



Partnership: *Giving and Receiving*

Susan Fikse

BETH BEAVER

■ "If there is only one hand clapping, does it make a sound?" In Turkey, this proverb is woven into the national psyche—Turkish people assume that relationships and cooperation are as essential to any task as two hands clapping. Yet, most individualistic Americans are more likely to say, "put your hand to the plow" in order to get something accomplished. Despite these different cultural perspectives, both Turgay, senior pastor of All Saints Church in Turkey, and Chuck Frost, senior pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, agree on the need

for collaboration when it comes to world missions.

Fuel for the Flame

Since Westminster entered the Turkey Partnership with Turgay six years ago, Chuck and his church have developed relationships with the brothers and sisters in Christ who lead All Saints. "Our goal in partnering with Turkey was to know each other deeply enough to know what would really help," says Chuck. As those relationships have matured, the Americans have developed a new perspective on their role in the partnership. "We now have the

perspective that we're not taking light to the darkness," he explains. "We're providing fuel for the flame that already burns."

That fuel comes in many forms, including one-time, short-term trips and more long-term, relationship-building efforts. For example, Westminster and other members of the 14 PCA churches in the Turkey Partnership sent a group of women experienced in children's ministry to Turkey to help develop a biblically sound Sunday school curriculum. Last year, 26 Americans conducted a VBS for children in Istanbul. Another group conducted an adult soccer camp as an outreach in Bulgaria. ➤

Chuck is quick to clarify that short-term projects are not to be confused with long-term partnership. "Practical, short-term projects are needed, but unless the relationship is part of [the partnership], they may not have a long-term impact," he

explains. In recent years, Americans have developed a "parachute-in" approach to world missions, says Chuck. "We believe that projects should follow relationships rather than projects coming first and relationships coming later."

"Partnership is really important to us because we cannot do church planting alone," Turgay acknowledges. "Without the assistance we've received, I would be stuck in a store-front church pastoring a handful of people." Instead, All Saints is home to 42 families and 250 members, and 83 students are enrolled in a local extension of Miami International Seminary.

Kingdom Vision

With the added fuel provided by the Turkey Partnership, All Saints is now focusing on igniting new fires. The local church has grown and matured rapidly as a result of the partnership, but perhaps more importantly, Turgay has developed a vision that reaches beyond Turkey's borders. "In 1993 when I first contacted Mission to the World, my vision was very limited," he explains. "As I met with American church leaders, I gained a broader vision for what God wanted to do."

Chuck agrees that vision building is one of the most vital benefits of partnership. "No one understands context like the one who lives in it. Yet, no one can bring perspective to the context better than those from the outside," he explains. As the partners collaborated on strategy for Turkey and beyond, they "were able to paint a kingdom picture rather than merely a national picture," says Chuck. "Partnership brings creative energy to attempt things that might not have been possible otherwise."

One result of this broader vision is an outreach to neighboring Bulgaria. Medical doctors from partner churches in the U.S. formed a short-term team to assist a Turkish church in a medical outreach to the surrounding community. "This outreach created quite an impact in the area," Turgay reports. "Now, there is an effort to build up a small church. These things would never have been done



without our partnership with churches in the States."

Physical assistance has helped the church advance in Istanbul as well. Following a deadly earthquake in 1999, All Saints, backed by U.S. partners, helped supply secular hospitals and operated a variety of relief projects. This "in deed" ministry brought new legitimacy to the church, especially important in a Muslim culture skeptical of Protestant Christianity. "We are well known in the area because of these projects," says Turgay. "It's like the pumping of blood, giving life to different parts of the community."

Giving and Receiving

While the clear beneficiary of missions collaboration like the Turkey Partnership may be the local church in Turkey, Chuck suggests that local churches in America benefit substantially from their involvement as well. "It may be difficult for a 200 to 400-member church to manage its own short-term missions trip," he explains. "So, the partnership is able to bring about more personal involvement than many churches are able to create on their own."

"Partnership also brings together a larger capacity of material resources," Chuck continues, "so that our work is more consequential." For example, funding a \$25,000 translation of a classical work of theology may be an unattainable goal for a single church; however, it may be a realistic goal for a group of churches working together. Finally, as local church members join with members of other partner churches to serve internationally, they forge deeper relationships across church boundaries. "When people share kingdom ministry, it is truly a life-enriching experience," said Chuck.

Turgay echoes those sentiments, suggesting that local American churches who engage in long-term partnership will see results over time that they never could have imagined. "They will see how much they can do, even from the States," he says. "They will say in the end, 'God really used us to complete some of His work.'"

Jud Lamos, international director for MTW's Enterprise for Christian-Muslim Relations, is charged with providing oversight to the Turkey Partnership and many other efforts to take the gospel

to the ends of the earth. He agrees that collaboration in global missions brings glory to God in a unique way. "Partnership is our best testimony to the effectiveness of God's grace to change sinful men and women so that they love and serve each other in His body, the Church." This work is not to the credit of local churches either in Turkey or the U.S., nor to the Turkey Partnership. Jud emphasizes, "It is only through God's grace, as it is expressed in Christ, that churches can cooperate and work together across national boundaries."

Jud, Turgay, and Chuck all hope that the Turkey Partnership can serve as a prototype for other PCA churches desiring global collaboration. As the future of the Turkey Partnership unfolds, perhaps more Americans can resist "putting a hand to the plow" and seek to work hand in hand when it comes to world missions. ■

Turkish camp counselors lead children in daily Bible study and VBS activities.



INTERN TO MISSIONARY: *Recruiting from Within*

Ashley Levy



Stephanie Pike



Philip Stenberg

Jeremy and Amanda Ross learned about the lifestyle of missionaries in the country where they planned to serve. Stephanie Pike discovered a love for the people of France and a long-term call to the mission field. Philip Stenberg found a unique way to use his God-given talents and passions to advance the kingdom.

They were in different fields at different times, but these men and women all found that God worked in their lives in unique ways during their time as MTW interns. They, like many others, found their internship to be only the beginning of their involvement in the mission field.

"Internships are often a stepping stone to either long-term missions or to greater missions involvement as a church member or leader," said Jack Beall, director of MTW's Internship and Two-Year Departments. "An internship can be a milestone time with far-reaching impact." (MTW's Internship Department provides opportunities to assist long-term missionaries in the field for as little as one month or as long as 11 months.)

Jeremy and Amanda Ross were confident of their call to career missions before they went to Lima, Peru, for six weeks in the summer of 2003. The missions pastor of their home church encouraged them to explore that field as a possibility by going there as interns.

"It took maybe a day for us to know that we wanted to be there long term," said Amanda. "We loved the team, the vision for ministry, and most of all the people of Lima."

Since they knew they wanted to return as career missionaries, Jeremy and Amanda took advantage of their time in Lima to learn as much as they could. They shadowed missionaries, visited the market, and checked out schools. Their six weeks helped them prepare for their move to the field as long-term missionaries.

Stephanie Pike was working for St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Orlando, Fla., when her sister persuaded her to go on a 10-day mission trip to Lyon, France. By the end of the trip, Stephanie had agreed to return as an intern to work at the American School. During her six months in Lyon, Stephanie found herself thinking of returning long term.

"These thoughts just wouldn't go away," said Stephanie. "My internship gave me a firsthand view of the need and a heart for the people of France. I realized that many of them may not know anyone else who can tell them about Christ."

Philip Stenberg grew up going on yearly mission trips with his family. After college graduation he began to think about ways to be involved in missions on his own. Two weeks later, an email from his church about a trip to Ethiopia appeared in his inbox. Philip went on that 10-day trip in the summer of 2004, and later took a leave of absence from his job to do a three-month internship in the African nation.

"I really resonated and connected with the people of Ethiopia," Philip said. "I went back the second year specifically thinking about ways I could be more involved and make more of a difference."

For now, Philip continues to work in the States. He plans to lead a 10-day trip from his church to Ethiopia this summer, and he looks forward to future missions opportunities where God can use his business skills and experience to help the church.

Whether investigating the mission field or confirming a call to missions, an internship can be a valuable and life-changing experience. Jeremy, Amanda, Stephanie, and Philip all agree—an internship is a great way to join God in His work around the world. ■



PHOTO COURTESY: ANDREW JAMB

ANDRES GARZA

A Man with a Plan

Carter Davis

What often seems like a series of timely coincidences is inevitably the divine work of God.

For reasons that seemed inexplicable at the time, the ministry team at Bethel Presbyterian Church—a small congregation based in Clover, S.C.—felt compelled to begin a series of summer mission trips to northern Mexico several years ago. Around the same time, Andres Garza—a former city planner in Monterrey, Mexico, who had recently become a key component of the church-planting movement in northern Mexico—was beginning to realize that he needed further theological training.

As Andres and the team from Bethel came to know each other through an existing partnership of churches and annual mission trips, both realized needs they could fulfill for each other.

Bethel needed an intern to provide administrative and ministerial assistance. Its close proximity to Reformed Theological Institute's (RTS) Charlotte campus made it an ideal location for Andres as he earned a master's degree there and received training to help raise up the next generation of pastors in Mexico. Additionally, Bethel had already shepherded several Mexican church leaders prior to Andres.

"To see God's hand in all of this has been exciting, to say the least," said Bethel pastor John Gess.

Andres has recently completed his master's program at RTS, and will return to Monterrey in July.

"Church planting is my passion," he said. "I realized that we needed people working in our

region that are well trained, but previously I had no theological training."

Andres will return to a part of the world that he says is hungry for Reformed doctrine.

"There are between 40 and 50 million people in northern Mexico," he said. "In this region, there are only about 40 or 45 Reformed churches. Church planting is one of the best ways to share the gospel in areas with few or no churches."

In addition to overseeing the planting of new churches in the region, Andres will also help develop a recently-established theological institute in Monterrey, which will train future church planters and church leaders.

"It will be hard to see Andres go," John Gess said, "because he's integrated himself into every aspect of this church. But, we are seeing firsthand how God's work is unfolding in this huge city in Mexico."

Andres and his wife, Ruth, both are master's level educated architects, which helps explain Andres' commitment to church planting.

"There is a lot of planning involved when a church is planted," he said. "I love planning, and that's my professional background, so the match is perfect for me. We are taking a long-term vision back to Mexico with us and letting the Holy Spirit lead us." ■

LIFETIME LEARNING

Ongoing training is crucial for missionaries

Carter Davis



New missionaries at Interview and Orientation Training.

Author Robert Fulghum created a cottage industry by convincing others that they learned all they really needed to know in kindergarten. A cute saying indeed, but as any MTW missionary can attest, this cliché couldn't be further from the truth.

Long before setting foot on the mission field, MTW missionaries are immersed in a battery of classes, tests, evaluations, and mentoring programs, which are designed to root them in the gospel, enhance their skill sets, broaden their knowledge base, and prepare them for specific challenges they will face while working abroad.

"We are charged with the spiritual care of our missionaries," said Steve Collins, assistant to the director of MTW's Spiritual Life Department. "It's not a position to be taken lightly. The number one cause of

failure [for missionaries] is an inability to take care of themselves spiritually. Because of this fact, we have to be more proactive than reactive."

One important training series is the Living in Grace conference, which every new missionary must complete prior to departing for the field. The Spiritual Life Department also hosts an annual summer conference for missionaries on home ministry assignment (HMA) and regular area retreats for missionaries on the field.

"We provide a variety of conferences and retreats as a time of refreshment and renewal," Steve said. "Once [the missionaries] are out on the field, we attempt to draw them back to the fundamentals of the gospel, emphasizing a reliance on Christ."

To that end, educational opportunities are offered at every stage of a missionary's tenure, ensuring that newcomers and seasoned missionaries alike have the tools they need to serve abroad.

"You can't arm these folks with knowledge and skills and just abandon them once they're out on the field," said Steve. "There has to be a continuation of learning."

A New Learning Tool

In January, MTW's Global Training and Development (GTD) Department unveiled its most recent effort to ensure that missionaries' educational needs are being met in the form of a learning contract.

"Essentially, the learning contract is designed to be self directed," said Jeff Marlowe, GTD director and regional director for Enterprise for Christian-Muslim Relations in North America. "We want [the missionaries] to be in charge of their own learning."



(Top and bottom) New MTW missionaries at Pre-Field Training in Brussels.

When completed, the thorough, step-by-step guide ensures that missionaries clearly understand their strengths, weaknesses, and the steps necessary to complete their goals.

Jon and Sarah Pfeil, who are preparing to work with the Tokyo/Chiba church-planting team, are currently enrolled in language school in Japan for two years, and were among the first crop of missionaries to complete the learning contract.

"I admit that we were both a little skeptical about it," said Jon, "but we found both the process and the results to be valuable."

As the contract is designed to do, the Pfeils became more aware of their strengths and shortcomings and were given ideas on moving forward toward their goals.

"During our transition to the field, we felt more 'in tune' with ourselves and our tendencies," Jon said. "We made conscious efforts to respond differently than we normally would have."

Offering Training In-House

Although MTW missionaries have never been sent into the field "empty handed," Jeff and Steve affirm that in recent years, MTW has augmented its training efforts by bringing them in-house.

"By doing the training ourselves," Jeff said, "we are able to keep our finger on the pulse of what the missionaries truly need. To be an effective organization, we must be concerned about the development and learning of our members."

The Pfeils believe that the learning contract—in addition to the Living in Grace

conference, Readiness Evaluation, Pre-Field Training, language school, and Interview and Orientation sessions—has sharpened their abilities as servants of God far from home.

Another who can testify to the value of extended training options is Bob, a short-term missionary with MTW Enterprise, who is preparing to leave for Western Europe.

Like the Pfeils, Bob was among the first to complete the learning contract.

"I felt like I was able to absorb the material naturally and turn it into goals that could help me tailor my role specifically," he said. "It is extremely helpful to have a clear idea of where you are. [The learning contract] makes it much easier to move from the theoretical into the practical."

When asked how prepared he felt for the mission field, Bob's satisfaction was apparent.

"At first, I'll admit that it was a little frustrating at how hands-on the training was," he confessed, "but in the end, when I look at where my colleagues are—those who aren't affiliated with MTW—I am extremely impressed with all that MTW has done to prepare me to spread the Word." ■



Partnering WITH Nationals Heart to Heart

Susan Fikse

Boniface Tibirihwa has lived through his share of trials. All three of the children born to him and his wife died by the age of two. The couple was ostracized by their clan because they refused to submit their sick children to a witch doctor's remedies. They subsist on the meager earnings of a peasant farmer, growing cabbages and tomatoes. Yet, MTW's Rick Gray, regional director for Eastern Africa, says of Boniface, "He is the most dedicated servant of the Lord that I know anywhere in the world."

This Christian brother in Uganda is one of the many valued partners working with MTW to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Ordained as an elder evangelist by the Presbyterian Church in Uganda, Boniface is sent out by his local presbytery to share the message of Christ throughout the region. In conjunction with MTW, he

hopes to develop leaders within the church by establishing a Bible school for more effective ministry. With his fluency in the language and his knowledge of the local culture, Boniface is better suited than most Western missionaries to take the gospel to his own people.

Building Firm Foundations

MTW increasingly relies on local partners like Boniface, particularly in remote and unevangelized areas, to pioneer new ministries. Not only are local Christians most equipped to take the gospel to their own people, but they also provide a strategic alliance, according to Rick Gray. In many areas of the developing world, local missionaries can operate on a mere five to 10 percent of the funds a Western missionary would require. However, despite these advantages,

navigating the terrain of local partnerships can be as treacherous as the African jungle.

"The potential for cross-cultural confusion is considerable," says Rick. "When people with dissimilar life circumstances and ways of viewing the world explore how they might work together, it's imperative that they invest enough time building their relationship to get a good look into one another's hearts." Rick has encountered East Africans who betray foreign churches by receiving financial assistance from multiple sources, as well as East Africans who have been devastated by the unfulfilled promises of American mission agencies. These are the situations MTW attempts to avoid by investing time building firm foundations for partnership.



Rick Gray preaching in Rwanda.

Locals Reach Neighboring Tribe

In South Asia, Paul Taylor, MTW's international director for the Asia/Pacific area, has seen firsthand the value of investing time in local Christians with a vision for reaching their own. Learning of the Bawm tribe's desire to reach the neighboring Mru with the gospel, Paul pledged MTW's support for the seminary education of two future Bawm ministry leaders. As the relationship developed over three years of seminary training, trust between these Bawm leaders and MTW grew.

What began as a small investment in the education of two men evolved into a full-fledged partnership that changed their entire area. The Bawm ministry now includes 24 national workers who serve not only the Mru, but the Chakma and several other tribes. Since 2003, this partnership has yielded 1,100 professions of faith, 900 baptisms, 11 new churches, and a boarding school. By God's grace, MTW's expertise combined with local resources has brought Him glory in missions efforts in South Asia and around the world.

No Cookie Cutters

The dramatic spiritual transformation that Paul witnessed in South Asia is not the pattern with every partnership. The

methods and results of each partnership are different because each local context is different. "There are no cookie cutter models of partnership," says MTW's international director of Enterprise for Christian-Muslim Relations, Jud Lamos. "That's the nature of cross-cultural ministry." However, as MTW continues to form new partnerships and work with local partners in various contexts, a common thread is the need for solid relational foundations.

"If a partnership is formed too quickly," says Rick, "before you really get to know one another, then your co-laboring for the gospel can quickly degenerate into a bog of misunderstandings, disappointments, and squabbles." While spending time living and ministering together is no guarantee of tranquil relationships, building this foundation can help avoid the pitfalls of cross-cultural partnerships. "If you spend sufficient hours to live and minister together," said Rick, "to ask good questions and listen to one another, and to lay a solid foundation of mutual trust and understanding, then a growing synergistic spirit can bear significant fruit for Jesus and His glory."

The Builder is Able

The complexity of establishing effective partnerships with local believers will continue to test the creativity of MTW missionaries for years to come, as

they build church-planting movements in remote and unreached areas. As Rick and those like him around the world build solid relational foundations for cross-cultural partnership, U.S. church members can pray that those relationships would yield partnerships characterized by the dedication of Boniface Tibirihwa and the transformation of entire people groups as in South Asia. As Rick aptly puts it, "The Builder of the Church is more than able!" ❏

Missionaries and Nationals: An Essential Partnership

In recent decades, much missions work has shifted from being missionary-led to missionary-facilitated. And that trend is a good one, according to MTW director of field operations Bill Goodman.

"There are few places in the world where we're working that has no Christian witness," said Bill. "So we're seeking to facilitate church planting through national leaders more than ever."

Nationals are able to relate to their countrymen easily, understanding the language and culture implicitly. But they may not have a background in theological education or church planting. "National workers possess extraordinary skills," said Bill. "But they often lack church-planting resources, training, materials, and know-how. That's where nationals and missionaries benefit from working together. We can help facilitate what they want to accomplish."

This new paradigm has gained momentum, especially as U.S. churches increasingly desire direct contact with mission fields. "Sometimes well-intentioned churches have gone overseas to try to manage projects themselves, and have gotten burned," said Bill. "Western missionaries trained in the language and culture of these fields can serve as a crucial link."

But overall, the understanding is the same: in the new world of missions, working with nationals is essential.



SOUTH ASIA— Paul Taylor with Pastor Purnalal Chakma and his family.

Come with Me Over the Bridge

2006 CHILDREN'S MISSIONS PROJECT

Each year, MTW selects a missions project designed for children and illustrated with a video. This year's project is for MTW's Acapulco StreetChild center, Sobre el Puente (Over the Bridge).

The video, "Come with Me Over the Bridge," is divided into five sections, making it ideal for use in VBS, Sunday school, Christian schools, or camp programs. Funds from this year's project will be used to hire a Christian social worker for Sobre el Puente.



Maggie Gonzalez with a former street child who has been helped through Sobre el Puente.



TOM STEWART

To request a free copy of the *Come with Me Over the Bridge* video, in DVD or VHS format, email info@mtw.org, call (678) 823-0004, or check the tick box on the coupon on page 15.

"We've been hoping to fill this position since the ministry began four years ago," said Maggie Gonzalez, director of Sobre el Puente. "This social worker will help children reconcile with their parents, and when that's not possible, arrange for the emotional, medical, and financial care they need. When this happens, kids get their identity back, and it makes a huge difference. Best of all, they begin learning about Christ and how to give and receive forgiveness." ■

■ FOLLOWING IS AN ARTICLE ABOUT ACAPULCO'S SOBRE EL PUENTE STREETCHILD MINISTRY, BY DONNA JENNINGS GARCIA.

"¡Curame!": A Ministry That's More Than Medical

"¡Curame!"—"Cure me!"

The requests usually begin as I approach the front gate outside Sobre el Puente ("Over the Bridge"), the MTW StreetChild drop-in center here in Acapulco. The kids are lined up, waiting to enter, and want to be sure I know exactly where their ankle hurts from yesterday's fall, where they have glass stuck in their foot from walking without shoes, or how bad their throat hurts. Their physical needs are many—drug addiction, high-risk sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy, and poor nutrition—but their spiritual and emotional needs are even greater.

I am a physician assistant by trade, and here in Acapulco I have the privilege

of caring for the medical needs of children involved with MTW's StreetChild outreach. Some of my work is traditional medicine—checking for ear infections and listening to hearts and lungs; but other is traditional mom's work—wrapping band-aids over cuts or encouraging them to swallow their medicine.

Caring for the children's medical needs is a simple and powerful way to speak the love of Christ. I cannot over-emphasize the impact of physically touching and helping these children. They are used to a society that acts in hate and disgust toward them, so the act of placing a bandage on them with love is a totally new experience. Every day, providing

medical treatment opens a window of opportunity to share the God who loves them and offers them abundant life.

In addition to personal interactions, providing medical care has additional benefits for the ministry. The offer of medical attention draws kids to the center, where they hear about God's truth.

Some days the work here is difficult—it is dirty, it's hot, and the kids can be disrespectful. However, I can't get over the fact that God is working in these kids' lives. He is redeeming His people, He is calling children into His kingdom, and it is the highest privilege to have a front-row seat to the great work He is doing in the lives of the street children of Acapulco. ■

news briefs

Persecution in South Asia

Smoke was still rising from the ruins of the church building when several MTW missionaries arrived on the scene. The church building had been completed only two months before by the new believers among the Chakma people in South Asia.

Persecution is alive and well throughout the world. More than 80 percent of all people living in the Asia/Pacific region live in "closed countries."

But often, this persecution actually helps the growth of the church, since those who claim the name of Christ have counted the cost and thus are firm in their faith. This was certainly the case in the village whose church was burned. Even though these believers were less than two years old in their faith, they were unwavering and talked about building another church building—this time out of brick.

MTW Europe Meets in Spain

More than 50 people recently attended MTW's first "Europe International Leadership Forum" in Madrid, Spain. More than half of the attendees were national workers, with 16 European nations represented.

"We were thrilled to have so many nationals there," said Brian Deringer, MTW's international director over Europe. "I saw Czechs and Latvians talking together, and Ukrainians and Scots. Europe can be a tough field, so it was great to see nationals from all over being able to network and share resources."

All the national leaders shared their ministry vision with the group and received prayer. Attendees heard presentations from both nationals and MTW team leaders on a variety of topics, including church-planting movements, obstacles facing Eastern and Western Europe, theological education, and the issue of dependency.

"It was such an encouragement for these nationals to meet one another," said Brian. "So many of them are isolated in ministry in their different countries. It's a real shot in the arm for them to connect."



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Here, There, and Everywhere

Melissa Morgan

For **Alice Hatch**, working from the States doesn't change her status as an MTW missionary.

"I'm serving in a global sense," said Alice, who is based out of Atlanta. "I'm serving all 600 of our missionaries around the world, even though I live in the U.S. And I experience many of the same things foreign missionaries go through—prayer letters, itineration, and keeping track of my support account."

As a licensed professional counselor (LPC), Alice provides "member care" for MTW missionaries all over the globe via phone contact, email, and trips

overseas. And her 20-year career as a missionary in Ecuador, ending in 1992, only enhances her current role.

"When I walk into a room of missionaries, I don't even have to open my mouth and they agree with me," Alice jokes. "There's a certain credibility when I talk with them, because they know that I am one of them."

Alice is one of a small group of MTW missionaries who are based in the U.S. and provide strategic services for foreign missionaries to help them do their work on the field.

Benefiting from Missionary Experience

MTW benefits from active missionaries who have previously served overseas working from the States. "U.S.-based missionaries help keep us focused on the global picture," said Bill Goodman, MTW's director of field operations, and a missionary himself. "And even though some of them have an office at Mission to the World, their workplace is global. The U.S.

location is a launching pad to support our missionaries all over the world."

David White, a home-based missionary and MTW's director of the One- and Two-Week Department, has served MTW for three years in Australia and 10 years in Mexico. "Missionaries coming off the field into the office provide the perspective of the field."

He relates a story of two training events with the same exercise—challenging participants to build the highest structure with a set of building blocks. "At the office staff event, everyone sat at their table and worked with the blocks, but at the missionary staff event, participants found ways to put the blocks in trees and on the roof. It was a perfect example of how the field forces a creativity and problem-solving approach that the U.S. location doesn't naturally generate."

As a foreign missionary, David oversaw some 4,000 short-term missionaries during the course of his time on the field. And when he transitioned into working from the U.S., he brought an intimate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of MTW's short-term program to the job. "I was able to use that experience to impact MTW worldwide by making the program more field friendly."

"Wider and Deeper"

Additionally, having U.S.-based missionaries allows MTW to go "wider and deeper" with its cross-cultural mission to spread the gospel through church-planting movements worldwide.

"Bringing in missionaries to work from the U.S. on occasion allows us to expand our staff in a cost-effective

way," said David. "We're able to offer services, assist missionaries, and enrich our field ministries in ways that would otherwise be impossible."

No matter where MTW missionaries work, they all serve the same goal. "We're all part of a whole system," said one U.S.-based MTW missionary.

The World is Flat

In our increasingly globalized world, the practice of missions is evolving. "People are on the move more than any time since the first century," said Bill Goodman. "So geography doesn't define a missionary the way it used to."

This "the world is flat" concept—that technology and globalization have sped up communication and connected people in ways previously unheard of—also informs how a new generation of missionaries will take the gospel to the masses.

"The world is so much smaller than it used to be," said David White. "In the early 1980s, relatively few people had traveled abroad. Now, a high percentage of the general population has traveled overseas."

So as immigration patterns shift, the Church must consider new approaches to reaching the lost—especially in a world where believers can reach the Senegalese in Harlem and Pakistanis in Toronto, not just in Islamabad.

But every nation continues to benefit from foreign missions. "Every nation needs to receive missionaries into their culture, including the U.S.," said an MTW missionary based in Atlanta who previously served overseas. "To really understand a

culture, you need to live among them and speak their language."

Missions from Home

Alice Hatch's supporters in the U.S. are increasingly understanding her role as a U.S.-based missionary. "When I first moved back to the U.S., one of my churches stopped supporting me because they couldn't understand how I could be a missionary while living in the States," said Alice. "But I explained, 'I'm extending your missionary dollars by enabling foreign missionaries to stay on the field and do their work. I need to stay a missionary to serve missionaries.' And they reinstated my support."

"We want to provide everything our foreign missionaries need to stay on the field," said Bill Goodman. "Through ministries like the Spiritual Life Department, Third Culture Kid retreats, Member Care, and Global Training and Development, we want to help all of our missionaries function optimally and grow in their effectiveness." ■



CULTIVATING THE BACK 80

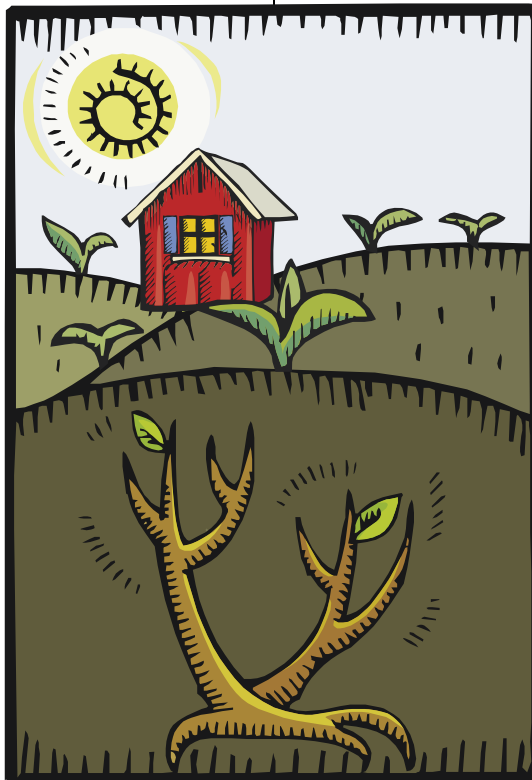
Dave Hebert

A tenant farmer was working 100 acres of good soil. The farmhouse he lived in was in the center of his fields, so he could easily keep track of the general health of his crops as they developed. He first plowed and seeded all 100 acres, then gave them all a soaking. Weed-pulling was time consuming and laborious, but as all good farmers know, you have to stay on top of the weeds or they'll soon be on top of the crops. Life was good, the work was hard but satisfying, and the farmer was generally pleased with the work of his hands.

But as he grew older, he became more and more easily satisfied by the looks of the crops closest to the farm. There was so much work to do with 100 acres, and it only seemed natural to give those closest by the most water, the most fertilizer, and the most time to weed-pulling.

Of course the acres not so close to the farm didn't do as well as the close ones, but at least they were alive, even if they weren't too pretty to look at. But what's a man to do? It costs a lot to run a farm. Even if the back 80 was not doing so well, when the living room chair was positioned just right, he couldn't even see back there. In fact, when he had guests over for supper on Sunday afternoons, he sat them by the big bay window and hardly a meal went by without someone commenting about how healthy looking his crops were.

So, it was no great surprise when the farmer's brothers offered to invest in his holdings. After all, they had supped often enough to taste the quality of his crops. They knew what he was capable of. Why, just look out the front window!



You don't have to be an experienced farmer to see who the fool is here. Only a farmer who didn't care about all of his land would farm this way. Why do we sometimes act this way in missions? Do those people groups closest to us and least-expensively reached need the gospel any more than those far off? Of course not. But people groups whose geography is hard to reach, whose language is difficult, whose customs are so different from ours deserve the full effort of our mission force too. We need to be careful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us.

My challenge as you consider becoming personally involved in foreign missions is this: cultivate the back 80. The cost may very well be greater, in terms of comfort, finances, preparation, and access to stateside family and resources,

but we must commit to the global need of the gospel of Jesus with a sense of equity and balance that truly considers the entire world. ■

DAVE HEBERT IS A FORMER MTW MISSIONARY TO JAPAN. HE IS CURRENTLY LEADING SHORT-TERM TRIPS TO THE FIELD AND WORKING ON SPECIAL PROJECTS.



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Paul Kooistra
Coordinator

Marty Davis
Editor

Melissa Morgan
Managing Editor

Beth Beaver
Graphic Design/Production

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Editorial offices:
1600 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
(678) 823-0004
www.mtw.org

Please send address changes to:
MTW
1600 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

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Dr. Paul Kooistra

THE CHOICE THAT COSTS

Is it more important to feel good about yourself or to do what is right? Not so long ago, no one in the church would have asked such a question. The answer was obvious to everyone. In fact, many of the privileges, freedoms, and much of the prosperity that Americans enjoy find their origins in the gospel of truth. Right must prevail over might, duty must come before pleasure, charity must come before self, and repentance must come before freedom. These truths do not seem as clear in the church today. Let me suggest that we have lost the principle that within the gospel of mercy and grace there is a cost.

Before you agree with me and simply move on, let me remind you that the question of cost is always central to God's kingdom work. Chapter eight of Mark's Gospel is a pivotal point in the earthly ministry of Christ. His previously private ministry now becomes public, and the focus is on the reason He came—the cross. Jesus asks His disciples, "Who

do you say that I am?" This is a kind of final exam for them, and at first it would seem that Peter got an A+. "You are the Christ," he answers. Peter understood that Jesus was more than a great teacher or a popular political leader.

However, if we read on we see that Peter got the question right, but he failed the test. Jesus begins to remind them that the Messiah must suffer many things and He must be killed and after three days He must rise again. Mark says, "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him." Then Jesus rebuked Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. Jesus rebukes Peter, but He speaks to Satan. Satan was attempting through the words of Christ's beloved disciple to turn Him from the cross.

There can be no doubt that a great cosmic battle was engaged at that moment, a battle that climaxed on Good Friday and ended on Easter morning. But Satan did not give up. Jesus then tells the people they will face temptation and will have to face the cost of obedience,

sacrifice, and discipleship every day. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Satan tempts us with the same choice of glory rather than the cross. Each day we face all kinds of choices, and almost without exception, the right way—the way of God—is the costly way. Telling the truth when it will hurt, being faithful to marriage vows when unfaithfulness seems so attractive, loving my enemy when the wound still stings, refusing to compromise when it will cost me my job.

For the servant of Christ the ultimate question is never how can I enjoy life, feel good about myself, or how can I succeed? The question is first, what does Christ want me to do? And secondly, am I willing to pay the price no matter what the cost?

Paul D. Kooistra



Mission to the World
1600 North Brown Road
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