

Unfinished

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Russia's young survivors

A rare look inside orphanage doors · page 4

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Our vision: The Cross of Christ within arm's reach of everyone in the world;

Our mission: To facilitate obedience to the Great Commission by the Body of Christ;

Our strategy: To create self-reproducing, indigenous, discipling Christian communities by mobilizing cross-cultural witnesses for Christ in partnership with nationals.

Join us in The Mission

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

INCARNATION

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

INTEGRITY

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

PASSION

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

PEOPLE

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

PARTNERSHIP

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

PRAYER

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

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Reality check

Our nation's economic pundits are telling only half the truth

I'm having a hard time. It's probably my fault. I make it a point to read our Atlanta paper daily. I listen to news radio on the way to and from the office each day. I make sure I catch the local and the national news on television each night. I also read my Bible. I try to stay informed, and I also ask the question over and over, "What would Jesus do?" In addition, I have traveled extensively in my life – both for business and for pleasure – as I am in love with this wonderful world God has created and the marvelous people with whom He has populated it. Yep. It's my own fault that I'm having such a hard time. If only I didn't read the paper!

Different context

This great country of ours has experienced unprecedented economic growth over the last several years. Now the pundits say we are in an extreme slowdown at best and a recession at worse. I could respond (my graduate work and business experience – before I met Christ and entered the ministry – were in accounting, finance, and economics). However, to engage the argument on that level ignores the larger reality that I have seen firsthand in so many countries. On our worst day economically, we in the United States are much better off than millions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The reality is that the poor in our country are wealthy compared to many in other countries.

Now, don't get me wrong. I am not saying we shouldn't be concerned by the needs in our nation. I am just saying we

need to look at those in context of the needs of a larger population of people around the world. As I read the Bible I am totally convinced that God's love and caring concern extends equally inside and outside our borders.

My problem comes when I put the world's needs alongside the concern that I share with many others who lead Chris-



Photo by Laurie Drum

On our worst day economically, we in the United States are much better off than millions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

tian ministries today. That concern is that every time our nation experiences an economic slowdown, the bottom falls out of charitable giving. It is natural in times like this to re-evaluate our spending and giving patterns. Unfortunately, past records show that our nation's giving declines significantly more than our spending. In a faith-based ministry such as The Mission Society, when the giving declines, so does the ministry. It's as simple as that.

Oh, the ironies

This is hard to watch. Christ's command to make disciples does not change, even with a decline in giving. People need Jesus just as much today as they did last year. Ironically, in difficult times it is often easier to introduce someone to Christ than in prosperous time. In difficult times there is more need for ministries of compassion, but with declining funds, it is harder to accomplish them.

This year it will be even harder to watch the news knowing that millions, and perhaps billions, of dollars have been spent on the presidential primaries, and more will be spent on the election before the end of the year. It's hard for me not to wonder how much ministry could be done with just a fraction of those resources.

As you read this issue of *Unfinished*, you will catch a glimpse of the worldwide work The Mission Society is doing to advance the cause of Christ. This ministry would not be possible without the faithfulness of countless individuals like you.

Please pray that during this time in our country, the hearts of people will be stirred and giving will remain strong, so the ministry God has laid out for us and for other Christian organizations can continue unabated. ✠

The Rev. Dr. Philip R. Granger, The Mission Society president and CEO, is an elder in the North Indiana Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.



PLANNING

The Parable of the Apple Orchard

In the beginning, God created the apple tree. He said to man, "This is my tree. I'm going to teach you to fertilize it. I'll teach you how to prune it. I'll send the sunshine and rain, and together we will grow a beautiful apple tree.

And man did as God had instructed. He pruned, fertilized, and God sent sunshine, rain and His blessing.

You and I know that as stewardship.

It wasn't long until they had a country of beautiful apple orchards producing red, shiny, delicious apples.

But man began to argue with other men about whose trees would be picked. And other nations became jealous of the way God had blessed their country. And they began to build armies to take over the country.

And God said, "It's not good that man should operate this way." So He sent kings and judges to be in charge.

We call that government.

The kings built armies to protect their country.

The judges decided whose trees would be picked by whom.

And peace returned to their country.

When peace had returned, the kings and judges came to man and said, "Man, we need some apples to finance our operation."

We call this income tax.

Man understood that he could live with any income tax system put in place by government, so long as he had enough apples left over to eat. That didn't mean he would like it, but he could live with it.

Man observed that there were surplus apples being produced by his country. But there were other countries that did not have enough apples to eat. So man decided to sell his orchard and build a packing company. He would pack the surplus apples and ship them to other countries for a profit.

But when man sold his apple orchard, Caesar came in and cut down a fourth of the apple trees.

We call that a capital gains tax.

When Caesar took a third of the apples as an income tax, man went back to the apple orchard the next year and picked another hundred bushels of apples. But when Caesar cut down the trees, there were no more apples.

Man then observed that when his neighbor died, Caesar cut down half of his apple trees.

We call that an estate tax.

Man said to Caesar, "Caesar, don't you understand? There are only two things you can do with an apple tree. You can grow apples, or you can cut it down and burn it as firewood."

And Caesar still doesn't understand why there are more hungry people on the streets today than there were when he cut down the first apple tree. It's because when you cut down the trees, you don't have any more apples.

So man said to Caesar, "Caesar, those are not your trees, those are God's trees. God has placed me here as a steward, the caretaker and trustee of those trees." "I'm going to build a fence around

God's apple orchards, and I'm not going to give you a key. You can stand at the gate and take some of my apples when I pick them, but you cannot cut down God's trees over which I am a steward."

Conclusion

We would like to help you build fences around the "apple orchard" God has entrusted to you. To assist you, our staff has prepared a special **Guide to Planning Your Estate**. Please write for your free copy today, or call 678.542.9037. You can also reach me at dbrown@themissionsociety.org.

PLEASE SEND ME A FREE GUIDE TO PLANNING YOUR ESTATE. I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS NO OBLIGATION.

For additional information on estate tax and business planning, please indicate if:

- Your estate is over \$2 million, or You own your own business.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ E-mail _____

Date of Birth _____ Spouse's Date of Birth _____

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Russia's young survivors

A look behind the orphanage doors and inside the orphan's heart

Ever since the fall of communism, the largest country on earth has been taking up less space in our collective consciousness. After nearly a century of watching over our shoulder at fellow superpower the USSR, other emerging giants seem to be capturing more of our nation's attention these days. Even so, *Time* magazine reminds us, "Russia is central to our world."

And its orphaned children are, for many Americans, also central to our hearts. Russia is among the top foreign nations (including Korea and China) from which children are most often adopted by U.S. citizens. Every year about 5,000 Russian children have been grafted into U.S. families. Still 700,000 remain in Russian orphanages. And when, at age 16 or 17, children are asked to leave the orphanage, an estimated 10 percent commit suicide; 30 percent commit crimes, and 40 percent are unemployed and homeless.

The Mission Society has been involved in ministry among Russian orphans since 1994. Missionaries Sue Fuller, Ari Arfaras, and Steve and Carol Johnson serve in Khabarovsk, in the Russian Far East, where Sue and Ari minister among the city's 14 orphanages.

Mr. and Mrs. Peterson* serve in another Russian city, helping orphan teens transition from life in the orphanage to life to a society that doesn't seem to want them. Here, Sue Fuller and Mr. and Mrs. Peterson tell of life behind the orphanage doors – and inside the orphan's heart.

**A pseudonym*



What are the common characteristics among the Russian orphans you know?

Sue: They are all just like little survivors. Some of them have more hurt and pain than others, but they all have this self-preservation instinct.

Mr. Peterson: Read *Lord of the Flies*, and you've just described an orphanage in Russia. There's a visible structure (the teachers, etc.), but underneath that structure, the kids develop a separate society that's ruled by terror (usually), fear, and abuse of each other.

When a young person's identity is shaped by the orphanage environment, what happens when he or she is no longer in that system?

Mrs. Peterson: They're very lost usually. In an orphanage, they grow up in a communal environment. For example, they might have 10, 15, 20, or 30 kids in one room, and they've lived like that their entire lives.

Mr. Peterson: They don't have an individual identity.

Sue: Masha is one of our orphans who went on to graduate from university. We've seen her change, so now she has learned to enjoy spending time by herself. But there are other things – like responsibility for taking care of self, home, money – that have been slower to develop.

"We've seen a lot of kids come to Christ. And I'm seeing now that God is kind of targeting the leaders, like Kolya. One of the leaders among the girls committed her life to Jesus just last week."

Mr. Peterson: That's because in the orphanage, anything that you have can be broken, or used, or taken – and probably will be – by other kids or by the administration. As a result, the kids learn that if you have something, you should use it. If you have money, you should

spend it. If you keep it, someone might take it from you. An orphan will think, "I have to get whatever I can out of this situation." If a pie is on a table, he will know that if you get more pie, he will get less pie. And if he waits, he will get no pie. So the orphan will have to learn to rob from others in order to get for himself. If he cares for others' needs, he's in serious danger of not getting anything for himself. And nobody else will look out for him. An orphan will live today for today. Never mind the future.

What news would make an orphan's heart sing? In other words, what would be perceived as good news by him or her?

Sue: Good news would be that their parents will take them back (many orphans are abandoned by parents), or, if not their parents, that one of their family members – an older brother or sister – will take them back.

Mr. Peterson: We've heard many times that "my dream is to live in a

Called to adopt?

The restrictions on non-Russians adoption have recently increased, so the process is often slower than in the past. To begin your research, check out the Russian government's official website concerning adoptions (<http://www.adopt-in-russia.ru/>). It provides information about requirements and procedures. Mr. and Mrs. Peterson also recommend, "Make sure the adoption agency you choose has a current registration with the Russian government (for 2008 or 2007) and a permit in a given oblast (state) or region (preferably several) to operate as an adoption agency.

Ask to speak with people who have adopted who can explain how the process went for them. Adopting a Russian orphan is a very lengthy process (at least a year, usually much longer) and not cheaper than American adoption (upwards of \$20,000 these days). We would also state very strongly that adoption is not merely an alternative to biological parenting. Because of the many difficulties and unknowns involved in the process, adopting should be a calling, not just of one parent or even of both, but of the whole family, including biological children, if any."

family [meaning any family], because I've never experienced that."

Mrs. Peterson: They seem to dream only to a point. Once the teenage years hit, the dream dies, and a kind of hardness sets in.

Sue: Even if they have opportunities for education, or if you are trying to work with them to find something that they're interested in doing, they are just so apathetic. They're indifferent about anything that would take just a little more effort on their part – like studying, or even going with you to look at different technical schools. You get so tired of pushing them, because you don't want to push them into something that they don't want to do. But the thing that requires the very least from them is usually what they'll do on their own, because they feel so hopeless.

Mr. Peterson: The kids begin to believe that no matter what happens – even if they graduate from university – nothing really is waiting for them. They think, "I'm never truly going to transition

to society. I'm never going to be truly acceptable." The orphan is jettisoned into society as an individual. But remember, they don't see themselves as individuals. Orphans understand themselves as a member of a group. When they get into society, they have no group.

The Mission Society also works in orphanage ministry in Costa Rica, Kenya, Ukraine, and has a child advocacy representative on its Global Resource Team. To read about The Mission Society's orphanage work in Costa Rica, *see page 18*.

Mrs. Peterson: I guess our kids operate with kind of a gang mentality, but it's a good thing. It's good for them to stay connected. They have a leader [another orphan] who looks out for the

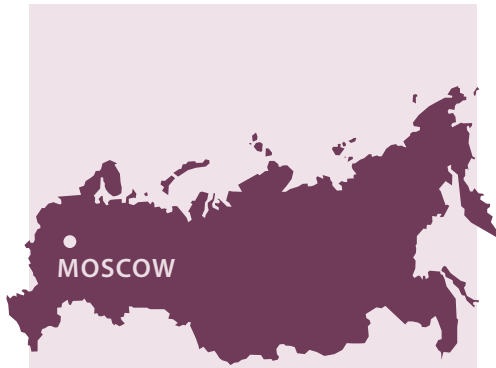
needs of the group. And once the leader comes to Christ, it's almost like the others say, "Yes, sir" [we'll do that, too].

For example, there is a boy, Kolya, who is kind of a boss of the kids in the orphanage. He graduated from the orphanage four years ago, and all the kids still call him "Boss." He recently accepted Christ, and he's gone back into the orphanage, and all the kids showed up at Bible study because of him.

Mr. Peterson: Kolya commands so much respect that when he walked into the orphanage, everyone backed away; they stay well clear of him and his friends.

How do orphans like Kolya come to be regarded as leaders by the other orphans?

Mr. Peterson: When Kolya came to the orphanage in first grade, some fifth graders came up to him and decided to let him know who was boss. They punched him, and he went down, but he stood back up. They punched him again, and he went down and got right back up.



Quick Facts:

Population:

142,893,540

Language:

Russian 79.8%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 2%, Bashkir 1.2%, Chuvash 1.1%, other or unspecified 12.1% (2002 census)

Religious groups:

Russian Orthodox 15-20%, Muslim 10-15%, other Christian 2% (2006 est.)

Note: estimates are of practicing worshippers; Russia has large populations of non-practicing believers and non-believers, a legacy of over seven decades of Soviet rule

Opened field in 1993

Ministries:

- Arts ministry
- Children's ministry
- Discipleship
- Orphan transition program
- Orphanage ministry
- Teaching

Tears began to flow, but each time they knocked him down, he just stood back up. It got to the point after their punching him so much and him just standing back up that *he* scared *them*.

After that, his authority was established, and he started to gather his lieutenants from his first-grade class, which was divided into two groups. Over a period of years, his band of eight guys got total control of their group. Then they took over the other group in the grade. Then they began to terrorize the groups under them. Then they used the groups under them to terrorize the groups over them. And by the time he reached the end of seventh grade, his gang had total control of the orphanage, and the teachers were in terror.

So now, years later, Kolya walks in and just says, "I'm going to do a Bible study," and the other kids all choose to come. He commands respect, not just because of his past inside the orphanage, but also because he's made it on the outside. The first question all of the other kids asked him was, "How did you do it?" (The only stories about graduated orphans that usually get back to the orphanage are of death, or drug addiction, or prison.) Because he's made it on the outside, Kolya is able to come back in and say, "Here's the way; it's Jesus," and he has authority to do that.

Mrs. Peterson: We've seen a lot of kids come to Christ. And I'm seeing now that God is kind of targeting the leaders, like Kolya. One of the leaders among the girls committed her life to Jesus just last week.

What is your hope for your [orphanage] kids?

Sue: Our hope for the kids is God's

best for them – not for a family *we* think would be good, or adoption, or foster care, but *God's* best for them, whatever that is. And our prayer is that we are able to discern what the Lord wants us to do and that we are who we need to be to help bring the kids to that place.

Mr. Peterson: This might sound wacky, but my hope, my desperate plea, is for revival, not just for the Church, but for all of Russia. My hope is for revival that rocks the culture, that transforms the culture, that comes from the heart of orphans who know they are sons and daughters of God, who have the power and the authority through that understanding to drive out the spirit of fatherlessness that has raped and pillaged Russia for centuries. The

fatherless are not just the orphans. The fatherless are everywhere.

Mrs. Peterson: Every person who has ever been born has been an orphan, because we're cut off from the Father. And the

"My hope is for revival that rocks the culture, that transforms the culture, that comes from the heart of orphans who know they are sons and daughters of God."

whole ministry through Jesus is the ministry of adoption to the Father. Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Way where? I never asked that before. Jesus is the way to the Father. But so many people only come as far as Jesus, but never get to the Father.

Sue: I always thought that it would be better to talk to kids about God the Father first, and then get to Jesus. But the orphans grasp the idea of Jesus much faster than they do of a heavenly Father.

Mrs. Peterson: That's because Jesus represents a sibling or a peer, and an orphan understands having a peer. But when they learn about God the Father and learn to hear Him speaking to them, they are so happy. †

Mission Society's ministry in Russia's Far East

In 1993 The Mission Society, as a member of CoMission, responded to an invitation from Russian education authorities to send teams to Russia to teach ethics and morality in its public schools.

Mission Society missionaries were sent to the city of Khabarovsk, on the border of China in the Russian Far East – seven time zones away from Moscow. Although the Russian laws have now changed and there is no longer an invitation to witness explicitly, Mission Society missionaries, Sue Fuller and Ari Arfaras, continue to minister and distribute



humanitarian aid among the city's 14 orphanages. In addition, Steve Johnson, an elder in The United Methodist Church, teaches and mentors Russian pastors in the Khabarovsk area, and his wife, Carol,

leads small groups and ministries for women dealing with spousal abuse and alcoholism.

For more information, or to donate online, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org. To give to the ministries of any of these missionaries, indicate on your check to The Mission

Society as follows: Ari Arfaras (account #242); Sue Fuller (account # 245); Steve and Carol Johnson (account # 283).



Ari Arfaras



Sue Fuller



Steve and Carol Johnson

In Khabarovsk, New Year's, rather than Christmas, is the time of gift-giving and decorating. This year, The Mission Society team, along with friends David and Tanya Workman, bought decorations for the orphanages and gave stockings filled with small gifts to each child.

With money provided them by ministry partners, The Mission Society orphanage team also provided a New Year's Eve dinner for the older children, who were each permitted to invite a guest. The kids planned the menu, bought the groceries, and helped make dinner. Missionary Ari Arfaras wrote, "We love giving the kids good memories and 'normal' family experiences that they will hopefully carry with them into adulthood."

During the first weekend in February, the graduates of the Karsakova orphanage got together for an event planned by The Mission Society team. "Our simple tea turned into a full-fledged reunion," remembered missionary Ari Arfaras, "complete with program, slide show, and games. Sixteen of the forty Karsakova graduates showed up, which wasn't bad considering we had to depend mostly on word-of-mouth invitations. There were 32 of us in all, including staff who also wanted to attend. ... My favorite part was when each of the graduates got up and spoke. Each one thanked their teachers for the love and care that they'd been given."



New Year's celebration



Karsakova orphanage reunion





MISSIONARY TESTIMONY:

The beauty of the impossible call

A couple's coming to their "wit's end" marks the beginning of a magnificent journey

"We've changed our mission statement every month for the last five years," say Mr. and Mrs. Peterson* who, by their own admission, were called to do an "impossible job." The job looked possible, though, when their journey began. They had a detailed business plan. They would help Russia's orphan teens transition successfully into society by establishing a Christian center where orphanage graduates would be taught computer, micro business, basic life skills, and be introduced to Jesus. The center would be replicated, too – adding a certain number of new locations every year, like a McDonald's franchise.

It looked good on paper, says Mrs. Peterson, but when they started operating the center, they discovered that "the only thing the kids wanted to do was to drink vodka and play computer games." What's more, when the kids started asking why God never showed up to save them from the abuse they suffered, "I became God's prosecuting attorney," remembers Mr. Peterson.

Behind the story of every public ministry there is the story of the private work of transformation in the ministers' hearts. This is a tale of a crisis point in ministry, the voice of God, and the miracle of resurrection.

**A pseudonym used here because this couple ministers in an area where Protestant Christian witness is not welcome*

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

—Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV)



Mr.: A real watershed moment came when one of the kids at the center said to me, “You know, all this stuff you are saying is really great, and I love the center. I love being here. But I can’t live by this reality and these rules in the hell I live in. It will get me killed.” That’s when we started to realize that what the kids were experiencing at the center had no connection to their outside lives.

Over time they began to relate to each other at the center more and more in the way they related to each other in the dorm. So it was getting worse. At some point, we asked them, “Do you believe in God?” And they said, “no.” And we asked, “Do you believe in the devil?” And they said, “We live in his territory. We’ve seen him; we’ve seen demonic manifestation. We’ve seen demons when we’ve been high.”

Mrs.: There was so much darkness in them, at some point we started to really realize that we had nothing to offer. Our orphan kids’ hearts were big, bleeding wounds, and it felt like all we were doing was putting Band-Aids on them, but not stopping the bleeding, not dealing with the infection.

Mr.: Even if we put these kids in a bubble where their world would not touch them, it wouldn’t matter, because their world was always with them inside their heart. The biggest blackness was in their own hearts. They were asking questions that I could not answer, like, “Where was God when I was raped?” “Where was God when I was abused?” “Where was God when my parents left me?” “Where was God when I lived in terror in the orphanage?” And to be perfectly honest, I became the prosecuting attorney against God.

Mrs.: We thought, “God, if you care so much for the orphan, really, where were you?” We were coming to see that our own hearts were in a pretty bad shape, and that the orphans were bringing our own pain to the surface.

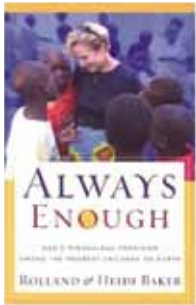
Mr.: You can ask questions of God two different ways. You can ask, “Where were you?”—really seeking an answer; or you can ask accusingly, “Where were you!” I’m not sure I was really seeking an answer.

And God began to speak to me. He said, “I have been moving in the lives of these kids. But no one has brought them to Me in a way that I can show them

where I’ve been working in their lives. So for everything I have done, they have given credit to another source. They say, ‘It’s luck’ or ‘it’s chance.’ I need someone who will walk into their lives and declare to them that, ‘What you’re about to see is God’s love manifest in your lives,’ and then get out of the way for Me to do what only I can do. If you don’t declare to them beforehand what I’m about to do, they can give credit to another source.”

God reminded me of the story of Moses and the Nile. If Moses had come the day after the Nile had turned to blood and said, “My God did this,” he would have been number 13 in a long line of magicians who claimed credit for their god. But because Moses came the day before and said, “What you are about to see is God showing His glory and His majesty in your presence,” nobody could argue.

A while after that, I was talking to a gang leader, and he essentially told me, “Your God has no place here. This is the devil’s territory.” Oxana was there while he was saying this. She’s an orphan girl who has, in desperation, tried prostitution and suicide. She said, “No. God is real.” She told a story about how she had had



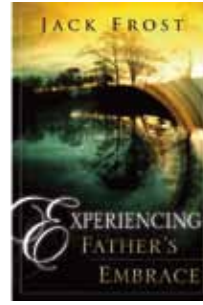
Always Enough

By Rolland and Heidi Baker

Published by Chosen (2003)

As you follow the adventures of missionaries Rolland and Heidi Baker in Mozambique – ravaged by civil war and famine to become one of the poorest places on earth – you'll be awed by God's power and

provision. The account of how He has enabled the Bakers to help many hundreds of Mozambique's throwaway children and start an astounding 5,000 churches will warm your heart and move you to tears. The simple practice of "ministering to the one" and choosing to trust God daily unleashes great power to change any situation. –*excerpted from book's back cover*



Experiencing Father's Embrace

By Jack Frost

Published by Destiny Image (2006)

Jack Frost lived a double life. On the outside, his aggressive, performance-based approach to life had served him well in ministry, but his family life and interior life were in shambles. In *Experiencing*

Father's Embrace, Frost shares his story of transformation and the message of God's unconditional love he learned along the way. His teachings on "The Father Heart" (on CD) have helped Russian orphans accept the love of their heavenly Father.

–*portions excerpted from Christianbooks.com*

Both of these books are available online at Christianbooks.com or Amazon.com. To order by phone from Christian Book Distributors, call 1-800-CHRISTIAN.

a terrible headache one day when she was riding the bus with Tanya. And Tanya prayed for her, and the headache immediately left. "God is real," she said. The gang leader had nothing to say.

These kids were saying to us, "I need someone who can save me from the hell I live in and the hell that lives in me. I mean *save*. Every part of me." Oxana could see God was real and working in her life when he saved her from her headache.

Not knowing what else to do, we began to pray for healing for kids who had physical problems, and we started reading books on healing and deliverance. Among the books we read was *Always Enough*, by Rolland and Heidi Baker.

Mrs.: Basically, *Always Enough* is a book about Rolland and Heidi Baker's working in an orphanage in Mozambique, and how God has used orphans in one of the poorest nations on earth to begin a revival that has swept through the whole country.

Mr.: We thought, "We need what the Bakers have, because what we have doesn't work."

Mrs.: We had gone to do this impossible job, and we were not supposed to go without the

supernatural tools. When we did, it was just horrible. I learned that the spiritual gifts are really necessary for ministry. You cannot do it without them. We said, "God, we've just got to have more of You."

Mr.: By this point, my frustration level with ministry and my pain for our kids had increased so much it exceeded my offense at God. I said, "Okay, God, I need whatever you have." Soon after that, a friend invited me to a conference and I said, "Okay. What's to lose?"

Some of the main teachings at the conference were about forgiveness and judgment. (Judgment has always been a big issue for me.) During that conference, I spent about 10 hours total over three days lying on the floor, watching as God paraded before me people I needed to forgive. It was like I was a hot-air balloon tied to the ground with weights around every side. With every person I forgave, it was like another cord was cut and another sandbag was dropped, and I felt like I was flying, flying, flying. I had more joy, more happiness, more peace, more power – even more than I had just after my salvation. I wanted to read the Bible again; I wanted to spend time with God. I could hear His

voice again. Learning to hear God was what freed us both up to have anything to give our orphan kids. And it happened through forgiveness.

The scriptures say [see John 5:19] that Jesus only did what He saw His Father *doing* – present tense – not what He saw His Father doing on the first day of the month and then didn't do for the rest of the month. Moment by moment, Jesus did what His Father was doing, and that has become, essentially, our entire ministry model.

Mrs.: I never really knew I could hear God's voice. I didn't know that on a daily basis God had stuff to say to me, like pages of stuff to say to me, and to everyone really.

Mr.: He's there, all the time, talking.

Mrs.: And we just don't know how to tune in and listen to Him. We're not taught how to hear His voice. We're not taught to expect Him to speak. And if you ask Him to speak, then He will.

We started learning how to hear God's voice and to teach others to do it. Over time, we also began learning to do prayer counseling. This is when we seek to allow



“Pray to the LORD for the grace to be stopped.”

—Dr. Susan Muto, professor of Christian spirituality

Jesus to be the One who is counseling people, and we just help them to learn to hear Him for themselves; we help guide them in the process. We started to see that, through prayer counseling, Jesus would take people into the moments of trauma and show them that He was there with them in that moment. Then He would show people what lie they had believed from that experience.

Mr.: Honestly, all the gifts of the Spirit flow from just listening to God.

When we got back from the conference, we started inviting orphans to come to our house, and we would spend an hour just listening to God’s voice. And you know what happened? We had non-Christian kids telling us perfect theology. They would say, “God told me this and this and this.” And they had healthier theology than many of the people I know. They heard His voice. Non-Christian kids!

What we found was that most of our kids had not been able to come to God, because you cannot come to God unless you believe that He is a rewarder of them who do diligently seek Him. If I think that He’s going to reward me with a two-by-four in the head, I’m not going to come near Him. Most of our kids are convinced that God is

either super far away or He’s waiting to hit them. And so their first step actually has to be to hear His voice. We teach them to ask, “God, show me one of Your thoughts about me.” I can’t tell you the number of times they have heard God answer, “I love you.” They’re like, “That can’t be. Can that be Him?”

Natasha will tell you that she used to be an orphan, but then was adopted and now has an awesome Daddy.

And there are kids who hear Him and say, “I’m still not willing to accept it.” But one of the biggest shockers for me was how He answered all the questions they had – like, “Where was God when . . .?”

Mrs.: Once the kids can ask God for themselves, and they actually know how to listen, He gives them really good answers. His voice is always encouraging, loving.

One of our favorite stories of healing and restoration is about one of our girls. Natasha was an orphan from birth (left in the hospital by her mother). She was a tough little girl with lots of anger and unrest on the inside. By the time she was in second grade, she was smoking; by fourth grade, she was drinking.

We met her when she was out of the orphanage and studying in a tech school. Shortly after we met, she received Jesus and was instantly transformed in many ways. She lost all interest in drinking and stopped cursing (which, up to that point, had been her main language).

Natasha started growing in Christ, but after about six months, she came to a point that unless she allowed God to deal with some of her pain and unforgiveness, she couldn’t go any further. So she met with one of our teammates for prayer counseling.

As they prayed, Natasha saw herself carrying a big bundle of her pain. Then she saw herself at the foot of the cross, and Jesus was asking her to give Him her pain. It was a real struggle for her to give up her pain, because it had become so much part of her identity. Finally she gave it up to Jesus and was immediately transported in her mind to the next picture where she was a little baby, and God the Father was carrying her around in His arms and showing her off to everyone, saying how glad He was for her to be born and how incredible He thought she was. He was also calling her His daughter.

As Natasha came out of this experience she was no longer an orphan, but was adopted by Daddy God Himself. To

this day, two years later, Natasha will tell you that she used to be an orphan, but then was adopted and now has an awesome Daddy.

Mr.: Sometimes the kids get answers from God that are, to me, not satisfying. But to them, they are. For example, when one girl wanted to know why God didn't intervene when her mom wouldn't come see her at the orphanage, God showed her a vision of her mom passed out drunk on the couch. The girl saw that Jesus was there, too, trying to wake up her mom. When her mom wouldn't wake up, Jesus began to cry. When I asked the girl if that answer (seeing Jesus crying like this) was enough for her, she said, "Oh, more than enough." People want to know a God who cares for them like that.

Before all this happened, we saw ourselves as doctors. Now I feel like we're somewhere between a nurse and a cheerleader for what God is doing. We're just following God around saying, "We just want to see what You are doing and what You're going to do next." ☩

To give to the ministry of Mr. and Mrs. Peterson, indicate account #0299 on your check made payable to The Mission Society.

Wide open receiver

Missionary tells about learning to hear God

By Mr. Peterson*

After we were taught to hear God's voice at the conference, for three months, every time I lay down to pray (I have to lay down to pray because I'm too active. If I sit to pray, I get up and do things before I even know it), I would say, "Lord, show me one of your thoughts." Bing. He would show me painful memories, shame, people I had not forgiven. He was showing me things that needed to be dealt with that were blocking my ability to hear Him. In the past, when these memories popped up on my mental screen, my normal reaction was to shove them back down. But now I'd say, "Okay God. What do you want to do with this memory?"

He would say, "You really need to forgive him or her." "For what?" (That's the thing with forgiveness. You have to be very specific.) God would show me a single moment, and say, "You need to forgive her for saying that word. And you also need to forgive yourself."

The moment I forgave someone for a concrete thing – not by my strength, but by agreement with God's desire to forgive, because Jesus died for forgiveness – I was set free from the pain, the guilt, and heartache of that moment. It's a miracle.

With shameful memories, I discovered that I could not access

about 3/4 of my life, because I so automatically feel shame. (By shame I mean something so insignificant as falling down in second grade in front of the class.) But God would say, "No, no, give that to me. Trust Me."

I remember; I opened my hands and said, "I give you the shame of that moment. Do something with it." When I did, all the shame left that

"I remember; I opened my hands up and said, 'I give you the shame of that memory. Do something with it.' The moment I did, all the shame left that moment. There was no pain left."

memory. There was no pain left. And suddenly that part of my life that I couldn't access, part of who I am, was given back to me.

It wasn't like I had been living *with* a facade; I had been living *as* a facade, because I only lived in that fine, little layer of the good stuff in my life. But God wants to – and is able to – take the pain, the shame, the guilt, and the unforgiveness. And once those are gone, I can hear Him. And out of that, everything else flows.

**A pseudonym*



Jesus, Lord of all

To embrace Christ's Lordship, do Muslims, Hindus, and people of other religious beliefs have to wholly abandon their culture? Methodist missionary E. Stanley Jones lends a hand.

When the young missionary E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973) arrived for the first time in India in 1907, he was not prepared for his new life. "As I look back," he wrote, "I see that the most valuable thing about me in those days was my colossal ignorance. I had no knowledge of what to do and not to do, for I had gone through no course in Indian evangelism or briefing. ... All I knew was evangelism – people needed to be converted." (1)

For Jones, who had been educated in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, early 20th century India would become a place of disequilibrium and confusion. Two worlds had collided for him. How could he, rooted in an understanding of Christianity so tied to Western culture, ever hope to introduce Christ to the people of the East? In his book, *Christ of the Indian Road*, Jones identifies the problem. He wrote, "A Hindu puts the matter thus: 'We have been unwilling to receive Christ into our hearts, but we alone are not responsible for this. Christian missionaries have held out a Christ completely covered by their Christianity.'"

Trying to force the Christianity of the West into the culture of the East was not working. Jones' struggle, as one so resolute to introduce Christ, would eventually subside, as he came to believe that the people of India need not fully abandon their Indian culture in order to embrace Christ. In fact, in 1923 Jones would publish an essay entitled, "The Influence of Indian

Heritage upon Christianity." Later he would identify "living seeds" of Indian religion that "the world can not afford to lose," among them: "that there is justice at the heart of the universe"; and "a passion for freedom." (2)

"Jones had found a new way of thinking about the Kingdom of God," writes David Bundy. "It was no longer North American or British culture." (3)

Perhaps for Jones, this awakening to the "Christ of the Indian Road" was a more full awakening to God's "prevenient grace" (a concept familiar to Jones as a Methodist churchman). God had been at work in the culture of India long before any missionary ever arrived. In 1925, his book, *Christ of the Indian Road*, would become a centerpiece for discussion and debate and put Jones on the world stage.

Today, more than 75 years later, there are evangelistic movements to offer Christ to Muslims and Hindus without requiring that they disengage entirely from their Muslim and Hindu culture. Those who come to Christ under these terms consider themselves to be "followers of Jesus," rather than Christians (which is a term more closely associated with a "Western religion").

As you read these short excerpts from *Christ of the Indian Road*, pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to draw all people to Jesus, who is the completion of all truth.

We want the East to keep its own soul – only thus can it be creative. We are not there to plaster Western civilization upon the East, to make it a pale copy of ourselves. We must go deeper – infinitely deeper – than that.

Again, we are not there to give its people a blocked off, rigid, ecclesiastical and theological system, saying to them, “Take that in its entirety or nothing.” Jesus is the gospel – he himself is the good news. Men went out in those early days and preached Jesus and the resurrection – a risen Jesus. But just as a stream takes on the coloring of the soil over which it flows, so Christianity in its flowing through the soils of the different racial and national outlooks took on coloring from them. We have added a good deal to the central message – Jesus. Some of it is worth surviving, for it has come out of reality. Some of it will not stand the shock of transplantation. It is a shock to any organism to be transplanted. . . . Some of our ecclesiastical systems built upon a controversy lose meaning when they pass over into a totally different atmosphere. But Jesus is universal. He can stand the shock of transplantation. He appeals to the universal heart.

– From *Christ of the Indian Road*, by E. Stanley Jones
(Abingdon Press)

A friend of mine was talking to a Brahman gentleman when the Brahman turned to him and said “I don’t like the Christ of your creeds and churches.” My friend quietly replied “Then how would you like the Christ of the Indian road?” The Brahman thought a moment, mentally picturing the Christ of the Indian road – he saw him dressed in Sadhus’ garments, seated by the wayside with the crowds about him, healing blind men who felt their way to him, putting his hands upon the heads of poor unclean lepers who fell at his feet, announcing the good tidings of the Kingdom to stricken folks, staggering up a lone hill with a broken heart and dying upon a wayside cross for men, but rising triumphantly and walking on that road again. He suddenly turned to the friend and earnestly said “I could love and follow the Christ of the Indian road.”

– From *Christ of the Indian Road*, by E. Stanley Jones
(Abingdon Press)

Questions for discussion:

1. In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote, “If you are a Christian you do not have to believe that all the other religions are simply wrong all through. . . . If you are a Christian, you are free to think that all these religions, even the queerest one, contain at least some hint of the truth.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What are some “hints” of the truth that you see in other world religions? How do you see God already at work in them?
2. What are some of the leading influences coloring non-Christians’ understanding of Christianity?
3. E. Stanley Jones wrote, “We have added a good deal to the central message – Jesus.” What are ways the North American presentation of Christianity have “added” to the central message of Jesus?

Notes:

- (1) From *Song of Ascents*, E. Stanley Jones
- (2) From *Christ of the Indian Road*, E. Stanley Jones
- (3) From “The Theology of the Kingdom of God in E. Stanley Jones,” by David Bundy (Wesley Center Online)



Churches, let the little children come to you

A doable plan for congregations to care for orphans

I remember my first time. My family had only been serving as missionaries in Central Asia a few weeks when our church group decided to make weekly visits to a local orphanage. I fell in love with the children. I was overcome by their hugs and their hunger for love. I wanted to make a difference. I've been in many orphanages in different countries since that time, and the experience is always the same. If the decision to adopt could be made and consummated in a moment, Shawn and I would have 100 children! Whether it is Kazakhstan, Russia, Tanzania, Costa Rica, Romania, or Peru, this is the common experience of people who visit children's outreach ministries. Children in need get to our hearts.

Yet moving from an emotional response to actually providing a long-term solution for orphaned children creates challenges. Often when people act out of emotion, the end result is limited impact at best and harmful at worst. But unless brokenhearted orphanage visitors line up to adopt these children, how can these little ones ever have hope of a family and a more promising future?

Search for solution

Recently while I was on a field visit to Costa Rica, Mission Society missionaries Doug and Brooke Burns told me about an organization with which they have connected. It's called Casa Viva. The founders, Phil and Jill Aspegren, had formerly directed a group home. This is a fairly common arrangement, in which the orphaned

or abandoned children are housed on a campus with several homes. Each home has house parents (who are paid staff).

After some years of working with this model, Phil and Jill saw some limitations, especially as they considered the millions of children in need. One was practical. The per-child cost required to operate such institutions is very high. There is no way to replicate that model in a way to impact more than a small fraction of the



Photo by Laurie Drum

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress. ..."
—James 1:27, NIV

need. Another limitation was social. We all would agree that children are better served if they can be in a true family setting. House parents can be a wonderful alternative, but by the nature and demands of the group-home environment, their abilities to function in a true parental role are limited. Still another limitation was ecclesiological. Caring for orphans is an explicit command of God to His people, yet churches often are not involved beyond

some financial support, if even that.

In forming Casa Viva, the Aspegrens would seek to address these issues. Casa Viva is licensed by the government to place children into foster care. Although a permanent family setting is most desirable, foster care is still a step up from institutional care. Casa Viva provides children a family in which to live until they can either be reunited with a restored biological family or be adopted. But Casa Viva doesn't look for just any foster families; *the families are raised up from within the Church*. The local church provides some of the funding, as does the government. More importantly, the church provides a caring and supportive community for families within the congregation who receive the children into their homes. Casa Viva provides training for the church and families; it staffs social workers and psychologists who assist the families, and it interfaces with the government to negotiate the necessary legal details. The Casa Viva staff members also work with the biological family or, when that's not possible, with potential adoptive families to advocate for the best long-term solution for the child.

The result is that children are cared for by families in their own culture; local churches are empowered to address the problem of children-at-risk in their own communities, and the funding is provided primarily by government and local sources. This avoids an unhealthy and unsustainable dependency on foreign money.

BRISTOL HOUSE

Your Partner in Discipleship

Costa Rica's witness

The Burnses hadn't planned to serve in Costa Rica, but after prayer and more research they have become convinced God would have them remain in Costa Rica for now, working with this ministry model. As much as the Burnses would love to be the ones interacting with the children day by day, they realize more children will be helped if Doug and Brooke dedicate energies to help local



Doug and Brooke Burns live in San Jose, Costa Rica with their children Austin (12) and Mary Beth (10).

churches address the issues of children-at-risk. Casa Viva is potentially a long-reaching ministry indeed. Through its witness, Costa Rica's church communities can announce to the world God's love for orphans. †

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

the formation of community | and (1) management | assist in the differences.

April 2006

OUR FAITH TODAY

Leading United Methodists Answer Your Questions

Q Why should Christians read the Old Testament?

A The simple answer to the question is that it is the same reason that readers of the first chapter of Timothy's *War and Peace* need to read the rest of the book. We can read that first chapter with enjoyment, but we miss the real meaning and significance of that first chapter only if we have read what leads up to it. The same is true for the New Testament: it is the conclusion to a book which begins in Genesis. The only church contained this when they came to call the post-Christ writings the "New Testament." They were saying that this was the second part of a series—the sequel to the Old Testament "prequel."

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

Christ, we are misunderstanding it. Again, this is what the early church meant when they called it the "Old Testament." They did not mean "the Testament that has been rendered unnecessary." They meant to say, "This is the first part of the deal that is necessary to understanding the rest." We need to see it that way, too.

Q Why do we pray in Jesus' name?

A As the youngest child in my family (and the only boy) I didn't always get my way. To convince my older sister, I would always say, "The Bible said so." Then, working on authority my sisters recognized, but lost out if ever I said even's name in vain, claiming something about her that was contrary to her character or her will for us kids.

Dallas Willard in *The Divine Conspiracy* defines prayer as a conversation with God about matters of mutual concern. It's telling God what's important in our lives and listening to what God wants in our lives. To pray in Jesus' name is to provide that Jesus has the final authority over our requests and desires in our relationship with God. We are submitting to his authority and power because his name is equivalent to his character. It's comparable to the phrase in the Lord's Prayer, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." When Jesus said out 72 statements, they reported that "from the devil's mouth as to his prayer name" (Luke 10:17). The name of Jesus is powerful in making God's Kingdom real in our world today.

Praying in Jesus' name is not a lucky sign-off at the end of the prayer. It is a reminder to his will, something that is greater in Jesus, disciples.

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

A When we consider the New Testament we find that

La Estructura de Nuestra Fe

Los fundamentos esenciales de nuestra fe cristiana de Costa Rica

Harold W. Burgess

OUR FAITH TODAY

THIS MONTHLY BULLETIN INSERT answers questions about United Methodist practices, the Scriptures, personal and social holiness and more. A new section, written by **The Mission Society** staff, offers informative and inspiring stories from around the world.

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Uncomplicating evangelism

Three reasons why sharing your faith shouldn't be so scary



The Barna Research Group has found that among adults who accepted Christ, the most common precipitant was a friend.

On many weekends, our church ministry team members have the privilege and blessing of being in a local church delivering our Global Outreach Weekend (*see opposite page*). These churches have invited us in to either help ignite a passion for missions among the membership, or to assist in taking their existing missions program to a higher level. In the context of these weekends, the issue of evangelism has been increasingly raised. Most often, the comments go something like this, “I know we are supposed to be engaged in missions, but this evangelism thing makes me feel so inadequate.” One church called before one weekend event and said, “The people here are asking if this Global Outreach Weekend is for missions or evangelism. What should I tell them?” Upon further questioning, we found that if it were a missions event, the church people would come; if evangelism, they would not.

The truth is that evangelism (witnessing, faith sharing, etc.) scares the

socks off many Christians. I think there are several fundamental reasons for that. When it comes to evangelism, Christians generally think:

1. Closure – not process

While we want to see all people come to the place where they invite Christ into their lives, the truth is that rarely does one do that after having only one encounter with the Gospel. For most, it is a series of “God encounters” that lead to a decision point. Sometimes we may be the first to introduce the reality of the risen Lord to someone. Other times we may be one of many along the continuum. Every once in a while, God may have us present at the time a person is ready for a decision, and we may get to pray with them as they accept Christ. However, no one encounter is more important than the other. All contribute to the end result. Jesus simply calls us to be His witnesses.

2. Knowledge – not experience

Many Christians think they have to have extraordinary knowledge of the Bible, so they can recall specific verses as they share their faith. Others feel as if they have to know some formula or have a specific tool such as the *Four Spiritual Laws* or *Evangelism Explosion* to be an effective witness. While these certainly can be used, in truth, if you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you have the most powerful tool available. You have your story, and nobody knows and can tell your story like you. At the very heart of witnessing is relationship. When you combine relationships with non-believers and your personal experiences with Jesus Christ, you are witnessing. You are engaged in, dare I say it, evangelism.

3. Special – not common

Sometimes Christians are reluctant to talk about their experience because their story lacks the spectacular. We marvel at those Damascus Road stories where people were saved from a life of debauchery or from pending doom. The fact is that God is at work in the ordinary, the routine, and the everyday things in life. If we would be more observant, we would see His presence at work, and that would form a basis for relating the love of Christ to a variety of people in a variety of situations.

Let's go back to the question we mentioned earlier, “The people here are asking if this Global Outreach Weekend event is for missions or evangelism. What should I tell them?” The answer is, *both*. The Mission Society practices and

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

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

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

Developing a Global Outreach Plan **September 4, 2008**

Norcross, GA

This workshop will provide each participant with the training and tools needed to implement an effective missional structure and strategy that will be a unique fit for your local church.

Cost is \$30 per person.

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

Norcross, GA

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

Cost is \$30 per person.

Conducting a Global Impact Celebration **September 5-6, 2008**

Norcross, GA

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Cost is \$30 per person.

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

promotes holistic ministry. That is, we minister to the whole person, and we would never think of separating compassion ministries from evangelism. We are fond of saying that through compassion and mercy ministries we build bridges to people. However, once the bridge is built, we always want to carry the Gospel over it. I like the way Larry Williams, our Global Resource Team director and Agrimissions specialist, puts it. He says, "First the bread, then the Bread of Life."

We are the Church. As such, we have been called to be His witnesses in our community, our nation, and our world (Acts 1:8). To attempt to do missions without the Gospel element is to reduce the Church to a service club. That is not something to which God has called us. †

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

What is a Global Outreach Weekend?

The Global Outreach Weekend is a catalyst for missional transformation in your church. It is comprised of the six-hour Global Outreach Seminar, plus ministry to the entire congregation during Sunday worship and Sunday school.

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

The elusive bottom line

Betsy Phillips unveils the struggle of every missionary

I am a lousy secretary. Really. Maintaining and updating detailed records is not my strength. Len and I actually have a perfect division of labor in place – he manages all of our financial records, and I let him!

But one task I cannot avoid is writing activity reports. Not that I'm complaining. I realize that periodic evaluations of my time and effort are necessary, that accountability is an essential component of both discipleship and ministry. Furthermore, without goals and objectives, I lack direction.

Yet I cannot help but ask myself if the quantifiable results I so often list on my reports are actually an attempt to justify either my presence here or the financial and prayer support invested in our ministry in Bolivia. At the very least, such itemizing could be an attempt to reassure myself that I have been "productive" through the past month or year. Regardless, a concise review of my activities is woefully inadequate as a means to express the truth of what has transpired.

The unquantifiable

I wish there were some way to include the intangibles of ministry in my reports. I'd like to find a way to first know, then list the moments of eternal influence I may have had on someone's life through daily, seemingly insignificant interaction. Should I keep count of prayers invested in the flock God has trusted to my care? Would anyone care to peruse a list of victories and defeats in my own experience with the God who has called me to be where I am and to do what I am doing? Could I possibly catalogue the moments of amazing grace when God suddenly reveals Himself anew as He works in and through me?

But it is not only written reports or quarterly newsletters that present limitations in communicating the sometimes inexpressible mercies of God manifested as we serve on the mission field. As we look ahead to a year of Homeland Ministry assignment in the United States, I struggle with preparing myself to condense four years of life and ministry into 20-minute-or-less segments. How can I possibly convey the passion, the pain, the weariness, and the joy of sharing the reality of the Kingdom of God with those I only see once every five years? Behind the words on paper and the often well-rehearsed spoken presentations are days, weeks, and months of struggles, doubts, labor, love, grief, and celebration. My heart longs to share the significant, to ponder together the mysteries of the unseen moving among us as we contemplate our recent past.

Maybe we all need to learn to read "between the lines," to delve beyond the superficial and seek to discover, acknowledge, and applaud what God has done and is doing through His people. As Eugene Peterson puts it in *The Message*, "There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever." (2 Corinthians 4:18) I want to move beyond the imparting of information to a transparent revelation of what our eyes cannot see. I don't want to do so in order to commend myself. No, I want to do so in order to glorify God for His work "between the lines" that, surprisingly enough, can be revealed through a fragile and unreliable vessel like me. That would make a report worth reading. †



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

Ghana's Methodist Church mobilizes to send missionaries

The second International Missions Conference in this African Church culminated in plans to launch a first-ever Ghanaian missionary sending agency

The Mission Society partnered with The Methodist Church – Ghana to conduct its 2nd International Missions Conference in January, 2008. Hosted by the Evangelism, Missions, and Renewal (EMR) committee of the Ghanaian Church, the conference was attended by more than 100 African pastors and church leaders, including five of the church's bishops. The Revs. Kirk and Nicole Sims, missionaries with The Mission Society who serve in Ghana, coordinated the event.

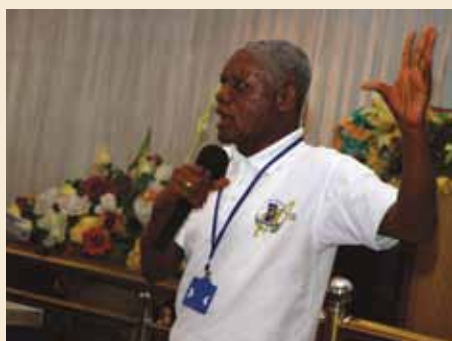
Presiding Bishop Robert Aboagyee-Mensah set the tone for the conference when he called on his denomination to establish a missionary-sending body, challenging the participants to bring a proposal to the church to launch such an effort. (The Methodist Church – Ghana is 172 years old, but has not previously had a formal missionary sending structure.) Bishop Robert electrified the gathering when he cast the vision for sending 500 missionaries across West Africa and beyond in the next five years.

Dr. Darrell Whiteman, Mission Society vice president for mission education, led the first portion of the conference, teaching about the dynamics of communicating the Gospel across cultural barriers. Noting that radical enculturation was

demonstrated in Christ's Incarnation, Whiteman challenged the participants to engage in mission in the spirit of Jesus.

The latter portion of the conference was devoted to presenting the Global Outreach Seminar, The Mission Society's flagship tool for mobilizing local churches for global outreach. (The seminar has been translated into six major languages.) Instructors included several Ghanaian leaders, missionaries serving in Ghana, and the Rev. Dick McClain, vice president for mission operations at The Mission Society.

The 1st International Missions Conference had been conducted three years ago under the leadership of Mission Society vice president and former missionary to Ghana, the Rev. Frank Decker. (That gathering was itself the outgrowth of The Mission Society's initial effort in international missions mobilization that took place when the pilot program – for what is now the Global Outreach Seminar – was taught in Ghana in August, 2003.) At the conclusion of this winter's conference, The Mission Society's team collaborated with the Ghanaian Church's EMR committee to draft a proposal for the formation of a Ghanaian Methodist sending body. †



Bishop Willie Blankson heads the Evangelism, Mission, and Renewal Committee of The Methodist Church – Ghana. This committee, collaborating with a Mission Society team, drafted a proposal for the formation of a Ghanaian Methodist missionary sending body.



"Although only time will tell for sure, it seems evident that God used the conference as a 'launching point' for our Ghanaian colleagues," remembers the Rev. Dick McClain, Mission Society vice president and Global Outreach Seminar author. "The real key was the Holy Spirit's presence and activity."



Left to right: The Rev. Joseph Otsin, Ghanaian pastor and Mission Society board member; the Rev. Michael Mozley, Mission Society missionary to Ghana; and the Rev. Lawrence Beka, a Ghanaian church-planter who has served among the unreached Dagomba people of northern Ghana.

Election fury

Mission Society missionaries in Kenya report on recent atrocities

By John Michael De Marco

Several Mission Society representatives in Kenya have been deeply – and at times personally – touched by the tragedies in the nation following national elections that took place near the end of December 2007.

“This is not what anyone expected,” noted Mission Society international partner and Kenya native Michael Agwanda, whose own aunt’s home was burned down. “However, when Satan and his agents are allowed to work in the hearts of people, what can we expect, unless God intervenes? We are reminded in the Word that ‘Satan comes to steal, kill, and to destroy.’ These words are real in the lives of Kenyans today. They will testify to it.”

As of mid-February, more than 1,000 people in Kenya had been killed and 300,000 made homeless, “both by police and warring gangs, from both the government and opposition party supporters,” claimed Agwanda. “Shops and businesses have not only been robbed and looted of their commodities, but also burned to the ground.”

Most horrific was an incident that saw more than 50 adults and children burned to death within a church building where they had sought refuge. Reports in Christian media such as Christianity Today have indicated that some local churches, caught up in the divisiveness, have at times fueled the fires of unrest while other apolitical servants of Christ have sought to be peacemakers and relieve suffering.

“We have given sanctuary to a widow and seven of her eight children,” noted missionary Don Dickerson, who serves in Kenya along with his wife, Laura, and their children. “They are of the Borana tribe and were recently compelled by the violence to spend nights in the forest. This was done because the Kikuyu [tribe members] in this family’s area had issued letters stating that tribes other than Kikuyu would be physically harmed unless they cleared from the area.

“Our home houses members of Kikuyu, Luhya (night watchman), Borana, Akamba, and sometimes Luo tribes. In our absence [the family was back home in Georgia until February 18], there are about 12 people living there,” Dickerson added.

The ethnic complexities of Kenya surfaced as a result of close election results and accusations of irregularities in the vote tally. “In cities across the nation,” explained Mission Society President Philip Granger, “there have been demonstrations and violence – sometimes police and protestors clashing, but also vigilante groups, looters, and vandals are attacking people of opposing ethnic groups.” Some Kenyan pastors put it this way to Mission Society missionary Rick Slingluff, “It’s like two bulls with horns locked fighting, the bulls are our leaders; we are the grass beneath their hooves.”

At press time, Kenya’s ruling party and opposition had agreed to form a power-sharing government in an effort to end the weeks of bloodshed. Kenyan

pastor, the Rev. David Thagana, international partner with The Mission Society, wrote from Kenya on February 28: “President Mwai Kibaki in his national address speech has said, ‘Kenya has enough space for everybody.’ Raila Odinga in his address speech has said, ‘Today Kenya has marked a significant day from confrontational politics to cooperation.’ Join us to thank God for answering our prayers for peace. Meanwhile keep praying that our parliament will enact laws to protect these agreements. Thanks for your prayers and standing with us.”

A massive job of relief and rebuilding is needed in Kenya to help the affected people put their lives back together again, said Granger. Those wishing to lend support can visit www.themissionsociety.org. The Mission Society will distribute the donations through indigenous Christian churches and relief channels who are assisting in this massive job of providing food, clothing, and shelter to those have been severely impacted by this crisis.

“Friends and the entire church, I call on you now than ever to pray for this country,” said Agwanda. “It is only prayer and fasting that can salvage this country from the hands of people who do not know God and have no respect or regard to life.” ✠

Michael Agwanda, Julie Campbell, Rick and Deb Slingluff, and Amanda Smith make up The Mission Society team presently serving in Kenya.

KENYA'S CRISIS:

How it all began

Kenya erupted into violence in the aftermath of the December 27, 2007 presidential election, during which President Mwai Kibaki claimed victory against challenger Raila Odinga in the midst of widespread voting irregularities. The challenger's supporters felt cheated by the electoral process, and the discord gave rise to the explosion of long-standing tribal rivalries that have led to weeks of bloodshed and destruction of property.



Photo by Jim Ramsay

Introducing your newest missionaries

On February 29, 13 new missionaries were approved for service with The Mission Society. They are (from left to right, first row): **Shannon Mersinger** (from Venice, Florida), shown holding daughter Naomi, will serve in Morretes, Brazil with husband **Steve**, shown next to her holding son Caleb; **Laura Newton** (Athens, Georgia) will serve as a campus missionary at the University of Georgia Wesley Foundation; **Katy Roark** (from Springfield, Ohio) will serve in a Central Asian nation; **Louise Reimer** (from Pratt, Kansas) will serve in Huancayo, Peru; **Kristen Matveia** (from Marion, Iowa) will serve in Tanzania; **Nicole McCoy** (from Alpharetta, Georgia) will serve in Kenya, with sons Korede (age 6) and Kitwan (age 14); **Becky and Doug Neel** (from Alexandria, Louisiana) serve on The Mission Society's Global Resource Team as agriculture specialists. *Back row:* **Bryan Tatum** (from Madison, Alabama) will serve with his wife, **Beth** (not shown), in Costa Rica; **Bill Williams** (from Gainesville, Georgia) serves with his wife, **Linda** (not shown), on the Global Resource Team members as media specialists. Welcome, friends. We thank God for the privilege of serving Him in partnership with you.



You can hand this book to a non-Christian.

We recommend:

The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus, by John R. Cross

Do you want to tell your friends and family about the Bible but are a little nervous about being able to explain it? Here is a book that gets you started. As a narrative, the Bible is explained chronologically from beginning to the end, starting with simple truths and moving to the complex.

Illustrated with more than 100 drawings, maps, and diagrams, *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus* is an effective tool to teach the Bible's message in a clear and logical manner. It can be read through in about eight hours and is available in English, Spanish, French, German, Russian, and in a Muslim outreach edition. Workbook also available. (Review adapted from *Christiananswers.net*)



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

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



Highlights of www.themissionsociety.org:

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

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





The wrong question

Your calling: It's not 'If?' but 'How?'

I ask a lot of questions. Some of the questions cause me to appear like a calculated user of the Socratic method. Others make me sound like I'm a bit lacking in common sense. An example of the latter is when I bought a new set of golf clubs earlier this year and asked if I needed to keep the UPC barcode sticker on my driver.

The man at the golf shop responded, "Well, it's not going to help you hit any better whether you keep it on or take it off, if that's what you're asking."

I wondered later, "Why did I ask such a question?" Did I think the sticker contained some sort of tracking device that would allow course officials to track me down in case I had a medical emergency? It's at times like these that I find great comfort in the saying we all learn as children: "There is no such thing as a stupid question."

I force myself to keep this adage in mind when Christians ask me whether or not they are called to missions. After all, how can we read our Bibles and conclude that missions involvement is an option for any believer? Now, let me be quick to say that Christians who ask whether or not they are called to missions are not asking a *stupid* question. They are just asking the *wrong* question.

So, what is the right question for every believer to ask? The right question is, "How has God called me to participate in

His mission?" The Scriptures – Old Testament and New Testament – remind us that everyone who names Christ as Lord is called to join in the work of God's mission. Whether this be through giving, praying, sending (others), teaching, offering hospitality to people of other nations as they come to us, or going ourselves to

are not called to missions since God has not called them to be full-time missionaries (similar to a layperson who concludes he doesn't need to share his faith because he's not an ordained clergy member). This type of thinking has slowed the momentum of worldwide evangelization and placed an extra burden on full-time

missions workers. In order for the Great Commission to be accomplished, the *whole* Church must be involved in taking the whole Gospel to the whole world. So, in our prayers and our time with fellow believers, let's ask the right question: "What *role* has God called me to play in His mission?" †

If you sense God is calling you to serve on the mission field, The Mission Society has opportunities for you, with terms of service ranging from one month to a lifetime. See pages 28-29. Also, visit our website, www.themissionsociety.org and subscribe to the podcast, "Not if, but how?," in which missionaries and other Christian believers discuss their call to missions.



"Not called!" did you say? "Not heard the call," I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible. ...Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help.
–William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army

other nations, we are all called to missions. Just as God has granted different parts of the Body of Christ different gifts, so has He given us different roles as it relates to the accomplishment of His worldwide mission.

Whole church means *whole* church

In my 10 years of missions involvement, I have often heard people assume that they

Richard Coleman, *The Mission Society's* director of mobilization and candidacy, has served previously in local church ministry as director of missions. Richard earned his Master's of Divinity degree from Oral Roberts University.

Feeling called to cross-cultural ministry?

Nearly every Mission Society field of service has one thing in common: need for more laborers. The following is a list of the opportunities available in several countries to serve in cross-cultural ministry. We hope these pages will serve as a topic of discussion and prayer for your family, for your Sunday school class, church, and friends.

Don't forget that The Mission Society offers missionary internships of 1-11 months, and terms of service ranging from one year to four years. For a complete listing of personnel needs and for more information about terms of service, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org.

GHANA:

Agricultural worker

Agricultural workers are needed to help pastors and evangelists (who are also subsistence farmers) regarding better farming techniques and seeds. Cross-cultural workers would also work one-on-one with local farmers in improving yields, marketing, and soil. These individuals should be strong in their faith, self-motivated, and deeply committed to missions.

Community health nurse

A nursing medical professional (to serve as part of the Community Health Evangelism team) is needed to work in a village setting in the areas of preventive care, nutrition, and general health for children six years of age and under. Physical and spiritual care is given to the mothers and children as they visit the outreach clinics. Training in Community Health Evangelism is available in-country.

Community health workers

Motivated and creative people are needed to help implement a program of community development among villagers and their families. While there are no medical or professional-skill requirements (training in Community Health Evangelism is available), leadership and relational skills are a must.

Healthcare workers

Doctors, nurses, dentists, ophthalmologists, and pharmacists are needed in rural settings where very little medical care is available. This is an opportunity to offer physical as well as spiritual healing to thousands of patients.

Hospital chaplain

A chaplain is needed to minister in a rural Christian hospital. Work with healthcare professionals in this village clinic and minister to both the patients and their families. Pastoral experience required.

Literacy teacher

Act as a teacher's assistant to cross-cultural workers, teaching both English and native literacy. Students learn their own "mother-tongue" reading and writing skills using the Bible as reading text. Education majors and ESL teachers are especially encouraged to apply.

Medical personnel

Work alongside missionaries and nationals in a variety of settings to administer first-aid and some curative and preventative care as part of the holistic outreach of the team and the church. Emergency medical technicians and nurses are especially needed. First-aid in villages does not require any special license. Village curative care is needed to work in Christian hospital and clinic settings in tropical conditions with limited resources and high volumes of patients. Visits as short as two weeks are welcome, but longer terms are encouraged. Physicians who specialize in family, internal, or emergency medicine, as well as pediatric, OBGYN, and general surgery are needed. Physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, medical residents, and four-year medical students are also welcome.

Pastors and theological educators

Opportunities abound to teach courses, seminars, and conferences in local seminaries throughout several nations. Leadership development training of pastors and other theological leaders are needed. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

Teachers for young cross-cultural workers

School teachers are requested to facilitate home-schooling for the children of some of our cross-cultural witnesses (missionaries) who live in rural settings.

HUNGARY:

Children & youth ministers

Work with cross-cultural witnesses (missionaries) and national workers to provide spiritual nurturing and mentoring for fledgling youth and children's ministries.

English teachers (TESL)

Individuals are needed to teach English-as-a-second language. Relationships formed in educational settings can open doors for sharing the Gospel with students. Instruction in TESL is available during cross-cultural training.

K-12th grade teachers

K-12th grade teachers are needed yearly for a variety of grades and subjects. Classes are taught in English, and a modest salary is provided. Share your faith through building relationships with students and their parents in this strategic ministry.

JAPAN:

Administrative assistant

Missionary Neal Hicks is in need of an administrative assistant. This person should have a firm grasp of the Japanese language, translation skills, and an understanding of Japanese culture.

ESL teachers

ESL teachers are needed to work with a Japanese church, primarily teaching English (as a bridge to communicate the Gospel). Currently there are nine Free Methodist churches in need of someone to serve in this capacity. A partial salary may be provided, which could help offset support needs.

Teachers

K-12 teachers are needed at the Christian Academy in Japan. To inquire, go directly to the website for The Christian Academy at: www.caj.or.jp.

KAZAKHSTAN:

Children & youth ministers

Cross-cultural witnesses (missionaries) and national workers are needed to provide spiritual nurturing and mentoring for fledgling youth and children's ministries.



Called to serve in Far East Asia?
ESL teachers and K-12 teachers are needed in Japan. See more details on page 28. For a complete listing of available opportunities for missionary service with The Mission Society, visit www.themissionsociety.org.

English teachers (TESL)

Teach a conversational English program in Kazakhstan for the 2008-09 academic year. The qualifications for this area of service include a love for children (elementary through high school); a desire to make an impact for the Kingdom through building relationships with students and staff; and a four-year college degree (in any field, not just in education or English). This is a great opportunity for an intern or a mission explorer (a person serving one or two years). Individuals are needed to teach English-as-a-second language. Relationships formed in educational settings can open doors for sharing the Gospel with students. Instruction in TESL is available during cross-cultural training.

K-12th grade teachers

K-12th grade teachers are needed yearly for a variety of grades and subjects. Classes are taught in English. Share your faith through building relationships with students and their parents in this strategic ministry.

Pastors and theological teachers

Opportunities abound to teach courses, seminars, and conferences in local settings. Trainers for pastors in areas of leadership-development and theology are needed. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

Administrator

A Small Business Training Center (SBTC) and Private Educator Training Center (PETC) are in need of an administrator. Knowledge of accounting is helpful.

RUSSIA:

Healthcare workers

Doctors, nurses, dentists, ophthalmologists, and pharmacists are needed in rural settings where very little medical care is available. This is a great opportunity to offer physical – as well as spiritual – healing to many.

Orphanage workers

Abandoned children in Russia are in need of persons called to ministries of compassion, evangelism, and discipleship. Work in and among orphanages in the Russian Far East. Male workers are especially needed to help in orphanage ministry.

Pastors and theological educators

Opportunities abound to teach courses, seminars and conferences in local seminaries. Trainers for pastors in areas of leadership-development and theology are needed. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

TANZANIA:

Agricultural worker

Agricultural workers are needed to help pastors and evangelists (who are also subsistence farmers) regarding better farming techniques and seeds. Cross-cultural workers would also work one-on-one with local farmers in improving yields, marketing, and soil. These individuals should be strong in their faith, self-motivated, and deeply committed to missions.

Community health workers

Motivated and creative people are needed to help implement a program of community-health development among villagers and their families. While there are no medical or professional skill requirements (training in Community Health Evangelism is available), leadership and relational skills are a must.

Engineers

Workers with engineering experience are needed to work alongside national drillers of water wells, as well as hosting work teams that come to help drill water wells.

Pastors and theological educators

Opportunities abound to teach courses, seminars, and conferences in local seminaries throughout several nations. Trainers of pastors in the areas of leadership development and theology are needed. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

UKRAINE:

Teachers

Teachers are needed at all levels to work at Kiev Christian Academy, an international Christian school ministering in the English language. Join this community of missionary families and Ukrainians and enjoy serving in a wonderful atmosphere of love and eternal purpose.

ZAMBIA:

Agriculturalist

Workers with agricultural skills are needed to help develop a 15 – 20 acre land for farming bananas. The proceeds from this farm will help other ministries to create jobs in the area.

New Life press

Workers with printing skills are needed to help maintain a printing facility and to help give guidance in the interpretation into English of books being printed. (English is the main language in Zambia, but there are more than 70 different languages in Zambia alone.)

ESL teachers

Individuals are needed to teach English-as-a-second language. Local education is taught in the Bemba language, whereas national tests are given in English. In order for a student to achieve higher education, he or she must pass a test in English, even though the student may never have received education in English. Relationships formed in educational settings can open doors for sharing the Gospel with students.

New Life natural water systems

Workers are needed with construction or engineering skills to help drill for fresh water, which is a great need in many villages.

Front-porch orphanage workers

Individuals are needed to work with the children in the New Life Center by connecting orphans with homes in local villages.

Computer teachers

Teachers are needed for all computer functions, all of Microsoft software, and higher education online. High speed internet is available 24/7.

With the good news of Jesus, The Mission Society missionaries and their families minister in 32 nations around the world. We offer their names here. How we thank you for your prayers for them!

The Mission Society missionaries:

Michael Agwanda, Otto Arango, Ari Arfaras, Ed & Linda Baker, Jose & Audrey Banales, Erica Beeles, Jim & Angela Beise, Mark & Leslie Benton, Rose Blank, Liz Boggess, Reid & Lola Buchanan, Margaret Buell, Debra Buenting, Doug & Brooke Burns, Julie Campbell, John & Sandra Carrick, Chris & Sue Champion, Charlie & Miki Chastain, Amantha Claxton, Jennie Clements, Cathy Coburn, David & Carol Cosby, Patrick Cummings, Adam & Jennifer Dalenburg, Tim & Daina Datwyler, Christian & Angelica Dickson, Caren Dilts, Billy & Laurie Drum, John & Colleen Eisenberg, Sue Fuller, Cam & Anne Gongwer, James & Barbara Gray, Dave & Beth Greenawalt, Alicia Grey, Rebecca Griffith, Florencio & Maria Guzman, Charlie & Chris Hanak, John & Katheryn Heinz, Jill

Henderson, Jon & Jeanne Herrin, Neal & Mari Hicks, Ron & Bonnie Hipwell, Ronnie & Angi Hopkins, Andrew & Margaret Howell, Arthur & Mary Alice Ivey, Charles & Becky Jackson, Charlie & Mary Kay Jackson, Andrew & Juliana Jernigan, Trevor Johnston, Jonathan & Amy Killen, Esaho & Beatrice Kipuke, Clay & Deborah Kirkland, Sue Kolljeski, Joetta Lehman, Kristen Matveia, Nicole McCoy, Ash & Audra McEuen, Steve & Shannon Mersinger, Grant Miller, Mike & Claire Mozley, Katie Nash, Doug & Becky Neel, Marshall Neely, Laura Newton, Steve Nikkel, Ron & Michelle Olson, Donald & Carol Paige, Peter & Esther Pereira, Len & Betsy Phillips, Martin & Tracy Reeves, Leon & Vicki Reich, Louise Reimer, John & Rosalie Rentz, Ben & Jenny Reyes, Ruben Rodriguez, John & Bess Russell,

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

In addition to those listed above, 38 missionaries serve in areas where security is an issue for Christian workers. For that reason, they remain unnamed here. Thank you for praying for these dear brothers and sisters, as they face unique challenges.

For more information about The Mission Society missionaries or fields, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org.

May we pray for you?

Each morning at The Mission Society, we start by praying. We pray for the world. We pray for our missionaries. And we pray for you. Do you have prayer concerns that you would like to share with us? We invite you to do so. Here's how: Write your request on the response card included in this mailing and return it in the envelope provided, or

- Email us at prayerrequest@themissionsociety.org, or
- Call us at 770.446.1381 (ext. PRAY or 7729) and leave your prayer request message, or
- Write us at: Prayer, The Mission Society, 6234 Crooked Creek Road, Norcross, GA 30092

Your shared concerns will be handled with care and prayed for by our staff and visiting missionaries. Thank you for the privilege of joining you in prayer.