the local church gains, much is lost as well. By not availing itself of the agency's expertise and experience, a church may plunge into a work blind to the issues and pitfalls at every turn. Field ministry may suffer when churches fail to develop a coherent philosophy—or even know what to consider in devising a strategy. Most detrimental is the difficulty of producing a sustainable ministry without the broader resources of numerous churches, thereby leaving national partners in the cold when the ministry falters. Certainly the missions agency is not perfect in these regards, but there is every danger the local church will repeat the mistakes it has sought to avoid. One final caution: the churches most likely to attempt this direction are the larger, better-resourced congregations. The unfortunate implication, then, is that direct field involvement is not for the smaller church, which must continue in the traditional role of missions patron.

My own experience as a missions pastor reflects these problems. Convinced that greater focus leads to greater participation, our church adopted a people group in the Balkans, in part because an agency was planning to send missionaries to this newly opened country. When that placement fell through, our church teamed up with another PCA church to serve as our own sending agency. We recruited and selected candidates, provided pre-field training, helped the missionaries settle into the country, and worked with them closely as they developed a strategy. Our congregations enthusiastically supported them through their prayers, giving, and several short-term projects. Our missions leaders visited them two to three times a year and regularly communicated with them via email and phone. The actual ministry was busy and robust, providing a significant contribution to training emerging church planters. Based on the commitment from our churches and the vision on the field, everything seemed to be going great.

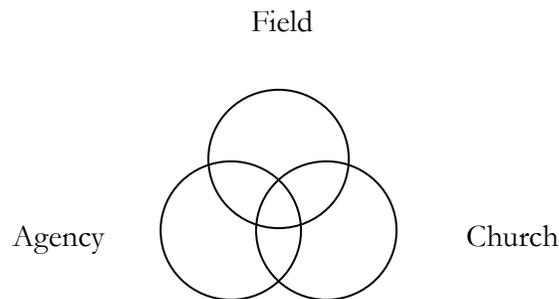
Over time, however, we saw that it was difficult to sustain the work. Policies and philosophy were created on the fly and in reaction to ever-changing circumstances. We made strategic mistakes that could easily have been avoided had we more experience. The administration of funds and resources seemed a common distraction from “the real work.” We didn’t know what level of care and oversight was appropriate, including support for re-entry into the U.S. And with a limited pool of candidates, we ultimately could not provide successors to our missionaries. The work was essentially turned over to another mission agency and our current involvement remains relatively insignificant.

A NEW APPROACH

There is, however, a third way. The unavoidable trend in missions today is for churches to connect directly to the field; this direction should be accepted and affirmed. The agency brings experience and facilitation for long-term ministry; this role should likewise be accepted and affirmed. A model for the future, then, is one that builds on the strengths of the two models mentioned above, while attempting to minimize the weaknesses. This new approach involves the creation of a partnership of all interested churches, the sending agency, and field workers to develop and coordinate ministry related to a specific field.

The dominant message here simply is: “We all need each other, so let’s work together,” as suggested by the following diagram:

Partnership



All: “Let’s work together.”

In this model, MTW becomes a facilitator of missions involvement, rather than the traditional “here’s what we’re doing” agency. In this facilitating role, MTW’s first question to churches changes from “Will you join us?” to “Where has God called you to serve? And if you don’t know, can we help you discover it?” A group of churches with a common focus would then partner together with MTW and missionaries to initiate and/or develop a work.

We are currently in the early stages of several such partnerships. After a formation period of defining how the various partners will work together, they are beginning to cooperate in ministry. One partnership established an English lending library in Central Asia, collecting, cataloguing, and shipping the books, then sending interns to teach English and establish relationships. Another partnership is focusing on church planter training, helping to develop the curriculum and materials. The essential difference in this model is the level of communication and interaction among the various partners.

Although each partner may contribute to any aspect of the partnership, it has been helpful to clarify which partners will take the lead in various responsibilities, as follows.

The field workers (missionaries and national leaders) determine ministry vision and strategy, carry out the ministry, and equip partners to effectively serve alongside. Churches provide input to field strategy, initiate projects with field approval, and participate in ministry. Further, they educate, equip, and send members in missions, help provide financial support, and can assist in candidate assessment and training.

MTW continues its responsibilities to administrate financial accounts, assess and train candidates, and supervise the missionaries. It will also facilitate the partnership by fostering communication and coordination, and keeping the partnership on track by preventing both irrelevance (not being engaged) and micro-management (dictating to the field). All the partners—field, church, and agency—are responsible to promote the ministry, expand and organize the partnership, and recruit and care for team members.

A GREAT ATTEMPT

Partnership in some expression is nothing new. What is different in this emerging model, however, is the combination of two elements: the high degree of interaction and coordination among the various partners, and the concentration of ministry on a particular work. It is premature and even hubristic to term this direction the “future of missions,” but those involved to date have great hope that something truly significant is taking shape. They like being more connected to the field and to each other, and they see the potential to invigorate the missions ministry of both the local church and the overseas field. The ability of these first partners to see over the horizon recalls the faith that William Carey called his brothers to demonstrate.

The passage from Isaiah that Carey spoke from at the Nottingham conference challenges us to “enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide.” The surprise in this passage is not that we need to make room for the expansion of God’s kingdom, but that we are to do so *before* the growth actually occurs. That requires faith, a deep conviction that God is going to work, and we need to get ready for it. These partnerships are a waste of time and energy if God has no place for us in the Great Commission. But if He does, partnering with others demonstrates faith by expanding our capacity to serve—even prior to seeing the fruit He will bring. May we too “expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”

Rev. Scott Seaton is MTW’s former International Director of Enterprise for Christian-Muslim Relations. He is currently helping MTW to resource and equip church missions ministries while becoming a church planter with the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA).

MISSION IGNITION: PARTNERSHIP MINISTRY

Theme: Partnership

REV. CHUCK FROST

I serve a “missions-minded” church family. Westminster Atlanta, from its birth more than 100 years ago, has “prayed, given, and gone” in response to the simple clarity of Christ’s command to go and make disciples. What would cause Westminster’s heart for missions to pound more deeply for this present generation? PARTNERSHIP. The name implies the obvious—people working together to accomplish a goal.

This partnership model has ignited a new era of excitement and personal participation in missions for the Westminster family. Through our past relationship with Turgay Üçal, executive director of the Turkic World Presbyterian Church, our partnership focus is on the Muslim world of Turkic-speaking peoples. This partnership, named Enterprise Turkey, directly connects Westminster and sister PCA churches with front-line ministry on the field. Enterprise Turkey (known as ET) enables the corporate power (prayer, money, and people) of a number of sister congregations to be directly applied to a specific field of ministry. While a partnership is in fact assisted and encouraged both organizationally and administratively at the denominational level, the application of personal energy comes directly from the constituent church families. This produces both excitement and challenge.

The excitement is seen at Westminster in a clearer focus on a particular mission field rather than being so widespread that we make personal connection with nothing! This more clearly-focused pursuit produces genuine relationships with people on the field, and thereby produces personal prayer and resource involvement, not to mention personal trips to the field. Our first vision trip shepherded four individuals to Turkey and Bulgaria. Upon their return, their excitement and interaction with peers produced a group of 12 for the next trip—with a waiting list! It is our hope that in the next ten years at least 50% of the adults of Westminster will engage a short-term missions trip. Our sister churches in ET have similar aspirations. Sister churches encouraging and challenging each other is another layer of this excitement. Suddenly, people in the pew see themselves as personally significant in Christ’s redemptive plan.

But the challenges are not insignificant. We are all on the same bus (a helpful metaphor)—delighting in the renewed intimacy and involvement of partnering. Who is driving the bus? We must remember that our commitment is to assist national pastors in *their* work of making disciples (evangelizing and church planting). Great care must be taken to prevent the inertia of “American resources” from unintentionally blundering into the driver’s seat. We must strive for a collegial relationship that supports and encourages rather than directs and demands. Effective partnership ministry is significantly rooted in the intimacy of direct involvement—confident to be partners, not patrons. Our goal is to promote kingdom growth. We are not bringing light to the darkness—we are bringing fuel for the light that already burns.

So why is the Westminster family so excited about this model for missions? Why is there a waiting list for our next vision trip to the Turkic world?

Here's the linkage:

- ✓ We develop deeper personal relationships with people on the field.
- ✓ We become more careful prayer warriors through those close relationships.
- ✓ We give more sacrificially where we have a heart investment.
- ✓ We are eager to go to help and encourage.

For Westminster Atlanta, partnership ministry has ignited missions momentum. The bus is moving—jump on board!

***Rev. Chuck Frost** is the senior pastor of Westminster PCA in Atlanta, GA.*

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL MISSIONS MINISTRIES

1. **Missions Committee:** An active, organized committee that coordinates the missions ministry is absolutely essential. The committee should not see themselves as the ministry, but rather as a leader that involves the entire congregation and all its ministries.
2. **Ecclesiology:** The Bible teaches us that God loves His Church, and has commissioned it to be His primary means and end for advancing the kingdom. Missions leaders need to develop a biblical understanding of the Church and emphasize efforts that help establish churches around the world. In so doing, it is important to discern the difference between a lasting church and a temporary gathering of believers, as many ministries claim to be committed to church planting.
3. **Short Term:** One of the most effective ways of mobilizing members for missions is to send them on local and global missions projects. All participants will return with a greater heart for God's world, and some will begin to pursue missionary service. Select projects that best fit with your church's long-term vision.
4. **Prayer:** The need for more laborers was Christ's only prayer request. Churches should reflect our Lord's heart for a needy world by meaningfully and regularly including prayer throughout the ministries of the church.
5. **Sustainability:** While churches in the West should give generously to missions, they should consider how to avoid national churches' becoming overly dependent on outside resources. Dependency can stifle growth and innovation.
6. **Theology:** It is both stimulating and challenging to engage godly Christians who have developed different convictions or expressions. While encouraging the interdependence of the global body of Christ, missions ministries can also affirm a natural emphasis on planting churches that share their theological convictions.
7. **Vision:** A seemingly limitless number of opportunities will come before the missions committee. Determining which ones to pursue requires a clear sense of direction. The vision of the ministry should be carefully developed, written, and embraced by church leaders.
8. **Contextualization:** No church ministry will be more exposed to the diversity of the larger body of Christ than the missions ministry. This is cause for celebration of God's love for all peoples and affirmation that the ministry of churches in other cultures can be expressed in biblically valid and culturally indigenous forms. Missions leaders need wisdom and experience as they encounter these different expressions.
9. **Giving:** Compared to the rest of the world, churches in the West have been blessed with tremendous resources. The message of Genesis 12:3 and elsewhere is that God blesses His people *so that* they will be a blessing to others. To that end, churches should be sacrificial in their support of world missions.
10. **Partnership:** When churches collaborate with other sending churches towards shared ministry goals, far more can be accomplished. More importantly, such partnership expresses the interconnectedness that Christ desires for His body. Churches should consider how they can contribute their experience and resources to other churches, as well as grow from the relationship.

11. **Word and Deed:** As missions ministries determine which efforts to support, they should have in mind the kind of churches that are being developed. A biblical church necessarily requires a commitment to both ministries of the Word (e.g. evangelism, preaching, teaching) and deed (e.g. mercy and justice).

12. **Multiplication:** Churches should actively be involved in planting new churches. Multiplication refers to the process of beginning new churches not simply by the occasional addition of a church, but through a movement of churches planting churches, that in turn reproduce. Effective missions ministries should look to support ministries in other cultures that share this commitment.

13. **Participation:** Christ has laid the task of world evangelization in front of every believer. Thus, missions ministries should not be seen as a separate department but as leaders of the entire congregation. Church members should see the Great Commission as their personal responsibility and have some relationship with someone serving in cross-cultural missions. Mobilized churches will be identifying members to consider missionary service, who would be sent out and supported in prayer and finances by the congregation.

14. **Emphasis:** In order to maximize the impact of the missions ministry, churches should identify special areas of emphasis for long-term participation and concentrated support. Churches with such focus sites typically continue to support other missionaries. However, a higher level of promotion, recruiting and funding will go toward these emphases, as well as repeat site visits and short-term projects.

15. **Church Planting:** If the Church is God's Plan A for establishing His kingdom—and there is no Plan B—then church planting is the means of expanding that kingdom. Moreover, studies have shown that church planting is by far the most effective method of evangelism. Therefore, a majority of missions resources should be directed towards church-planting efforts.

16. **Facilitation:** Increasingly, missionaries are being sent not as primary evangelists and pastors but as facilitators to indigenous leaders. Many such leaders are looking for a peer to come alongside them for counsel, resources and connection to the global Church. Although their ministry may not be as visible as other missionaries or the nationals they serve, these new missionaries can have enormous impact and deserve to be strongly supported.

17. **Church Leadership:** A significant factor in determining the success of a missions ministry is the support of church leaders, and in particular the senior pastor. The strongest ministries describe their church leadership as champions of missions, through their personal participation and public commitment.

18. **National Leadership:** No matter how long missionaries live in another culture, they will never understand the context as well as a national. Practically, church multiplication requires the development of indigenous leaders and their primary role in the local church. Missions ministries should look to support efforts that emphasize national leadership.

19. **Education:** While an annual missions conference may be the most visible event to promote missions, churches that are the most mobilized create opportunities to educate their members about missions throughout the year. The congregation should be regularly learning about missions through such means as sermons, presentations and missions courses.

20. **Commission of Church:** God has called the Church to be His primary instrument to evangelize people, extend mercy, and transform the culture around it. Missions ministries should consider whether the efforts they support are primarily based in the local church or are separate ministries.