

Unfinished

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The end of missions as we knew it

Reshaping ministry to reach the new world

Special section: Annual report

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Publisher/CEO
Dick McClain

Editor
Ruth A. Burgner

Associate Editor
Reed Haigler Hoppe

Design
Point of Vision / www.pointofvision.com

Founding President/President Emeritus
H.T. Maclin

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Cover photo:
A young Turk in Istanbul. Photo: IMB/
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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.

Our vision

The Kingdom of God advancing among all peoples bringing about redemption and reconciliation through Jesus Christ

Our mission

The Mission Society exists to mobilize and deploy the body of Christ globally to join Jesus in His mission, especially among the least reached peoples.

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, 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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–John Stott



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Missions come of age

Celebrating a new day of collaboration among the body of Christ



Countries that just a few short years ago only received missionaries are now sending out their own by the thousands. Gustavo and Dalila Faleiro (on far left and far right), shown here in Brazil, their homeland, now serve in Paris with a ministry purposing to reach French people for Christ by encouraging, inspiring, and discipling Christians working in the arts and creative professions. The Faleiros serve through a collaborative relationship between The Mission Society and IMFORM, a Brazilian missionary sending agency.

This issue of *Unfinished*, which contains a brief annual report for the fiscal year that ended May 31 (see pages 20-21), captures several currents that reflect what God is doing within The Mission Society and, I believe, the world these days. The year behind us was especially significant, because it was the first year in which our life and work as an agency was shaped by The Mission Society's new statement of mission:

The Mission Society exists to mobilize and deploy the body of Christ globally to join Jesus in His mission, especially among the least reached peoples.

On pages 4-11, you'll read the responses from all of our major ministry department leaders to a series of questions I posed during a panel discussion at last winter's President's Gathering. Their observations provide as clear an insight

into the heart of The Mission Society as anything you'll read. At the heart of what they communicated is a shared commitment to join Jesus in His mission, coupled with the recognition that our Lord is leading us in new directions these days.

New direction

Perhaps the most significant new direction is the changing role of the Church in the West in relation to God's people and God's work around the globe. One hundred years ago, the majority of the world's Christians lived in the West, and "missionary" was synonymous with someone from North America or Western Europe – probably white. Today, however, the majority of the Christians in the world live in the "global South" and the East. (From 1910 to 2010, for example, the number of Christians in the United States only tripled, while the population almost quadrupled. During that

same period, however, while the population of Africa grew by eight times, the number of Christ-followers on the continent grew by 42 times!) And countries that just a few short years ago only received cross-cultural workers are now sending out their own missionaries by the thousands.

As a consequence, the role of Western mission agencies like The Mission Society is changing. (*Jim Ramsay's article on pages 24-25 addresses this.*) For us to follow Jesus in His mission today will often mean a very different kind of ministry than Western missionaries undertook only a few decades ago. Today, our missionaries serve side-by-side with growing numbers of non-Western missionaries. Often our role is to train and help equip them for pioneer mission work they are much better able to undertake than we are.

All of which leads me to a poignant

and exciting moment I had just a few weeks ago in Kenya. Our board chairperson, Bill Johnson, and I were meeting in Nairobi with a small group of leaders of an emerging national mission association. With us were two dear Kenyan brothers with whom we have ministered over the past decade. One (David) was the mission director for a Kenyan denomination that today numbers some 800,000 members and constituents. The other (Simon) was the founder of a pioneering Kenyan mission that is evangelizing and planting churches among some of Kenya's least reached tribes.

Our hosts invited us to share how The Mission Society might support the work of their newly-forming association. Bill and I spoke briefly about the work The Mission Society has done in two primary areas of ministry: mobilizing churches for missions, and training missionaries. We offered to make these ministries available to their new organization.

No longer "in charge"

After Bill and I concluded, the leader of the group invited David and Simon to say a word about their own involvement with The Mission Society. (Both have been involved in our mobilization and training efforts for several years.) They were both generous with their gratitude and praise for what God had enabled us to sow into their lives and ministries.

After they had spoken, one of the young leaders in the group made a statement that captured the wonderful shift

that has taken place with respect to the role of the Western Church in world Christianity and world missions. He very gently and graciously noted that had only Bill and I shared, the group would have had to do a considerable amount of additional study and exploration of The Mission Society before deciding whether we had anything of significant value to add to their ministry. But based on the firsthand witness of their Kenyan brothers,

"For us to follow Jesus in His mission today will often mean a very different kind of ministry than Western missionaries undertook a few decades ago."

they were confident that engagement with The Mission Society would be beneficial for their newly forming association. Before we left the meeting, tentative dates were proposed for both a missions mobilization conference and an intensive missionary training event. (See page 22.)

In that moment, it was wonderfully clear that as Americans we were no longer "in charge" of anything. The fact that we came from the West with "a briefcase and a program" was no guarantee that our ministry would be needed or welcomed. It was the witness of two Kenyan colleagues who had personal experience of our ministry that opened the door for us to collaborate with our new friends.

Servants of others for Jesus' sake

Just a few months ago, 90-year-old John Stott, the great British evangelical pastor and writer, went to be with the Lord. In his classic work, *Basic Christianity*, Stott wrote: "The very first thing which needs to be said about Christian ministers of all kinds is that they are 'under' people as their servants rather than 'over' them (as their leaders, let alone their lords). Jesus made this absolutely plain. The chief characteristic of Christian leaders, He insisted, is humility not authority, and gentleness not power."

The apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth: "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Cor. 4:5, NIV).

Thankfully, our place is not to be "in charge" of anything. We are simply servants of others for Jesus' sake. As Stott suggested, humility and gentleness, not authority and power, are our greatest assets.

It's a new day. We're part of a global family of Jesus followers. Freed from any burden of ownership or "authority," we're now able to simply serve with joyful abandon. It will be exciting to see what God does in the midst of it. ✠

The Rev. Dick McClain is president and CEO of The Mission Society.



Re-focused.

The Mission Society is re-energized toward the vision that launched it 27 years ago

Who are the least reached? Where do they live? When and how did The Mission Society begin focusing on them? And how does it equip missionaries to communicate the gospel to them? At an event last winter, staffers answered these and other questions about The Mission Society's newly galvanized attention on reaching those who have never really heard. This presentation provided "as clear an insight into the heart of The Mission Society as anything you'll ever read," says President Dick McClain.

Those participating in the panel discussion were: Frank Decker, vice president for member care and development; Michael Mozley, senior director of international mobilization; Jim Ramsay, vice president for mission ministries; Stan Self, senior director of church ministry; and Darrell Whiteman, Ph.D., resident missiologist and vice president for mobilization and training. The discussion was facilitated by Mission Society President and CEO Dick McClain.



Least reached people are in our inner-cities. They may be in our communities.

Photos: Robin Nelson/Genesis Photos

1. Who are the “least reached”?

McClain: In February 2010, we adopted a new mission statement that reads, “The Mission Society exists to mobilize and deploy the body of Christ globally to join Jesus in His mission, especially among the least reached peoples.” So what do we mean by least reached peoples?

Whiteman: There are several ways to define least reached people. They are people who don’t have scriptures – written or oral – in their own language. Least reached are also those who have no fellowship of believers in their community, and no believer in their lives. So structurally and culturally, there is just no way for them to connect with who Jesus is or to understand what it would mean to follow Jesus. Sometimes we think of the least reached as being only in the Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist world, but there may be least reached people in our own communities.

Self: For example, I live just east of Stone Mountain, near the Atlanta area. I can drive 11 miles from my doorstep and be in the middle of Clarkston, Georgia. *Time* magazine has called Clarkston the most diverse square mile in the United States. It is a refugee center, and many who live here have no knowledge of Jesus Christ whatsoever. [A Mission Society missionary family serves among the refugees in this city.] If I drive north eight miles from my house, I arrive at the largest Hindu temple in the United States. This temple, so close to my house, serves many people who we typically think of as least reached. And they will continue to be unless someone takes the gospel to them.

Mozley: I just recently returned from Sacramento, California, where I have several friends who are pastors. I love being in some of their churches, because I’ve seen people who are coming to a church for the first time. They’re like, “Wow, I’ve never been in a church before.” We did an outreach in downtown Stockton in a drug-infested, highly multicultural area. Most of the churches have fled to the suburban areas; no one is rushing into the inner city, where there are a great many least reached people.

McClain: In the past, mission organizations have talked more about unreached people groups. But we’ve chosen to use the language of least reached people groups, because it is a relative term, one we can all relate to. In your own community, as you think about the areas surrounding your church, where are areas that are more reached and where are areas that are least reached? We all need to be thinking strategically about those areas and population segments in our communities that may have little access to the good news.

2. When and how did focus on the least reached begin for The Mission Society?

McClain: In light of our new mission statement, some folks might be wondering if The Mission Society’s focus on least reached people is a new emphasis. And if not, how did focusing on least reached become a strategic priority for The Mission Society?

Ramsay: Our focus on least reached is not new. In fact, our mission statement is an articulation of who The Mission Society has been since the start.



“We are sensing more than ever God’s heart for the least reached. More and more our missionaries are being assigned to serve among them.” –Michael Mozley

Photo by Dick McClain

That said, about four years ago, we began a process to take an even closer look at what we do as an organization and where we are headed. We invited about 20 missionaries from around the world and a couple of board members, and we met in Prague for a week. The facilitator, Bill O’Brien, led us through a process of looking ahead 25 years. He asked us to consider, “What will the world look like? And what should The Mission Society’s place in the world be?” And then he asked us to “backcast” from there to answer, “What do we need to be doing now to get there?”

That process culminated in our articulating that if the task [of reaching the world with the message of Christ] is going to get done, we’re going to have to begin focusing on the least reached even more intentionally. Today our focus on reaching the least reached is codified in our mission and vision statement, and it is becoming part of the culture among all of our cross-cultural workers, wherever they may be serving.

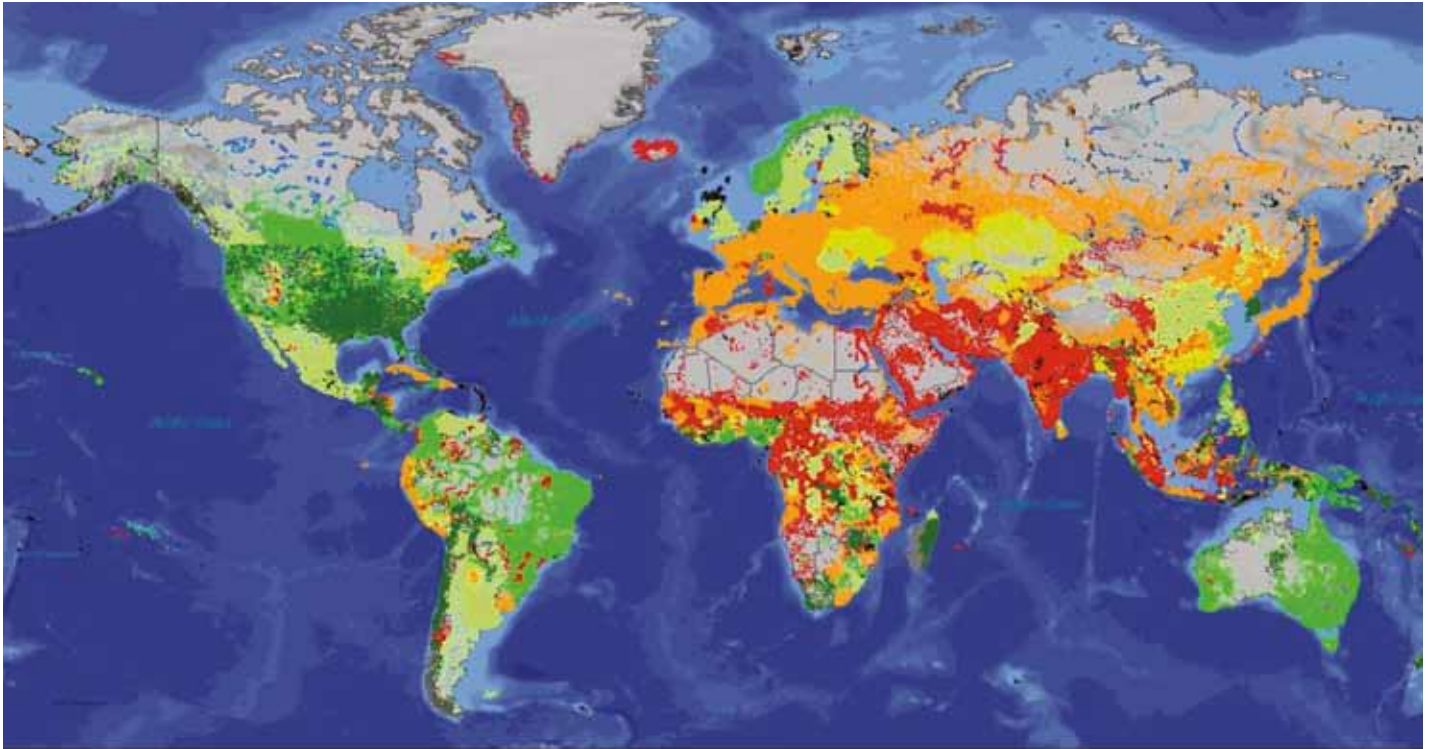
McClain: How is focus on least reached making a difference in the area in which you work?

Mozley: When I came to work at The Mission Society in 1996 as director of personnel, we tried to help new missionaries discern where they might be called, find them a place to serve, and establish a mission relationship with them. In the 15 years since that time [Mozley and his family would later serve for 10½ years as Mission Society missionaries in Ghana, West Africa], I’ve seen us increase in intentionality as an organization. We are sensing more than ever God’s heart for the least reached. More and more, our missionaries are being assigned to serve among them.

3. How does The Mission Society determine where its missionaries will serve and with whom?

McClain: What I hear you saying is that, even as we celebrate having an increased number of missionaries, the objective is not so much having more missionaries but being even more intentional and focused as a ministry. That raises a question for me. It’s a big world, and if you were to throw a dart at a world map, anywhere it would land, you would find an area of need. There are two billion unreached people in the world. There are many places The Mission Society could go and thousands of people groups among whom we could serve. So how does The Mission Society identify where we will go and with whom we will serve?

Decker: Generally, the ways the ministry locations have been selected fall into one of three categories. The first category could be called the *Macedonian call*. This is when someone – maybe a national church leader or a person “on the ground” – sees a need for ministry and essentially asks The Mission Society, “Will you come over and help us?” The second category is *statistical need*. Some ministry locations we are presently considering came onto our “radar screen” simply as a result of research – looking at numbers, considering where populations of least reached people live, etc. And the third category is what we call *providential circumstances*. For example, when one of our board members in the late 1980s traveled to a city in the former Soviet Union, he realized there were no Christian workers there and asked, “Why aren’t we here?” His question began our investigating that particular location.



Global status of evangelical Christianity

Of course, the selection process is rooted in an attitude and practice of prayer – seeking the Holy Spirit’s confirmation. Our resources are limited, and our most valuable resource is our people. We want to be wise in the expenditure of those resources.

Ramsay: Often people who have taken a short-term mission trip and have had their hearts broken for the people there come to us just sure that God is calling them to that particular location. But even so, we still push them a bit, asking if they might consider another part of the world, if the Lord calls them to it.

That’s what happened with the Smiths [not their real name]. They came to us, pretty sure that God was calling them to Costa Rica. They had a very valid ministry plan that we could affirm. But we said, “Let’s just hold off on determining for sure that that’s where you will go.” Well, after taking Perspectives [a course in world missions], and after having our training, the Smiths began to have a heart for least reached areas greater than what Costa Rica generally is. This began a process that took them mentally all over the world for a year.

Then a year ago, my wife and I were in Asia with some of our missionaries there. We were talking about how the Church in that country could be more effective in reaching out, especially to Muslims in that region. And as we were sitting there talking and praying about this as a group, this couple’s name came to my mind. I shot off an email and said, “What do you think about coming and being part of the team here? Within two weeks, it was a done-deal. About two months ago, they deployed and are now living and learning the language with the hope of help-

ing believers in that location be more effective in their witness among Muslims.

All to say, it is a process. There is no one way. Every time someone comes to us, we have to look at the person, at the context, and count on the Holy Spirit to help us determine where on earth we should send them.

McClain: Do you wish at times you had a formula?

Ramsay: Oh man, wouldn’t it be nice to have a checklist? Having said that, when you see a story like that of the Smiths unfolding, when you hear how well they’re doing, and see them thriving, it’s a lot more thrilling than if we had had a checklist.

McClain: In reality, prayer is the formula, isn’t it? And there are some other pieces that go into it, but at the end of the day, it’s a process of discernment and really needing to hear from God.

Ramsay: I remember that Mrs. Smith wrote on my Facebook wall, “Jim, just tell us where to go.” My immediate thought was, “It’s my job; I should be able to tell you where to go.” But we have learned to be patient, to trust the process, and let the Lord be the director and not our need for finality.

4. What is the new role of the Western Church in missions?

McClain: If this meeting were being held in 1911, answering how a mission agency strategizes to reach the least reached people would be quite different than it is today. In the last generation, how has the role of the Western Church, particularly the Church in North America and Western Europe, changed vis-a-vis world missions?

Status Level	Global Status of Evangelical Christianity Description
0	No evangelical Christians or churches. No access to major evangelical print, audio, visual, or human resources.
1	Less than 2% evangelical. Some evangelical resources available, but no active church planting within past 2 years.
2	Less than 2% evangelical. Initial (localized) church planting within past 2 years.
3	Less than 2% evangelical. Widespread church planting within past 2 years.
4	Greater than or equal to 2% evangelical.
5	Greater than or equal to 5% evangelical.
6	Greater than or equal to 10% evangelical.

One of the ways The Mission Society selects ministry locations is by looking at the statistical needs of the world, as shown in maps like this one.

Whiteman: One hundred years ago, the sun never set on the British Empire, and colonialism was in its heyday. Riding the wave of colonial expansion, missionaries would take with them Christianity, commerce, cotton seed, and civilization, so it was all mixed together. People were won to Christ, but often it was a much more Western form of Christianity. One hundred years ago, 85% of the world’s Christians lived in North America and Europe, and 15% lived in the rest of the world. Now, the center of Christendom has shifted, so today only 35% of the world’s Christian population lives in North America and Europe, and 65% live in what we call the global South and the East. Where Christianity is growing fastest is in Africa, in Latin America, and in parts of Asia. That means for us that we still have a role to play, but it’s not the role of sitting in the driver’s seat. It’s the role of sitting in the back seat, of being ones who come alongside those in the global South and East who are doing the driving.

They are struggling with the same issues we have struggled with. For example, like us, they are realizing the challenge of learning to present the gospel without overlaying onto it their own cultural trappings. But even with all the challenges, frankly, this is the most exciting era of Christian history to be alive, because we’re no longer in the driver’s seat. And I like that.

5. How is The Mission Society helping develop mission movements in other parts of the world?

McClain: I’m wondering if the Western Church’s role of “coming alongside” also entails being a catalyst for mission movements to emerge in what, not long ago, were regions that only received missionaries. What role is The Mission Society playing in the development of mission movements in other parts of the world?

Mozley: We go into developing countries and train pastors and lay leaders to be missionally focused, so that they no longer have the mentality of “When is the West going to come and rescue us?” or “When will they send us more missionaries?” Believers all over the world are taking on Matthew 28:18-19 and Acts 1:8 as their work. They are saying, “God is calling us to be globally focused in everything that we do. He is calling us to reach the least reached in our own countries.” We’re seeing God radically transform international pastors and laypeople. We recently trained 110 pastors in India. We brought to this conference about 20 flags from countries around the world. We did a talk about grounding our church in prayer. Then these Indian pastors, who virtually had no concept of any other place in the world, began to weep over these flags and the people they represented. God radically changed their hearts from being focused on their own people to now saying, “God wants us involved in Christian mission.”

McClain: So we rejoice in the privilege of being the servants of the global Church, recognizing that the job is never going to be finished until the whole Church is engaged in taking the whole gospel to the whole world.

“Where Christianity is growing fastest is in Africa, in Latin America, and in parts of Asia. That means for us that we still have a role to play, but it’s not the role of sitting in the driver’s seat. It’s the role of sitting in the back seat, of being ones who come alongside those in the global South and East who are doing the driving.”

–Darrell Whiteman

6. How does The Mission Society train its missionaries?

McClain: Leaving one’s home culture and learning to effectively communicate the good news in a very different contexts can’t be a real simple undertaking. How do you prepare people to do that? If someone is called by God and filled with the Spirit, is anything more than that needed? How is someone equipped to do the work?

Whiteman: There are two things that we have to bring together. One is an understanding of the Word, and an understanding of the world. Those two things have to be held together in balance. If we don’t understand what we’re communicating and if we don’t understand that world in which we’re communicating, we will be in trouble.

Our training program really tries to take a look at how can we help people enter new cultures as learners. The model we use is “incarnational identification.” In other words, in the same way that God became “Jesus, the Jew” and identified with us as human beings, when we take the gospel from one culture to another, we must empty ourselves of the power and prestige of being wealthy, well-educated North Americans. We need to enter into the life of those around us – to learn their language, to understand their culture, to build relationships, because only as a relationship is developed can the Spirit of Jesus flow from us to them and from them back to us.

McClain: Our missionary training has gone through a geographical transition. Tell us about that.

Whiteman: We used to train missionaries in Norcross, Georgia. But if you’re going to train people for cross-cultural ministry, it might be best done in another cultural context entirely.

Four years ago the Brazil Methodist church asked us, “Would you come alongside us and help us to figure out how to prepare and train Brazilian missionaries?” So for the last four years, we’ve been training our missionaries in Brazil alongside Brazilian missionaries. In the process, we have trained more than 150 Brazilians. It’s been a great experience, and combining the training of our missionaries with those from other countries is working well. [This summer the missionary training event was held in Huancayo, Peru. The trainees came from six countries in addition to the United States.] One example of the fruit that has come from this is a young Brazilian couple who came to our training and have now been sent out by the Brazilian Church to serve as missionaries in Paris with a least reached people group – the arts community. *(See photo on page 2.)*

7. How does the local church in the United States figure into all of this?

McClain: How does the local church figure into all of this? What role if any do local congregations have in reaching least reached people, and is The Mission Society doing anything to help local churches actually embrace such a calling?

Self: Absolutely. In our Global Outreach teaching we say: “Missions is the mission of the church,” and we firmly believe that.



“We rejoice in the privilege of being the servants of the global Church, recognizing that the job is never going to be finished until the whole Church is engaged in taking the whole gospel to the whole world.” –Dick McClain

Photo: Baptism in Ghana, West Africa, by Jon M. Fletcher/Genesis Photos

We believe that because we really believe the last things Jesus said before He left were the most important things. And before He left, He focused on telling the Church to go into all the world.

So everything we do in our teaching is about helping equip the church to go into all the world. The community won't be transformed unless the church is transformed. The nation won't be transformed, unless the church is transformed. And the world won't be transformed unless the church is transformed. And so that's what we're all about.

We come alongside the church and help its transformation in a number of ways. I call it the three Ts. The first T is *teaching*. We lay out the biblical foundation for being involved in mission. We talk to the church about the world – what the world looks like through God's eyes. Then we ask, “What does it mean to the local church? What does it mean to be on mission with God?”

The second T stands for *tools*. We give tools to churches that guide them along in the process. We don't prescribe anything. No matter how many churches we work with, the end result of every one of those churches will be different, because God's call on every church is different. And so we love to see that, but we do have some tools to guide them in the process.

And then the third T is *training wheels*. We don't lead; we come alongside. We're there to walk along with the church and kind of be a steadying hand.

Eighteen days ago we finished working with a church in Chapin, South Carolina, and saw that transformation take place, like we've seen happen over and over again. Here's what the pas-

tor said 30 minutes after the church's life-commitment service.

“I would recommend The Mission Society's program for global impact to every church. I knew we felt God calling us to do more, to go outside of our community in a greater way, but didn't have a clue to how to do it. The Mission Society came alongside of us – gave us freedom to be who we are, gave us freedom to seek God and to seek his precise, clear vision as an individual church – but also gave us the practical steps, the manual, the tried and true method. If you'll just work and allow God to work this process, you can trust God in this process. We had an incredible team of people who did this, and it was so beautiful to see it all come together. I absolutely recommend it to other churches. I am a 100% Mission Society guy, and we would love to see everybody get hooked up.” –Pastor Jody Flowers

So would we. And if you really want to talk about what breaks my heart, it is that we need 10,000 more of those churches out there. †

Mission statement: The Mission Society exists to mobilize and deploy the body of Christ globally to join Jesus in His mission, especially among the least reached peoples.

Vision statement: The kingdom of God advancing among all peoples, bringing about redemption and reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

Faith stories

Mission Society missionaries tell how Jesus is revealing Himself to hearts worldwide



Ravi's wife shared that one morning she was very troubled because a robbed man came to her in her sleep, called her "daughter," and told her he wanted her to follow him.

Just as she dreamed

The story of Ravi's wife: India

The Mission Society will soon open a field in a largely unreached area of India. One of the cross-cultural workers planning to move to India shared this story of an encounter with a man she met while exploring ministry opportunities there.

I found myself overcome with sorrow at the poverty, ignorance, sickness, and injustice that sometimes surrounded me. Then, in the next moment, I would get a glimpse of God's love and mercy working through some of the most humble, dedicated Christ followers I've ever met. Excitement would well up inside me as I saw their passion and vision to introduce

Jesus to people in the darkest places of their land. I found myself embracing that vision as, day after day, I saw evidence of miracles and God's healing touch.

Although this region is one of the darkest, most dangerous places in India, over and over I heard believers saying, 'This is our time. God is pouring out His Spirit over the darkness here.' And they are obviously right! I cannot adequately explain my excitement over being given the opportunity to join Jesus in His mission in this place!

One day we traveled further into the city to a slum where 65,000 Muslims were living literally on top of one another in an area roughly one-half square mile. That is where we met Ravi*, and once again I was gripped with the excitement of what God is doing in India.

Ravi welcomed us into his office

located down a narrow alley that was split by an open sewer. The office was a small room (smaller than many bathrooms I've been in) containing a bookcase, a small desk with a laptop computer, a wooden platform for seating, and a small area to prepare tea. I can still see this young man standing in the middle of that humble room. He had a grin that was bigger than his face and a twinkle in his eye, evidence that the squalor surrounding him had not been able to touch his spirit. Here's just a bit of his story:

Ravi moved to this slum 10 years ago believing that God had called him to minister in this place. He does not provide any official services. There is not much he can provide when, after 10 years, his work has grown to include six employees with a total budget of only

His heart was free

The story of Mr. Tsuda: Japan

Mr. Tsuda's stare was cold and without emotion. He barely acknowledged our presence as we sat opposite each other in the visiting room at the local jail. This would be the first of many visits before gaining Mr. Tsuda's trust. Regrettably, Mr. Tsuda acquired a large gambling debt, and in desperation kidnapped for ransom one of his own boys he coached on a baseball team. When the young boy screamed and cried out, Tsuda panicked and choked him to death with a necktie. Having received the death penalty, it would only be a short time until Mr. Tsuda was moved from the local jail to the state prison, where he would be executed. Death is always carried out by hanging in Japan.

As we faithfully met with Mr. Tsuda, we quickly learned he was an earnest Buddhist. While in jail he wrote the Buddhist scriptures over and over 1,000 times attempting

to achieve forgiveness for the weight of the terrible crime he committed. Nevertheless, no amount of writing brought peace to his mind or heart. Realizing his inward spiritual hunger and need, we brought him a Bible and several Christian books to read. Although he quickly read everything we gave him, still he could not accept a forgiveness he could not earn. Our message was how the eternal, almighty God of the Bible had already acted on his behalf and paid the penalty for his sin. The message of Jesus' death on the cross for his sin finally got his attention.

After several weeks of visits and much prayer, God wonderfully opened the eyes of Mr. Tsuda's heart, and in great repentance he found new life in Christ. With the great joy of knowing God's forgiveness, he left our local jail and was sent to the Hiroshima State Penitentiary to await his execution. In Japan an inmate on death row is never informed of his execution date. After arriving at prison Tsuda sought out the prison chaplain, Rev. Yamane. Soon afterwards he was baptized, and organized

a believer's group of other death row inmates. As time passed, Tsuda wrote two books about his new life in Christ.

For nearly 10 more years, Mr. Tsuda lived in prison never knowing when his moment would arrive. One November day he was awakened by the guards and the chaplain and was taken to a room where he was served communion. Tsuda and the chaplain sang his favorite hymn, "Amazing Grace" together and then only moments later he entered into the presence of his wonderful Lord Jesus. Rev. Yamane reported to us that Tsuda went to meet his Lord with an overwhelming sense of peace and joy in his heart. †

Neal and Mari Hicks serve among the people of Japan. They are involved in pastoral ministry, homeless outreach, evangelism, prayer summits, mission vision and the International VIP Club ministry to unreached Japanese business men and women. The Hickses are presently in the United States, where Mari is undergoing medical treatment. Thank you for your prayers for them.

\$13,000. Ravi's team mainly functions as social workers, connecting people to government organizations that already offer benefits no one bothers to tell them they are eligible for. His team members also work as advocates convincing private hospitals to accept some patients for free, helping adults to obtain vocational training and jobs, and finding the means to help parents keep their children in school. The success of Ravi's work is evident. For example, the percentage of children in this slum that are enrolled in school has risen from less than 10% 10 years ago to more than 80% today.

Ravi, although openly Christian in this completely Muslim community, has won the love, trust, and respect of these people, so much so that he was allowed to take a wife from among them. This is a miracle in itself as a Muslim father allow-

ing his daughter to marry a Christian is unheard of! He told me that he did not try to convert his young wife, but he prayed diligently for her.

Ravi, although openly Christian in this completely Muslim community, has won the love, trust, and respect of these people, so much so that he was allowed to take a wife from among them. This is a miracle in itself.

She shared that one morning she was very troubled because a robed man came to her in her sleep, called her "daughter," and told her he wanted her to follow him. Ravi listened and prayed but gave no

advice. His wife had the same dream a second and third time. He then took her to a Christian church, sat down with her in a pew, and pointed out a picture of Jesus on the wall. He pointed to the picture and said, 'This is the man who has been calling you. Ask Him what He wants you to know.' After long minutes of sitting with her head bowed and her eyes closed, she looked up at her husband. Ravi asked what Jesus had told her, and she replied that He didn't tell her anything; He showed her. She then began to recount the entire gospel story from Jesus' birth to His death on the cross! There are now two Christians in that Muslim slum!" †

**Pseudonym used for security reasons*



"The villagers sang and danced when the water came," remembers Mission Society missionary Michael Agwanda, shown here. "They kept saying, 'Praise God for the water!'... The people of this community have never known clean drinking water in their lifetimes." Michael knows, because he grew up in this village.

Unimaginable!

The story of a Kenyan village

By James Heffner and Jeff and Mary Lou Wallace

Wachara is a village in western Kenya, just south of the equator, not far from the Tanzanian border and halfway around the world from Gardendale Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church in Alabama. Wachara normally has two rainy seasons each year, and can grow corn, potatoes, pineapples, and cabbage. Rain and shallow groundwater feed the pond that has provided residents drinking water for years. The residents share the pond with livestock and wildlife. Michael Agwanda, Mission Society missionary and founder of Life for Children Ministry (LCM), grew up

in Wachara, where he would carry water from the pond to his house.

In 2007, Michael attended Gardendale Mt. Vernon's Global Impact Celebration. He and LCM board member Dick Weber presented LCM's program of caring for AIDS/HIV orphans in Kenya to the Faith Journey Sunday school class, which consisted mostly of 30-something married couples with children. They related easily to Michael and the children-based ministry. The members of Faith Journey asked him to identify the most immediate need for the ministry. Michael made a compelling case of the need for clean water in Wachara. Galvanized into action, the class raised \$15,000 in six weeks. Gardendale Mt. Vernon sent the \$15,000 to LCM, which contracted with a well-drilling team to complete one or two wells in Wachara in 2008.

Dreams dashed

A driller began to install a well close to Michael's childhood home, where public access was assured. As the well was nearing completion, unrest broke out after the 2008 elections. (Kenya had the worst eruption of fighting and bloodshed in its history.) The threat of violence drove the well-drilling crew out of Wachara. The wells were left incomplete, and there was still no clean water for the people of Wachara.

In 2010, a joint team primarily from St. John's UMC (Aiken, South Carolina) and Wesley UMC (Evans, Georgia), sponsored a Bible camp and medical evaluation for LCM's orphans in Wachara and Kisumu. They also visited the pond in Wachara and saw for themselves the terrible condition of the water. As they stood listening to Michael



Photo by CBM

Sanim (shown here with John Jeffries of CBM) is among many who have been touched by the love of Christ through the ministry of Michael and Jannike Seward. The Sewards, who served previously in Zambia, now serve in Papua New Guinea among the disabled and poorest of the poor. Jannike has a Ph.D. in special education and works with Callan Studies, the teacher-education branch of the Callan network of services for people with disabilities. Michael works as an ophthalmologist with CBM, a Christian organization whose aim is to serve people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries. Sanim is one of many whose vision has been restored through this ministry.

His long-awaited miracle

The story of Sanim: Papua New Guinea

By John Jeffries

Sanim is a 51-year-old banana farmer from the coastal town of Lae in Papua New Guinea. For most of his life he has been a leader in his village. One year ago

Sanim suddenly lost his sight. He had no idea why his sight had gone. He just knew that he could no longer see, so he could no longer look after his banana crop or work as a village leader.

But most of all, Sanim missed being able to read his Bible. He prayed that God would fix his eyes, but his prayers seemed futile.

One day Sanim's friend told him an amazing story of a place faraway in

Goroka, where a CBM eye doctor could restore sight to blind people.

Bravely, Sanim set off on the long journey to Goroka. He found the CBM doctor and was told that his problem was a cataract and that it could be fixed.

On June 6, 2011 Sanim had his sight restored through a simple, 10-minute operation. He has gone back to Lae ready to tell everyone about his miracle.

talk about the problem, God spoke to one of the team members from St. John's. He said, "You wanted to know why I brought you to Africa. This is why. You can bring my people clean water." Shaken but committed, this team member told her story to others, and within six months St. John's and Wesley had raised \$30,000 to renew the drilling effort.

Plans were made to drill in July 2011. A well site was chosen near the LCM-sponsored church in Wachara. With funds from St. John's and Wesley in hand, LCM contracted with a driller. A joint team from St. John's and Garden- dale went to Wachara to help oversee the drilling. Arriving at the site this past July, the team was grateful to see a professional and well-equipped drilling crew ready to work. Drilling progress was rapid. Water was struck at a depth of about 40

meters (132 feet). The water is good and the well is highly productive. Now people line up at 7:00 a.m. to begin getting water, and the hand pump installed by the team is in constant use until 7:00 p.m. at night.



Non-stop singing

"The villagers sang and danced when the water came," remembers Michael Agwanda. "They kept saying, 'Praise God for the water! Thank you, thank you,

thank you!' We cried with them, and we laughed. They came with carts and donkeys to get water from as far as 10 kilometers. They came with bicycles and carried the water on their head.

"This was a miracle to me. The people of this community have never known clean drinking water in their lifetimes. Generation after generation have died without knowing clean water. How I pray that this will not only be clean water for their thirst and cooking, but it will also clean their lives for the glory of God. They know that it is not for any reason we drilled the water but for glory and blessing of God!"

Now Wachara has two wells. At a school a mile up the road, the team drilled a second well and arranged for a second pump – all just in time for Bible Camp. ✚

Cheerful giving

Celebrating you – and the other generous hearts who make sharing Christ possible



Over the years, God has consistently provided The Mission Society with missionaries, with open doors to ministry, with nationals with whom to partner, and with leadership and staff. But if you ask me, one of the most amazing things about The Mission Society is how God has provided us with so many faithful prayer partners

and donors. Each day that I talk with you and other ministry partners, I am more convinced that you have figured out what life is all about. When we visit on the phone, I hear in your voices a peace and a joy that is beyond description. After having made thousands of calls to thank our ministry partners

for your prayers and gifts, I have never stopped being amazed by how you turn right around and thank us for sharing Jesus with the hurting people of the world.

We couldn't offer Christ throughout the world without our partners, like you. We wanted to give some of our friends an opportunity to share a bit of their story, so we asked them to answer some questions as you will read in the following.

All 10 of the people we asked responded, and we want to share four of those stories in this issue. We hope you will be encouraged by the testimonies of these faithful friends who are joining Jesus in His mission through The Mission Society.

–Dennis E. Brown is The Mission Society's vice president for advancement

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

–2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV



John and Donna Miller

Why do you pray for and financially support the work of The Mission Society? Giving is something that we learned gradually. In

the beginning it was learning to tithe at our church, then it extended to mission agencies, relief work, and beyond. As we ventured out, we learned that 2 Corinthians 9:7-8 is so true: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

“It brings us such joy to be a part of this work.”
–John and Donna Miller

Our younger son spent eight years in Tanzania, East Africa as a missionary with The Mission Society. Their training, counsel, caring, and genuine love for him was constant. They visited him, prayed for him, prayed for us, and sent other missionaries to work with him. We had many opportunities to spend time with various members of The Mission Society staff, and each time we came away with greater assurance of their integrity and commitment. The continued guidance and missionary heart of The Mission Society is authentic and

deserves support. They desire that all nations would come to know, love, and worship Jesus. All of us cannot go; however, all of us can pray and many of us can give and send. It brings us such joy to be a part of this work.

John and Donna Miller have been friends of The Mission Society since 1999. They live in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where John is in real estate management and Donna is in graphic design. They have two sons and one grandson.



Lynn and Mitzi Whittington

How has being part of The Mission Society influenced your life?

We became associated with The Mission Society in 1999, when we participated in a Mission Society short-term mission trip to Ghana. Prior to that, our experience and interest in

“The Mission Society has given us opportunities to be more active participants in the Great Commission, and we have a stronger relationship with Christ because of The Mission Society.”

–Lynn and Mitzi Whittington

missions work had been very limited. That trip dramatically opened our eyes to the need for people to share the good news of Jesus with the unreached, and it made us aware of the

real-life challenges and rewards that missionaries face every day. Because of the spark that was ignited with that first trip to Ghana, we have become more involved with the mission efforts in our local church.

Why do you pray for and financially support the work of The Mission Society?

We have supported The Mission Society financially and with prayers ever since our trip to West Africa because The Mission Society is tireless in its efforts to fulfill the command of Christ to spread the gospel to the unreached peoples of the world. We have learned of the vision, goals, and methods of The Mission Society and have met many of its missionaries. In our minds, they provide the faces, names, and real-life experiences to the concept of spreading the gospel. The Mission Society has given us opportunities to be more active participants in the Great Commission, and we have a stronger relationship with Christ because of The Mission Society.

Mitzi and Lynn Whittington live in Montgomery, Alabama, and have one son. Lynn is a neonatologist in Montgomery. The Whittingtons have been involved with The Mission Society since 1999.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

—Winston Churchill



John and Pearl McLeod

How has being part of The Mission Society influenced your life?

In March 2006 we attended a Mission Society event, and

John felt that God was telling him we should go on the "vision trip" to Ghana that The Mission Society was sponsoring. Except for one mission trip that Pearl took to Cuba, missionary work for us was financial and prayer support for others going into the field.

“For showing us the faces and hearts of mission work... we gratefully and humbly support The Mission Society.”

—John and Pearl McLeod

With fear and trepidation, we decided to trust God and go to Ghana. Acting on God's leading was one of the wisest decisions of our Christian walk. The dedicated Mission Society team cared for us and our group with love and patience as we experienced all the joys and challenges of a different culture. We visited a hospital staffed by doctors who had given up lucrative practices in modern facilities to care for the sick in unbelievable conditions. We actually supported the buying of bricks for a library to teach literacy, and we contributed funds for the completion of a church so worship services would no longer be held under a tree. Joining local Christians in praise and worship services that were so joyful and uninhibited in spite of, or perhaps because of, what we would deem their "poor circum-

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

–John Wesley

stances" caused us to feel unworthy of the blessings we enjoyed.

J.O. Fraser wrote: "Many of us cannot reach the mission fields on our feet, but we can reach them on our knees." Because of our trip to Ghana, our prayer and financial support of missions is no longer abstract. For showing us the faces and hearts of mission work and helping us participate in Jesus' mission, we gratefully and humbly support The Mission Society as God provides.

John and Pearl McLeod have been involved with The Mission Society for seven years. John is a retired U.S. ARMY Colonel and a retired non-profit organization executive director. Pearl is a homemaker and retired school media specialist. The McLeods live in Orlando, Florida. They have four children and five grandchildren.



John and Charlene Bridge

How has being part of The Mission Society influenced your life?

The simple expression: global awareness – in the sense of

reaching the world for Jesus – has become a prime mission in my life. I have become more motivated and disciplined in regard to daily Bible reading and study, and my current focus is on a daily prayer discipline. The missionary stories and staff teachings from The Mission Society encourage me in living out this global mission throughout the entire year.

Why do you pray for and financially support the work of The Mission Society?

Eight years ago, we began attending Mission Society events. A speaker at one of these events talked about “Last Words.” (Jesus’ last words gave us the Great Commission.) The speaker asked a question that has stuck with me: “Wouldn’t our last words be the most important?” For me, some of our last words are expressed in planned giving, where my wife, Charlene, and

“Reaching the world for Jesus has become a prime mission in my life.”

–John Bridge

I have placed The Mission Society in the top spot through our charitable remainder trusts because of The Mission Society’s passion and strategic approach to mobilizing mission movements around the world. We are in our seventies, and I wish we had developed this strategy at an earlier age. I recommend everyone consider planned giving now to help share Christ with the world through The Mission Society. ✝

John and Charlene Bridge reside in The Villages, Florida, and in Manchester, Maine. John is a retired fourth-generation New England road contractor. John and Charlene have been friends of The Mission Society for many years. The Bridges have five children and six grandchildren.

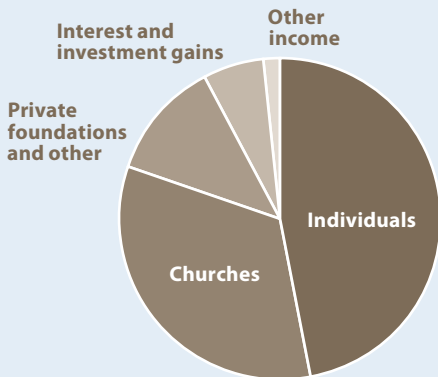


A year in review

Reflecting on the advance of God's kingdom through The Mission Society. *The figures below reflect activity between May 31, 2010 and May 31, 2011.*

- 215** Number of Mission Society missionaries
- 39** Number of countries in which Mission Society missionaries serve
- 2** Number of new ministry locations opened (Namibia and South Africa)
- 16** Number of new missionaries approved for service
- 14** Number of missionaries deployed for the first time
- 9** Number of new interns approved and deployed
- 11** Number of Global Outreach Weekends held in U.S. churches. (Events were held in nine states: Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.)
- 468** Number of international missionaries, pastors, and church leaders (those from countries other than the United States) trained by The Mission Society.

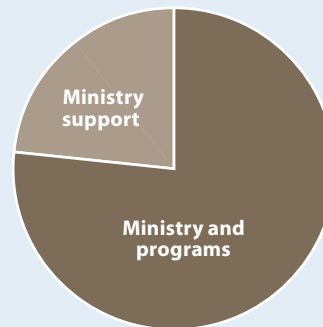
As of May 31, 2011, The Mission Society's 215 missionaries were serving in 39 countries, five of which are not shown here because of concerns regarding security.



REVENUE

- 47% Individuals
- 33% Churches
- 12% Private foundations and other
- 6% Interest and investment gains
- 2% Other income

Total revenue: \$8,829,041



EXPENSES

- 77% Ministry and programs (missionaries and projects, church mobilization, international mobilization conferences, training and resident missiologist)
- 23% Ministry support (president's office, finance and accounting, advancement, IT and personnel)

Total expenses: \$8,065,479

Audited financial statements are available on The Mission Society's website: www.themissionsociety.org or by request to its finance department, phone: 678.542.9050.

The Mission Society invited by Kenyan ministry to help train its missionaries

Second Kenyan ministry also exploring working partnership with The Mission Society

In early September, Dick McClain, Mission Society president; Bill Johnson, Mission Society board chairman, and his wife, Phyllis, met with leaders of Kenya's Africa Gospel Church (AGC) and the newly forming Kenya Mission Alliance (KEMA). As a result of these sessions, The Mission Society has been extended an invitation by AGC leaders to work alongside them to train AGC missionaries. An initial two-week missionary orientation and training has been scheduled for late next spring. It will be attended by as many as half of AGCs current missionaries; workers from God's Grace for All Nations (GGFAN), a Kenyan organization supported by The Mission Society; and representatives from several additional KEMA-related mission organizations.

AGC leaders also urged The Mission Society to continue its missions mobilization work with them. This work began

in December of 2008, when The Mission Society conducted a missions mobilization conference for more than 700 AGC pastors and leaders in Kericho, Kenya. (The 2008 conference has been credited by AGC leaders with doubling the denomination-wide mission giving in 2009.)

AGC's Missions Mobilization Conference is tentatively slated for February, 2012 and will include The Mission Society's Global Outreach Seminar; teaching on communicating the gospel across cultural barriers by Darrell Whiteman, Ph.D., Mission Society vice president and resident missiologist; and teaching from Peacemakers International on biblical peacemaking. Representatives from GGFAN and numerous KEMA member organizations are expected to participate.

During the recent meetings, KEMA leaders also elected to co-sponsor the

two above-mentioned events next winter/spring, with the hope that in the future, The Mission Society's missions mobilization resources and its missionary training model and program might be utilized by KEMA for strengthening missions movements within Kenya.

The relationship between The Mission Society and these Kenyan organizations reflects the growing (and strategic) importance of emerging mission movements in the Global South, and underscores The Mission Society's commitment to serve the worldwide mission of the Church – a commitment expressed in its mission statement:

The Mission Society exists to mobilize and deploy the body of Christ globally to join Jesus in His mission, especially among the least reached peoples. †



May we recommend:

Speaking of Jesus; the art of not-evangelism by Carl Medearis, David C. Cook, publisher, 2011

Looking for a book for your small group? Consider *Speaking of Jesus* by Carl Medearis. One online reviewer writes: This "is the best book you can read about evangelism – even if the subtitle says: the art of not-evangelism. Why? Because evangelism is neither a method nor an approach. It is not a what or a how. It is a who – Jesus is the good news. Carl powerfully (and sometimes humorously) illustrates how this works in real life.

"Carl's thesis is simple but liberating: We need to stop playing the 'our religion can beat up your religion game' (p. 103) and focus on calling people to Jesus. 'If you don't feel like you have to evangelize someone away from their team and onto yours, you can speak of Jesus much more freely and thus, more effectively' (p. 103). 'Evangelism, as a method, is dangerous because it's something we do to other people. Nobody likes to be done (p. 125). All we need to do is speak of Jesus.'"



Leaving a Legacy: Remembering The Mission Society in Your Will

Psalm 24:1 tells us that “the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” Throughout scripture, God calls on us as His followers to be good stewards of all the resources He has created and gives us. He blesses us not to increase our standard of living, but to increase our standard of giving.

By including The Mission Society in your will, you can leave a legacy of giving toward Kingdom ministry around the world. Through your generosity, countless lives and communities will receive the transforming love and grace of our Lord Jesus for years to come.

Thank you for prayerfully considering The Mission Society in your will and estate plan.

If you’d like to discuss more details about including The Mission Society in your will, please email us at dbrown@themissionsociety.org or call 1-800-478-8963 ext. 9037.



The Mission Society approves eight new missionaries for service

The Mission Society recently approved eight new cross-cultural workers for service in various locations around the globe. The Mission Society’s Candidate Assessment and Orientation was held September 11-14, 2011 at its Norcross, Georgia headquarters. The four days included interaction with staff, ministry and team-building activities, and interviews. The new missionaries’ names cannot be released until their country of service has been finalized.

One couple currently resides in Texas. They are both trained as teachers and

desire to work in children’s ministry. Their field of service has yet to be determined.

Another couple, both from Germany, plan to serve with Children of Zion Village in Namibia. He currently works in product development and she has served at Children of Zion Village for several months with Mission Society missionaries Travis and Lorna Curry.

A third couple was approved for an 18-month internship with The Mission Society. They reside in Florida where he studied engineering and she studied political science and writing. Their field of

service has yet to be determined.

A fourth couple resides in Georgia and has taken a number of short-term mission trips before committing to career service with The Mission Society. They plan to serve in Ghana and desire to start an addiction recovery ministry there.

The number of Mission Society missionaries presently totals 223. Forty percent of them serve – or are preparing to serve – among least reached people. ✝



Mission in shifting contexts

Doing kingdom work in times of rapid change



This photo of the statue of Lenin was taken in the mid-1990s. At that time, Kazakhstan had been independent for only a short time, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Fifteen years ago my family arrived in Kazakhstan. The country had been independent just under five years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The infrastructure was largely in a state of collapse. Unemployment was high; confusion was everywhere; utilities were unpredictable; cars were few; potholes were massive, and the availability of goods was inconsistent. The new government welcomed help from the outside. Even a small organization such as our own that offered help in education and health was welcomed by local officials and even had access to the office of the regional governor. The school we operated was one of the only schools paying teachers their wages on time. Students flocked to our English language program. In the newfound open atmosphere, people were open to new ideas, including those of faith.

Fast forward 15 years to 2011, and our workers in Kazakhstan face an entirely different scene than what welcomed us way back then. The city where we lived

looks totally different. Officials and businessmen who have benefitted from development drive Land Cruisers instead of Ladas. The roads even have lines on them. The banking system is stable. Our school is one of *many* good private and public schools and now has a hard time keeping up with teacher salaries. The

The days are long gone that mission work could take a standard approach – show up on the ship, set up shop, get to know the local language and culture, start a church.

country still faces many challenges, but the development and changes are hard to overstate. A small organization like ours is now irrelevant to the halls of power. We are faced with increasingly negative scrutiny by local officials as the openness of the first 10-15 years of independence gives way to suspicion of foreign

organizations and a rise of restrictions on religious expression.

This particular case provides an example of one of the important facets of kingdom work in today's world of rapid change. The days are long gone that mission work could take a standard approach – show up on the ship, set up shop, get to know the local language and culture, start a church. But not only do we now have to adjust our whole approach based on the context of each specific location of the ministry, but in most locations the context itself changes dramatically in just a matter of years.

When and if to exit

The work of the kingdom will not be finished until Christ returns. I always take exception to the phrase, “Our job is to work our way out of a job.” While there is truth in that statement, it implies that mission work is a task to be done and that there is a clear end aside from the return of Christ. The phrase does not fit well in the typically fluid environments



This recent photo of the capital city of Astana shows a different Kazakhstan than only 15 years ago. *Photos by Jim Ramsay.*

of mission where we want the focus to be on relationship more than task.

That said, the role of the cross-cultural worker does change as the context changes. If our primary goal is to maintain the institutions we founded and hold on to the roles we have held, we risk becoming obstacles to the growth of the kingdom as the context changes.

In the latter 1990s Kazakhstan was one of The Mission Society's largest fields, along with Paraguay and Ghana. But as we look at the picture in 2011, those places have now decreased in numbers for The Mission Society as the context in each has changed.

In all cases, churches have been started or strengthened. Leadership has been assumed by local believers. Vision is being developed independent of the foreign workers. In all three places, we still have people serving to encourage the church, engage in discipleship, and assist with projects, but the look of the work and the accompanying structures are very different than just a few years ago.

In each of these places, as well as any place we have cross-cultural workers, we must frequently ask the question, "Is it time for us not to have personnel on the ground?" If we don't ask the question, then we risk just assuming that the Lord still has called us to ongoing involvement when, in fact, it might be time for a change. And sometimes, as has happened in some places, restrictive visa laws end up forcing the issue.

Moving with the tide

At the same time as we ask questions of existing work, we are exploring places the Lord is calling us into. This past year alone has opened up two new places for service in challenging parts of the world with a high concentration of unreached people. In fact, some of our former workers from Kazakhstan are preparing to be part of a team in one of these new places. In addition, a major change in context in many places is that there are now mature churches and believers who can be mobilized to join Jesus in His mission. In such

contexts, our role can be to train and encourage local believers around the world who themselves are answering a call to serve God cross-culturally.

I was blessed recently to receive a letter from one of the young leaders of the church we helped start in Kazakhstan. I have known him since he was a teenager. In it he articulated a vision the church has for mobilizing young people in his church to greater witness and discipleship. He does not need our leadership, but is asking for our encouragement and prayers. Buildings and Land Cruisers aside, this is the change in context we and others prayed for in all our years of service! The mission God has given us is unchanged, but the contexts and roles change constantly. Only by the Holy Spirit can we hope to keep pace. ☩

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



Transformational unity

What the 'fish' long to see



As part of the mission focus for the weekend, Jasper UMC had scheduled a Stop Hunger Now packing event. ...In less than two hours that group had assembled and boxed 10,000 instant meals to be shipped to needy places around the world. *Photo by Chip Wilson*

The story is told that Robert Benchley, American humorist and actor, arrived for his final exam in international law at Harvard University to find that the test consisted of this one instruction: Discuss the arbitration of the international fisheries problem in respect to hatcheries protocol and dragnet and procedure as it affects (a) the point of view of the United States and (b) the point of view of Great Britain. Benchley wrote: I know nothing about the point of view of Great Britain in the arbitration of the international fisheries problem, and nothing about the point of view of the United States. I shall therefore discuss the question from the point of view of the fish.

In the 17th chapter of John, verses 20-23, Jesus prays for unity among his followers. He indicates the pattern for that unity is the relationship that is

modeled within the Trinity. Jesus goes on to pray that the unity among his followers would be a sign to the world that would lead some to believe in Him. In other words, if we looked at the followers of Jesus from the point of view of the fish (those we seek to introduce to Christ) we should see unity, not discord and division.

Unity in action

Recently, a team from The Mission Society saw such unity in action. A church in Jasper, Georgia asked The Mission Society to lead a Global Outreach Weekend. After the schedule was posted, we received a call from New Mercies Christian Church asking if it would be possible for some of their people to attend the workshop in Jasper. We contacted Pastor Chip Wilson at the

Jasper church, and he graciously extended an invitation for them to come. The differences between the two churches are striking. Geographically, the Jasper church is located in the North Georgia Mountains, while New Mercies is located in metro Atlanta. Racially, the Jasper church is predominantly white, and New Mercies is predominantly black. Numerically, the Jasper church is mid-sized, and New Mercies is a megachurch. Denominationally, Jasper church is United Methodist, and New Mercies is non-denominational.

For many churches any one of these differences would be enough to keep them apart. For example, in a Mission Society leaders' training session, the instructor offered how beneficial it would be if local churches of different denominations came together, not just on special

occasions but regularly, to bless the community. A pastor in the group responded by saying, “Different denominations? We can’t even come together as churches in our own denomination to bless the community.” A missions pastor in a large church was bemoaning that he could not interest other churches in partnering with his church because the smaller churches felt the larger church would siphon members away. Stories such as this are all too common. However, on this Friday night as we began the GO Workshop portion of the Global Outreach Weekend, these Jasper United Methodist Church and New Mercies Christian Church members came together beautifully. It was a great time of learning, interaction, and challenge.

Saturday morning proved to be especially rewarding. As part of the missions focus for the weekend, Jasper UMC had scheduled a Stop Hunger Now packing event. The workshop participants along with 50 or so additional church members joined together to package dehydrated meals that are used in crisis situations and in feeding programs for schools and orphanages in developing countries around the world. Assembly stations were set, beginning with the raw ingredients of rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables, and a flavoring mix with essential vitamins and minerals. These were placed in small plastic bags and sent on to the weighing stations where rice was either added or removed to meet the weight

criteria. The individual bags were then sent to the sealing stations where a hot press sealed the bags. Finally, the bags were sent to the packing station where 36 bags were placed in a box and sealed for shipping.

It was evident something special was happening when above the general chatter could be heard, “One! Two! Three! Four! Shake it, baby, shake it!” as the mixing station added the

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ingredients and shook the bags to settle their contents. For each 1,000 meals boxed, a gong was sounded, and the entire group would celebrate with applause and shouts. In less than two hours that group had assembled and boxed 10,000 instant meals to be shipped to needy places around the world.

Even greater harmony

The workshop continued that afternoon with an even greater sense of harmony. In fact, had one not known otherwise, it was as if those present were all from the same church. During the session on Building

Kingdom Partnerships, the following quote from *The Power of Partnership* by Phillip Butler was presented:

“The church has the people, money, prayer resources, and technology to fulfill the Great Commission in our age. But it will not be fulfilled by chance. It can only be fulfilled through godly unity and cooperation.”

The point was then made that the reality is none of us individually – and none of our churches or organizations – has all the gifts and resources on our own to accomplish God’s purpose of bringing all the peoples of the world to know Him, love Him, and worship Him. But when we’re willing to be connected to others who share the same mission and calling, God can use us to do very significant work. In Jesus we have a common life, a common calling, and a common purpose. We must not allow “unity” to remain just a catchphrase, when in reality we continue to do our own thing, all the while failing to work hand-in-hand in dynamic relationships with others in the body of Christ.

If we expect to see transformation in our own life, in the life of our church, and most importantly, in the lives of those that are not, as yet, followers of Jesus, we must come together in unity. Remember. The fish are watching us. †

Stan Self is The Mission Society's senior director of church ministry.



Money well spent?

Is the U.S. missionary still necessary?



In the past several years, as global missions has been undergoing significant shifts, even the need for missionaries from the United States has been called into question. Maybe you've heard. Some mission authorities have been asking, "Shouldn't the U.S. Church spend its money on supporting the ministries of indigenous Christian workers? After all, they already speak the language; they have fewer living expenses and have a better understanding of the local culture."

Bob Finley, author of *Reformation in Foreign Missions*, and K.P. Yohannan, author of *Revolution in World Missions*, are among those who contend that U.S. mission organizations make a mistake by continuing to deploy missionaries from the United States.

And these authors make some excellent points. It is true that indigenous workers already have some language advantages. It is true that they have certain inroads into understanding the local culture. However, the thinking that suggests that the U.S. missionary is no longer needed fails to take into account several important points:

1. Jesus called the entire Church to go and the entire Church to give. To assign one part of the body the role of going would be like assigning one part of the body the responsibility of praying.
2. God has not stopped calling women and men from the United States to serve as cross-cultural missionaries. Should we tell these believers to ignore the call, get a "regular job," and instead send more money overseas?
3. The sight of believers from different nations and backgrounds working together in the Lord's harvest provides a tangible image of God's love.
4. Americans still have valid contributions to make. What is critical is that they submit to indigenous leadership.
5. Indigenous workers are not immune from ethnocentrism, denominationalism, or poor contextualization. They, too, can make errors in communicating the gospel.
6. Due to prejudices and ethnic conflict, some indigenous workers will not be accepted in certain places within their own country. Americans can be helpful in such situations.
7. Even indigenous workers must learn new languages, especially if they are going to unreached people groups. India, for example has several hundred languages spoken within its borders. Even with English and Hindi being official languages, an Indian missionary would need to learn new languages.
8. Being in a constant position of receiving funds from the West is likely to cre-

ate unhealthy dependency. This dependency can do much to cripple and hinder the indigenous believers.

My hunch is that leaders such as Finley and Yohannan are reacting to missions done poorly. Unfortunately, there have been untrained or insensitive missionaries who have created more damage than good. The intentions were noble, but the results left much to be desired.

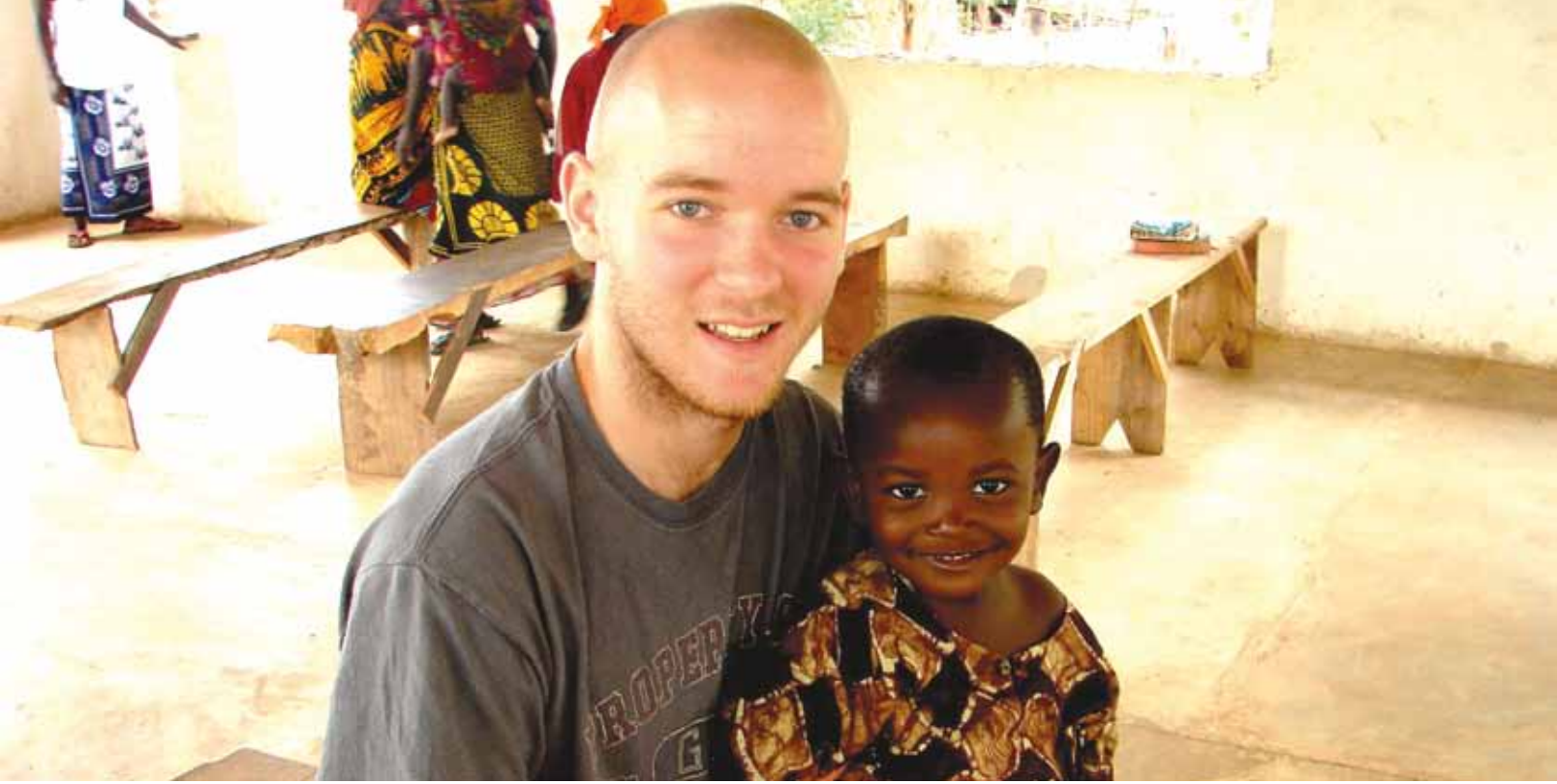
The solution to missions done poorly is not to ground the entire American missions force. The solution is to provide training and to redefine the roles that American missionaries play.

Here at The Mission Society, we do both. We spend a considerable amount of our energies supporting and training indigenous workers. At the same time, we in-grain within our missionaries the importance of doing missions well. We require our missionaries to go through eight weeks of training, read more than 10 books, attend a 15-week Perspectives on the World Missions Movement class, and spend their first year of service with an emphasis on learning the local language and culture.

Rest assured; your gifts to The Mission Society and its 200+ missionaries is money well spent. †

Richard Coleman is the director of mobilization and candidacy for The Mission Society.

We celebrate with Richard and Amanda Coleman whose second child was born just before this issue went to press.



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