

Unfinished

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Loving neighbor

Getting back to basics

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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, 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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*“We love because he first loved us.”
– 1 John 4:19, NIV*



photo by Jim Whitmer

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Letting God be in charge of change

Standing at life's crossroads. Remembering God's promises



"The decision to retire was reached only after much prayer. I love what I do at The Mission Society," says the Rev. Dr. Philip Granger. "It has been a privilege to serve these past seven-plus years as president. However, I am convinced God is calling me to a new season of life and ministry.

"The Mission Society Board of Directors is nearing the completion of its presidential search, and I am thrilled about the prospects identified. The future of The Mission Society is exciting, and God is providing the right leadership for the years to come."

Change. It's a word that has been used so much in this last year that it's easy to tune it out or not even relate to it. *Webster's Dictionary* says that change means "to make different in some particular; to make radically different; to give a different position, course, or direction." Now I can relate to change in that context.

Change – meaning "to make radically different" – was what happened in my life when Jesus became my Lord and Savior. I no longer lived for myself but for Christ who lived within me. I became a better husband and father. I became a better employee in my chosen profession. Every aspect of life became radically different as I grew and matured in Christ, a process that continues to this day.

Change – meaning "to give a different course" – could describe my whole life journey. After I dedicated my life to Christ, He called me to re-route my plans time

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us." – Helen Keller

after time. "Change of course" describes my move from business to ministry, then to seminary, to the pastorate, to the office of district superintendent (in the Indiana Annual Conference of The United

Methodist Church), and eventually to The Mission Society.

Now I am about to embark on another major change of course. Effective December 31, 2009, I will leave full-time ministry as president of The Mission Society and begin a life of volunteer ministry as a retired person.

The only meaningful change

Change can cause fear, particularly in our current economic environment. Some would say I am foolish to retire now when my retirement funds are worth less than half what they were a few months ago. I must admit that I have had my moments of doubt, but God has seen Sue and me this far, and He will care for us in the future. Of this I am sure!



PLANNING

WE'LL HELP YOU REVIEW YOUR WILL

Many estates are not distributed according to the individual's desires, simply because the estate plan was outdated.

Ask the following questions:

- Are witnesses to your will still living?
- Have you moved to another state since your will was drafted?
- Does your will appoint a personal representative who would be unable to serve today because of where he or she lives?
- Have minor children become financially independent, resulting in a change in your desires for estate distribution?
- Have tax laws changed since you last reviewed your estate plan?
- Do you need to explore the use of a trust?
- Have your charitable interests changed since your will was drafted?

- Has the size of your estate increased substantially, resulting in a need for tax planning?
- Does your present estate plan provide for management of property in case of disability prior to death?
- Are there additional methods you may employ to avoid probate at the time of death?

Your answers to these and other questions may indicate that you need to update your estate plan.

We have prepared a special *Guide To Planning Your Estate* that will be of value to you as you review your estate plan, to make sure it is up-to-date and will carry out your current distribution desires.

Please write today for your free copy. There is no cost or obligation. We just want to help.

"I'm concerned that my will might be out of date. But how do I know when it should be reviewed?"



THE MISSION SOCIETY

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Frankly, this worldwide economic downturn gives all of us an opportunity to better acquaint ourselves with the meaning of total dependence on God. And yet many Christians are giving less to ministries, because the stock market has dropped, which makes me think: What about Jesus' teaching on the widow's mite? She gave not out of abundance, but out of a conviction that God would care for her and that her gift could and would make a difference!

Needs at home and around the world are greater now than they have ever been before, and they are getting even more serious. Unfortunately, just in a time when our ministries should be expanding, The Mission Society – like so many other ministries – has had to lay off staff.

Fewer people are carrying out the work that should be done by a larger staff. Why are these few willing to do this? Because they are convinced that God wants His ministry not only to continue but to expand! The Mission Society staff, board members, missionaries, and faithful ministry partners like yourself are living out their conviction that the only meaningful change that can occur in this world is the change that Christ brings, as we abandon ourselves in faith to Him.

My hardest change

What's the hardest change God has asked me to make? It does not involve money or possessions. It involves people. The hardest change I will have ever faced will be the day I leave the day-to-day contact

and shoulder-to-shoulder ministry with the people at The Mission Society. I know when the time comes, God will get me through, but leaving will leave a hole in my life much like the death of a loved one.

I thank God that I have been privileged to be part of such a wonderful group of servants of God these past seven-plus years. Of course, I will never leave the ministry to which God has called me. The particular location of my call will change, but the call to reach the lost will remain. †

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



Missionaries John and Katheryn Heinz live in a downtown neighborhood in a home they renovated. Neighbors come here for pancakes on Saturday mornings.

Downtown for Good: Tearing down old walls

Cultural differences often barricade inner-city churches from the communities around them. How can those divides ever be leveled? Missionaries John and Katheryn Heinz help downtown congregations remodel their thinking so they can better reach into the communities in their backyards.

By Reed Hoppe

While many cities do not live up to the beauty, history, and attractions touted in tourist brochures, Lexington, Kentucky is definitely an exception. The rolling hills of vibrant bluegrass, lined with pristine white fences and speckled with regal horses serve as a landscape anyone would enjoy viewing on vacation, or on their daily commute to work. Lexington is known for many things, including its title as “The Horse Capital of the World.” The city of nearly 500,000 contains a multitude of diversity among its population.

You may not see Lexington’s diversity at first, but it is there – tucked away in the center of downtown, several streets behind the lofty office buildings and trendy boutiques. It is amid this backdrop that John and Katheryn Heizes’ ministry, “Downtown Pulse,” was formed.

Called to the city

Katheryn lived in Nebraska, Los Angeles, and Nashville before moving to Wilmore, Kentucky to pursue a Master of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. She also spent a month in south Chicago in a men’s rehabilitation facility which had a profound impact on her life and ministry. She has always loved cities and the diversity and complexity present within them. Her plans were to pursue a Ph.D. in anthropology after graduation from Asbury, but God directed her to instead consider urban ministry. With that in mind, she planned to return to Los Angeles and work in an urban context in the south central part of the city.

John grew up in suburban New Jersey and moved to Wilmore in 2001 to pursue a Master of Arts in World Mission and Evangelism. It was while he was studying at Asbury that he felt called to urban ministry in North America. In response,



In urban gentrification, middle- and upper-class populations move into lower-income areas, producing multicultural communities. Helping downtown congregations interact with the incoming and diverse cultures is what the Heinzes' ministry is all about.

John moved to downtown Lexington and worked with the Lexington Rescue Mission. For six months he lived with men who were homeless and addicted to drugs and alcohol. John then moved in with a group of Christians and lived in community in a house in downtown Lexington. These Christians opened their home to addicts, homeless, refugees, and single moms struggling to care for their children. They provided food, help looking for jobs, rides to medical clinics and relief agencies, and offered Christ.

While Katheryn was making plans to return to Los Angeles, John was planning to move to Philadelphia. It was around that time that they began dating. Their common call to urban ministry was one of the things that drew them together, even if they planned to live out that ministry on opposite sides of the country. Several months after they married, John and Katheryn traveled to dozens of cities across the United States. They prayed

about where God may be calling them and finally decided that they had already found their home in Lexington.

Break it down

The Heinzes' goal, through "Downtown Pulse," is to help downtown congregations see the cultural boundaries that exist, and then equip these church people to reach out to the different cultures with the love of Christ. Many of the Heinzes' daily and weekly activities are designed to create space for various cultures to interact.

For some downtown churches, the differences between the population directly surrounding the church property and the people within its walls can be daunting. Usually neither group engages in much contact with the other, and barriers are intentionally or unintentionally formed. As many cities go through the process of urban gentrification, downtown churches are often located in prime areas. Urban gentrification is the shift that occurs in

an area when middle- and upper-class individuals move into lower-income areas. One of the results of this shift is the formation of a multicultural community. Getting those various cultures to interact and learn from one another can be a challenge. The Heinzes' ministry role is to serve as a bridge between the church and the city.

Several of the minority groups in downtown Lexington include African-Americans, Latinos, students, refugees, artists, and homosexuals. These groups each have cultures of their own and have created a culture in downtown Lexington that is very different from the culture of the nearby churches.

John and Katheryn felt led to collaborate with First United Methodist Church (FUMC) in downtown Lexington in its urban ministry initiative. To the Heinzes' surprise, the people of FUMC had also been praying about reaching out to the community surrounding them and

Mission Bootcamp

On-the-job training for inner-city missionaries

Their “Mission Bootcamp” course is one way the Heinzes seek to equip downtown congregations to reach out with Christ’s love to the multicultural community around them. Ten people from Lexington, Kentucky’s First United Methodist Church have committed to meeting two hours each week for nine months to attend the training. By the end of the Heinzes’ first five-year term with The Mission Society, they hope to have trained 50 missionaries in cross-cultural ministry.

The training features a Bible study, a study on the history of missions, field trips to various areas of Lexington, and guest speakers. The speakers include Christian business people in secular jobs who discuss living out their faith in everyday life, as well as people who live on the street or are from the Heinzes’ neighborhood. The Bootcamp course participants

are pushed out of their comfort zones so they have the opportunity to see Lexington in a new light.

The three questions John and Katheryn ask class members are: (1) Where do you see God already working?; (2) How will the Gospel be heard as good news for this particular person?; and (3) How should we, as individuals and as the church, enter into this situation?

In the end, the Heinzes’ goal is not to fit every person into ministry in his or her particular neighborhood, or even into an urban ministry setting. The Heinzes’ desire is to help people discern what God is calling them to, and help them get involved. So far, the participants of Mission Bootcamp have become involved in a variety of ministries.

asking God for people to help lead the ministry. FUMC had adopted the motto “downtown for good” to symbolize their commitment to stay in the downtown area instead of relocating to the suburbs, as well as to be the light of Christ in their community. The Heinzes and FUMC began to work together on a plan that would further connect the church and its members to the people outside its walls.

Cut it down

One of the first things that John and Katheryn decided to do when they formed “Downtown Pulse” was to buy a house in a low-income neighborhood. A guiding principle of their ministry is to live “incarnationally” – in other words, to live in a way that closely identifies with the people among whom they serve. So, for the Heinzes, being incarnational meant living in the same downtown neighborhood and becoming involved in the daily lives of the people around them.

John and Katheryn said that their new neighbors tried to peg them into certain categories when they first moved to the area. People assumed they were drug dealers, undercover police, or “religious

The Heinzes network with Lexington’s First United Methodist Church, as well as other downtown churches in Lexington; Danville, Kentucky; and Cincinnati, Ohio, working to equip churches to better reach out to their multi-cultural neighborhoods.

people.” Some even insisted that they must be from another country, because, according to their neighbors, John and Katheryn are “weird.” As Katheryn explains, “We aren’t from another country,

but we are from another culture. Some of our cultural habits are weird, simply because the Christian life looks different.” And that is part of the goal – looking noticeably “different.” The Heinzes’ desire is that their neighbors see the love of Christ in their words and actions.

When they first purchased their house, which had been left vacant for decades, renovating it was necessary before they could move in. One of the first improvements they made was to chop down 10-foot tall bushes that had grown in front of their house and blocked their view of the neighborhood. They noticed that many houses had these same bushes, designed to serve as a shield from the unsightly activities that often go on across the street, and to block the view of anyone trying to see in. The Heinzes wanted make a statement by tearing down the bushes. Their openness was appreciated by other neighbors, who even commented about John and Katheryn’s

Our church has left the building

Here are a few ways some downtown churches are engaging their multicultural neighbors. How might these ideas inspire your church's outreach?

Provide an after-school tutoring program. Grace Fellowship Church in Snellville, Georgia, along with other area churches, began an after-school program for the immigrant children in the neighborhood. Most of these children are "latch-key kids" (children who are home alone for several hours after school each weekday while parents are still at work). The after-school program provides a safe environment for the children who receive attention and hear about the love of Christ.

Start a refugee ministry. San Antonio, Texas is home to a very large refugee population. University United Methodist Church offers English-as-a-second language classes, as well as provides transportation on Sunday mornings for worship and Sunday school. As more refugees settle in San Antonio, the ministry has continued to grow; volunteers tutor kids, help adults find jobs, sort and deliver donations, teach shopping/cooking classes, and of course, tell the story of Jesus every chance they get.

willingness to remove what was a literal and figurative barrier.

Much of what John and Katheryn do are simple acts of reaching out and forming relationships, acts that the Heinzes are convinced any downtown church at-large could imitate in their own communities. The goal of the Heinzes' ministry is not community development or social work – it is real transformation. John and Katheryn desire to live, worship, and serve together with their neighbors. As they walk with people in their journey of faith, they hope to see their neighbors made into disciples that love Christ.

Build relationships

How do downtown churches get "engaged" in the lives of the people around them? One of the primary ways the Heinzes' are training and equipping church members to serve as cross-cultural "missionaries" is through the

"Adopt" an apartment complex. Gracepointe Nazarene in Grayson, Georgia provides free concerts, food, movie night events, and other festivities for people in this particular apartment complex. They have also coordinated joint clean-up days for residents and church members to clean up the complex area.

Target a "needy" area. Guntersville First United Methodist Church in Guntersville, Alabama started a second campus in a high-crime neighborhood. The church offered job counseling, programs for autistic children, ESL training, Celebrate Recovery, and legal help which was all provided pro bono by professionals in the city. As a result of this outreach, a worship service has begun that has grown to more than 160 in just over a year.

"Mission Bootcamp" course (*see related article*). The Heinzes' weekly ministries also include a Saturday morning pancake breakfast and neighborhood Bible study. The breakfast crowd can range from five to 50 people, including both members of FUMC and residents in the community. The Heinzes are clear that it is not a soup kitchen; they do not hand out food to whoever shows up. The Saturday breakfast is about creating community and sharing a meal together with neighbors. During this time, relationships are built and stereotypes are broken down as people learn more about one another. The same rule applies in their Bible study group. People are asked to come together to grow in relationship and learn more about the Word of God.

Their labors have not been in vain. John and Katheryn have built many relationships with the residents of their neighborhood. Their house is known as a place of refuge. Several neighbors have

come by to ask for prayer, for healing, and for an escape from their life of addiction. Their Mission Bootcamp course has emboldened average suburbanites to find their role in ministry in the inner-city. Most importantly, downtown churches are learning to communicate the love of Christ across cultural boundaries and reach out to their community. †

Reed Hoppe, a deacon in the Alabama-West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church, is the associate director of communications of The Mission Society.

For information about partnering with the Heinzes or any missionaries of The Mission Society, call 1.800.478.8963.

Ministering to the people next door

Meet The Mission Society missionaries who are offering Christ in U.S. neighborhoods and beyond

Mission Society missionaries appointed to the United States serve in a variety of ministries. Some have worked in overseas missions for a number of years, have retired in the States, and continue to travel abroad to organize projects. Some are involved in church planting efforts, media and communications work, children's ministry, refugee ministry, community outreach, and recruiting new missionaries to serve overseas. For more information about partnering with these or any missionaries of The Mission Society, visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org or call 1.800.478.8963.



José and Audrey Bañales

José and Audrey served eight years in Mexico City with The Mission Society and OMS International. Based in Tulsa, they currently serve as the South Regional directors covering Texas, Oklahoma, New

Mexico, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Besides traveling in the South Region, they also continue to lead and organize work teams to Mexico, and José serves as the evangelism shepherd in Mozambique.



Alan and Beth Barrett **Children: Elizabeth, Stacey, and Andrew**

The Barretts partner with The Mission Society and Frontiers to minister in the Muslim world. During the time in which they lived in

Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Barretts worked in church planting, leadership development, and evangelistic ministries. They now serve with the "Barnabas Team" of Frontiers, in member care, counseling, and mentoring. Alan is also an ordained elder in the South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, where he serves a church.



Reid and Lola Buchanan **Children: Andrew, Jeremy, Serwaa, and Akua**

Reid was a trained civil engineer before earning a master's degree in world mission and evangelism from Asbury Theological Seminary.

He is an ordained deacon in the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. He and Lola, a registered nurse, ministered in Ghana for six years before moving back to the States. They now continue to coordinate Community Health Evangelism (CHE) programs in Ghana, while living in Lexington, Kentucky, where Lola serves as a home health nurse and Reid serves as a facilitator in Kentucky with the urban CHE model of ministry, "Neighborhood Transformation."



Margaret Buell

After serving for two years in Ghana, Margaret continues to use her videography skills for The Mission Society and its missionaries. Now based in Mississippi, Margaret travels to various fields of The

Mission Society and documents, through video, the stories of what God is doing. To date, she has created more than a dozen videos for The Mission Society.



Debra Buenting

Debra partners with Youth With A Mission's International Communications Network, which serves YWAM and other ministries worldwide. In addition to writing and teaching, she helps

organize communication consultations and workshops in various countries, and is using new technologies to help missionaries develop more effective communication skills. Debra, who holds a Ph.D. in communication, is particularly interested in the role of communication in holistic development.



Charlie and Chris Hanak

The Hanaks, based in Virginia, are jointly connected with The Mission Society and Ambassadors for Christ International (AFCI). Charlie is the AFCI Regional Director for the Americas, developing work in the

Caribbean and South America. Chris is the AFCI Women's Ministry Coordinator, equipping women leaders worldwide.



John and Katheryn Heinz

John and Katheryn are both graduates of Asbury Theological Seminary. Their ministry is to help the traditional, downtown church navigate the changing urban culture, and to learn

how to effectively communicate the Gospel in word and deed to this culture. They help guide church members into city life through community involvement, urban mission experiences and relationships, and Bible study with those from all walks of urban life. (See pages 4–8.)



Joetta Lehman

Joetta worked in Haiti for more than a decade before returning to the United States. She served jointly with The Mission Society and OMS International. While there, she worked as the administrator of

Bethesda Medical Center, coordinated children's ministries, assisted in the chapel program at Cowan International School, and taught Christian Education courses at the Emmaus Bible College. She now works at the OMS headquarters and plans to return to Haiti this summer.



Leon and Vicki Reich

Leo and Vicki serve with Neighbor to Neighbor Outreach, reaching Latino families in the Raleigh, North Carolina area. The Reichs' work includes children's, teen, women's, and family outreach programs. In

addition, they pastor and lead a Spanish worship service. They seek to serve a wide variety of needs that involve food, clothing, and furniture distribution; translation help; and advocacy for legal and special needs. "Being the gospel as we meet pressing daily needs opens doors for talking about the gospel."



Bill and Beth Ury

The Urys have worked in joint partnership with The Mission Society and OMS for several years. After retiring from 30 years on the field in Asia and from leadership in LEAD International, the Urys speak regularly around the country and continue to be involved in work overseas.

Some missionaries are not listed here due to security reasons.

The Mission Society's Global Resource Team

USA-based specialists, GRT members minister to neighbors around the world

Global Resource Team (GRT) members are individuals with specialty skills who serve as full or part-time Mission Society missionaries of The Mission Society. They use their expertise not just in one geographic location, but in various regions throughout the world. GRT members reside in the States and spend one-to-three cumulative months annually directing projects on a field.



Wayne Burgess, M.D.

A physician, Wayne currently works for WellSpan Medical Group in York, Pennsylvania. He joined the Global Resource Team to serve in areas in need of medical care around the world.



Douglas & Becky Neel

Doug serves as associate director for Agrimissions, a ministry of The Mission Society that purposes to empower local missionaries and to help improve the lives of those among whom they minister.

(Douglas will become director of Agrimissions in 2010.) Becky serves as administrative assistant for Agrimissions and works with children's ministries, wellness, nutrition, and fitness.



Gary and Tula Crumpton

Gary and Tula Crumpton joined The Mission Society's Global Resource Team to work in the area of agriculture. Gary will serve as associate director of Agrimissions, and Tula will utilize her skills in

counseling in countries in which Gary is involved. Based in Reidsville, North Carolina, Gary has a background in agronomy, and Tula has experience in education and counseling. Together they will use their skills to assist various fields of The Mission Society.



Bill White

A retired attorney with a specialization in tax law, Bill joined the Global Resource Team to offer help in his area of expertise. He assists The Mission Society missionaries with establishing

micro-finance programs in the locations in which they serve.



Patrick Cummings

God has given Patrick a vision for a world in which everyone has access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation. He works in the areas of well-drilling and household water treatment systems on The Mission Society fields.



Larry Williams

Larry serves as the director of the Global Resource Team and is the founder of Agrimissions. Agrimissions serves The Mission Society fields through researching and initiating pilot agricultural

projects, and by providing for missionaries and nationals ongoing help and assessments, one-on-one technical assistance, technical publications. Through all its efforts, Agrimissions also shares the Gospel in word and deed. Its purpose is to glorify God through the use of agriculture skills and talents.

One Global Resource Team member is not listed here for security reasons.



"It seemed so simple then: Just move to the city and watch God show up. But I had no idea at the time what it meant," writes Alex Davidson, who moved with his family into an apartment complex to live and minister among refugees. "I am still discovering what it means to have my life intertwined with the lives of my refugee friends, but when my kids jump on the couch with excitement because their Burundian neighbors are coming over to play, I know that I am in a place called *home*."

Home among the exiled

Finding the Kingdom of God in a city of refugees

By missionary Alex Davidson (a pseudonym)

"Yusuf, you can't threaten your neighbor just because he looked at your wife." Yusuf stared back at me, his eyes aflame. He was shaking with fury, and for a moment I thought he might explode in rage towards me. I felt knots in my stomach but trying to speak calmly, I explained. "I know this man may have been looking at your wife. Maybe he has a *chyorniy syerdsye*." My Russian vocabulary is limited, especially when it comes to describing abstract thoughts, but Yusuf knew what I meant by "dark heart."

Yusuf made it clear to me as we stood in the winter day outside of our apartment complex that if the intruder ever showed up again, he would have a very real physical problem. In broken English, Yusuf explained, "I love my wife, my children. Me Muslim. This man, what he do, this is *haram* (unclean). This for Muslim, very serious!" His statement was loaded with meaning. What was at stake was the honor of Yusuf's family, something worth killing and dying for.

"My brother, you must not follow the anger in your heart," I said. "You must follow the love. If you follow the anger, this man wins. Sheitan (Satan) wins. You will go to jail, and your wife will be alone. But if you follow love, you will let God settle things with this man, and you will take care of your wife."

Exhausted from his own tirade, Yusuf – more to honor our friendship than to agree with me – smiled weakly and said, "Okay." We would talk again later.

Story continues on page 15.



photo by Jim Whitmer

I've read that "becoming neighbor" is key to Christian efforts to redevelop our blighted American cities. But what does it mean to be a good neighbor? Daily life among our refugee friends raises so many hard questions: Where does legitimate need for help end and unhealthy dependency and entitlement begin? When does bonding with my neighbor become entanglement in his issues? Just how incarnational is too incarnational?

Refugees' Journey to Freedom

Homeland

A refugee is a person who must leave his or her homeland because of persecution or fear of persecution because of religious beliefs, ethnic background or political activities. Many times refugees face much danger when leaving their country.

Refugee Camp

A lengthy wait in a refugee camp is the next step for most refugees. The average stay in a camp is five years. The camps are usually guarded closely and surrounded by barbed wire. Refugees stay in these camps until a new country gives them permission to enter.

Interview

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) interviews all refugees and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (CIS) interviews those refugees who may be resettled in the United States. Only those who can prove they are escaping persecution are eligible to find freedom in a new country.

Flight

Finally some refugees receive the good news – another country has accepted them. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) coordinates their transportation from the camp to their new home.

Neighbors

After I returned home from this adrenaline-pumping encounter, I found myself wondering if I had loved Yusuf well. Jesus told us to love our neighbor. But what does that really mean? This is the question that has plagued my life recently.

It's been 10 years since I first read that small book that changed my thinking about what it means to be a neighbor. In *Return Flight: Community Development through ReNeighboring our Cities*, Atlanta counselor and community developer Bob Lupton writes that "becoming neighbor" is key to Christian efforts to redevelop our blighted American cities. Kingdom-minded Christians, he says, need to leave the sacrosanct comfort of the suburbs and re-enter the areas of the city that suffer for lack of hope and prophetic voice. (See book excerpt on page 17.)

Our Christian message can be heard, says Lupton, only when we

become neighbors, only when we live "incarnationally," making ourselves vulnerable to the same threats and being inspired by the same visions of hope as the people next door.

Moving in

The seeds planted through Bob Lupton's challenge took several years to push through the soil of time, but in 2005, my wife and I saw the sprout and decided God was leading us into an apartment-based ministry. With the blessing of our local church and a commissioning from The Mission Society, we sold our little townhome and moved as missionaries into the city. Because we had a growing heart for Muslims (we had been on several short-term mission trips with our church to Muslim areas of the world), we picked a city that had a large Muslim population. Bridgeport* is one of the many cities in America that is growing because it receives refugees from around the world. Every year,

the U.S. State Department invites more than 100,000 immigrants to have a second chance at life, after having been chased out of their countries by ethnic cleansing, war, religious persecution, and the like.

In the town that would become our home, 20,000 refugees have been "re-settled" since 1992. They come from places like Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Bosnia, Burma, Burundi, Congo, Bhutan, and Afghanistan. Pick almost any conflict-ridden country that has been in the news in the last 15 years and you'll find someone from there in our small city. They live there for a few years, close to their refugee re-settlement agencies (like World Relief, International Rescue Committee, and Catholic Social Services), making the huge cultural adjustments that come from being uprooted and replanted in a foreign land. Once they become more self-sufficient and established, they typically move to other parts of the state to find better jobs, better

Arrival in the U.S.

The U.S. receives the largest number of refugees. The exact number is determined by Congress each year. It is usually more than 50,000. The Department of State (DOS) assigns each refugee to one of several voluntary agencies (VOLAGS). These agencies help refugees become self-sufficient by providing basic services during their first 90 days in the U.S.

Resettlement Agency

Agencies like World Relief link refugees arriving in the U.S. with church volunteers. These agencies train and prepare volunteers to provide the most effective help possible.

Volunteers

Volunteers stand at the end of a refugee's long flight to freedom, welcoming him or her with open arms. They help refugees rebuild their lives in the U.S. by doing simple things like preparing apartments, teaching English, and finding jobs. Volunteers quickly become a refugee's first friends in America.

This information provided by World Relief.



photo by Jim Whitmer

Called to refugee ministry?

The Mission Society would love to send more folks to join the Davidsons in their work.* If you have a heart for patiently sharing the love of Jesus with actions and words, you might be at home in Bridgeport.* Can you teach English-as-a-second language? Can you help new immigrants find work? Do you love strangers? The Davidsons would welcome team members, serving a few months to a few years. You could be a summer intern, a bi-vocational or full-time missionary. For more information, call the mobilization department of The Mission Society at 1.800.478.8963, ext. 9036.

schools, and better homes. Currently, there are about 4,000 refugees in our municipality of 10,000.

It is in this milieu of whole people groups going through culture-shock that my wife and I find countless opportunities to learn how to be good neighbors. The collision of conflicting cultural and religious values, the frustration of a struggling U.S. economy and unresolved tension of having lost a precious homeland, can create a perfect storm of trauma and despair and, like in the case of Yusuf that day, tempers can flare.

Reciprocity

Just as is true of new missionaries on the field, refugees need help doing all the things that “natives” can take for granted: learning English, finding jobs, making doctor appointments, even separating important notices from the junk mail. (I can’t count the times a refugee has brought me a stack of weekend advertisements, and

asked, “Did I really win a new car?”)

Despite their many needs, refugees have much to offer as well. The furnace of suffering has produced in many a deep resolve and an enviable work ethic. They have faced death and hardship and rarely sweat the small stuff. They are resourceful and relational; they could teach American professionals a thing or two about “networking.” They come from ethnic groups and cultures that do not get a lot of press, so they have stories and cultural traditions that are as of yet undiscovered.

When I ask my Burmese friend Aung about the commute to his new job, he smiles in his characteristic nuthin’s-gonna-get-me-down manner and says “Oh, you know the bus system here no so good. It take me ’bout two hour.” He knows he won’t work there forever, and he says he can read a book or study English on the way. Because of his good performance and great attitude, he has opened

the door for several other refugees to be considered for employment there. Whether it is by translating for an English-as-a-second-language registration desk or running the PowerPoint slides at his church, Aung is eager to serve others. His kindness is not for any gain; he simply moves to the rhythms of reciprocity and gratitude. Others helped him leave war-torn Burma, so he will help others adjust to life here.

Friends of Muslims

In this day, it is no small thing to be a trusted Christian friend of a Muslim neighbor. Under the surface, many of our Muslim refugee neighbors have a deep-rooted suspicion that they will not be fully accepted into American culture because they perceive this as a “Christian nation.” They know that many Americans are fearful of the Muslim world; they watch the same news shows that we do. They also know that ever since 9/11, their

Try this at home

Proposal for a new church mission emphasis: Holy Order of Neighbors

It is abundantly clear that the fundamental cause of sustained poverty is isolation. Abandoned neighborhoods, schools from which the children of achievers have been withdrawn, spiritual battlegrounds where evil triumphs while the strong retreat – this is the twentieth-century city, the bitter fruit of a Christianity devoid of the essential doctrine of Community. The only corrective? The people of faith returning to the roots of our faith, rediscovering the meaning of the two commandments upon which our faith is hung.... Perhaps in this urbanizing and suburbanizing era in history we need to create a new mission emphasis in the church – a Holy Order of Neighbors – to re-establish visible, living models of how God intended communities to work. We know quite well what is not working

in our cities.... We must dust off forgotten truth and translate into the high-tech age a theology that has the power to bring about God's shalom in the city.... God has entrusted to us varieties of wealth earmarked for redeployment in Kingdom agendas. The Order of Neighbors will boldly ask, "For what reasons do we live where we do?" and, "What values dictate how we invest our best talents, resources, and time?" And if our answers mirror the value system of our society more than the values of the Kingdom, we need to be challenged to reorder our lives."

Excerpt from Return Flight: Community Development through ReNeighboring our Cities, by Bob Lupton, pgs. 68 ff.

family members have been profiled, if not by the government, then by the people who look sideways at them in the grocery line. So when an American Christian has a meal with a Muslim, the Muslim is likely to think one of three things: (a) this person is an informant for the FBI, trying to get close to me in order to assess me as a threat; (b) this person is a missionary who gets paid to seduce me into forsaking my religion; or (c) this person genuinely cares for me, contrary to all my expectations of the opposite.

Through a consistent ethic of hospitality, and with the unpredictable grace of the Holy Spirit, I see misperceptions and doubts ebb away and trust seeping in. As a result of this genuine love between neighbors, gospel encounters emerge like truffles after a forest rain.

And it is for this reason that we have chosen to share our lives with our neighbors. So maybe when

Yusuf and I have a conversation on the sidewalk, the Lord will use my life to help Yusuf understand the gospel differently than he might have understood it before. And when his wife is filled with fear, and I pray with her and Yusuf in the name of "Isa al Masih," Jesus the Messiah (in Arabic), whom they already revere, maybe they will begin to know Jesus even more deeply – as the One who casts out fear with perfect love.

The message

When we first arrived in Bridgeport, we knew that living among "the poor" would present some challenges to us in finding "healthy boundaries." Where does legitimate need for help end and unhealthy dependency and entitlement begin? How can I determine if a request is out of dire need or merely convenience? When does bonding with my neighbor become entanglement in his issues? Just how incarnational is too

incarnational? There seems to be no easy answer for these questions.

But, in the midst of the mess of unanswered questions, I get to be the one to tell my friend from Bhutan, "Hari, if your family is cold, you can use that switch on the wall to make heat come out of these vents." In our daily acts of simple love, sharing our lives with our neighbors, we find that Jesus has a way of showing up. And His message to me is this: "My grace is sufficient. My grace is sufficient." †

**The writer's and city's names and the names of the writer's friends have been changed, in honor and sensitivity to the relationships the Davidsons have with their Muslim neighbors.*

For information about partnering with the Davidsons or any missionaries of The Mission Society, call 1.800.478.8963.

There must be more

Feeding hunger on U.S. campuses

By Anna Egipto

It is 8:07 pm on Wednesday evening. As guitar, drums, and keyboard players on stage play songs of prayer, a large gathering of young adults enters into a time of worship. The tone is solemn but joyful. Below the stage is an altar where people are kneeling and praying for each other. The worship team will play until everyone has gone home, often that means hours. The leader sings, "All who are thirsty, all who are weak, come to the fountain, dip your heart in the stream of life. Come, Lord Jesus, Come!" It is the collective cry of every heart in the room. Where is this? Asbury College in 1970? Chicago in 1858? It's the Wesley Foundation at the University of Georgia in 2009.

In a time when young adults are gaining independence, thinking about parties and dating and occasionally studying, college ministries offer a friendly place on a larger campus where students can pursue Christ-likeness in the midst of community and discipleship.

Organized for growth

At the Wesley Foundations of the University of Georgia (UGA) and campuses all over the country, students are coming into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, and strengthening their faith at a critical point in their lives that can set the tone for the rest of adulthood. Since the first Wesley Foundation began in 1913 on the University of Illinois campus, Wesley Foundations have sprung up all over the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. While they are open to young adults of all denominational backgrounds, the spirit of the ministries resonates with the Wesleyan tradition of disciple-making, discipleship, and cell groups.



This on-campus ministry is one of the most important discipleship movements you may never have heard of. And in 2001, The Mission Society linked in.

At the UGA Wesley Foundation, or “Wesley,” discipleship is paramount to growth. There are more than 350 students on the volunteer leadership team, involved in ministry activities such as leading cell groups, worship, the outreach team, prayer, men and women’s ministry, and many others. Being on the leadership team means the students will have one-on-one discipleship weekly with a Wesley staff member. Discipleship times can be spent in Bible study, sharing what God is doing in their lives, accountability time, or just praying through a tough time.

The disciplers are a group of 38 interns, most of whom are former students who were impacted by the Wesley Foundation during their college years and have a heart to see students grow in Christ and service of others. Many are exploring a ministry calling or looking to spend a year or two in apprenticeship. The interns are disciplined by the 12 associate directors on staff, who, like the interns, are faith-based (they raise their financial support). There are 15 different ways that leadership students can serve through Wesley.

Trained for leadership

But if you ask staff members at Wesley, it’s not the numbers, the different programs, or the skit they are planning for the next Wednesday night service that gets them excited. What gets them excited are the students who come to Wesley (some enthusiastically

and some hesitantly), who find a place to belong on a large campus, and are transformed through the work of the Holy Spirit. Clay Kirkland is the associate director of staff development for UGA Wesley and a campus missionary with The Mission Society. He says, “Our vision for the campus is to raise up a new generation of Christian leaders. So we believe that God is good enough and powerful enough to work in the lives of students He brings to Wesley – that God has some sort of leadership purpose in the Body of Christ for any student who comes through our doors, in whatever capacity he or she gets involved. And so we desire that God would really show the students who they are and what their leadership purpose is. And we focus on the passions that God has given them to train them up and encourage them in pursuing those gifts God has given them to be a leader wherever He sends them.” The staff at UGA Wesley uses every point of contact with students to communicate the gospel, whether it is at a Wednesday evening service or in a one-on-one discipleship time. Associate director Rebecca Griffith says, “At Wesley students are taught that what Jesus did and the message he preached are available for this generation.”

Poised for challenges

In the spring of 2001, then director of The Mission Society mobilization team, Lauren Helveston, connected with newly appointed UGA Wesley Foundation director Bob

Discipleship has consequences

How Wesley Foundation's influence is paving roads for revival

In 1998, Dana Hernandez enrolled at the University of Georgia (in Athens, Georgia) as a freshman from Summerville, South Carolina. She made the move to Athens because she had heard about the party scene and that there are more than 100 bars within a square mile right next to campus. But the Lord directed Dana to a Wednesday evening service at UGA's Wesley Foundation during one of the first weeks of that fall semester. She heard the gospel in a way that led her to give her life to God.

Throughout her college years, Dana continued attending Wesley and was disciplined by the leadership there. After graduation, she spent a year as an intern at Wesley, building the freshman ministry, inspired by her own experience as a freshman. But Dana also sensed that there was more that the Lord wanted to do on campus and in Athens. She began to work with a group initiating a new ministry called Tribe Issachar and a 24/7 prayer room in the heart of downtown Athens. There, day and night students

pray to God that He would bring revival and become real in the lives of the people there.

Now Dana networks with campuses all over the U.S. Southeast to facilitate 24/7 prayer, encouraging student bodies to pray without ceasing – to emulate the watchmen in Isaiah 62 who “will never be silent, day or night, [who] call upon the Lord, give themselves no rest and give him no rest,” and the persistent widow in Luke 18, to whom the Lord hears and brings justice.

Beckwith (who is appointed through the North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church). Bob was already “vision-casting,” envisioning a new generation experiencing the Lord together in more powerful ways. He knew that real transformation takes place in the context of discipleship and small groups and that Wesley needed to raise up more staff leaders to disciple the student body. Beckwith and Helveston explored ways the two organizations could, with a Wesleyan spirit, work together. The Mission Society community already was aware of how God was working through UGA Wesley; several Wesley students had become Mission Society missionaries. Helveston saw potential for The Mission Society to form a relationship with UGA Wesley in order to facilitate a faith-based staff of disciplers and ministers. A partnership was formed and a new category of cross-cultural worker was initiated at The Mission Society.

Within a few years, staff members from Wesley Foundations at four other universities in the Southeast would become campus missionaries with The Mission Society. “Campus missionaries” are staff members of Wesley Foundations who come under the umbrella of The Mission Society, but minister to their respective campuses. Today, The Mission Society has more than 11 campus missionaries, including two from the Wesley Foundation at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Even though these young people live and minister in the United States,

they attend The Mission Society's training event in cross-cultural ministry.

So how is campus ministry cross-cultural? Consider the challenges. Campus ministers seek to build face-to-face Christian community among an internet savvy, millennial, postmodern generation saturated with materialism, consumerism, negative images from the media, and negative stereotypes of Christians and religion. In the end, questions asked by on-campus ministers begin to sound a lot like those asked by missionaries serving among an under-evangelized people group anywhere in the world.

Katie Nash, an associate director at the University of Central Florida and campus missionary with The Mission Society, has worked with college students for more than four years. She says, “The college lifestyle in general is cross-cultural. Things don't really get started till later at night and go on later. Free food is never turned down – no matter how unhealthy it might be. Students are looking for a community that won't judge them, and yet are quick to judge others. Dorm life is like no other kind of living. In all of these ways, college culture interacts with those living in the ‘real world,’ and can provide challenges for ministry on the campus.” Campus missionaries must work within this context to raise up followers of Christ to be the next generation of Christian leadership.

Campus Picks:

Wesley Foundation students recommend some of their favorite reads and tunes.

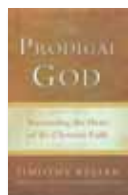
Reads:



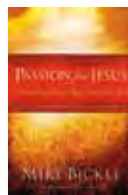
Rees Howells: Intercessor
by Norman Grubbs



The Shack
by William Young



The Prodigal God
by Timothy Keller



Passion for Jesus
by Mike Bickle



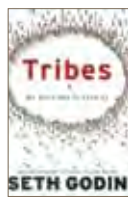
Secrets of the Secret Place
by Bob Sorge



The Heavenly Man
by Brother Yun



Hind's Feet on High Places
by Hannah Hurnard Smith



Tribes
by Seth Godin

Tunes:



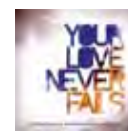
Gird Your Sword,
Ryan Kondo



Relentless,
Misty Edwards



Limbs And Branches,
Jon Foreman



Your Love Never Fails,
Jesus Culture

Positioned for ministry

One way that campus missionaries naturally resonate with The Mission Society is in their heart for the lost. For Wesley Foundation communities like the ones at UGA and UCF, an outward, missional focus is a natural outflow of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of students and staff. Not only do these campus missionaries lead mission trips all over the globe every year, they also actively reach out to the campus and surrounding communities. In cities like Athens, Georgia and Orlando, Florida, the nations have literally come to them. International student ministries and outreach to Hispanic populations help connect the students to cross-cultural ministry, with many deciding that full-time missions is the next step for them when they move on from the Wesley community. As Katie, Bob, Clay and others encourage the Wesley communities to serve God by pursuing what makes them passionate, ministries are emerging from the Wesley body. (See related article on page 20.)

At the heart of Wesley's corporate prayers is a cry for revival, to see the Lord work in powerful ways and be glorified on the campus at UGA, in the city of Athens and throughout the nations. Campus ministers like the leadership at UGA and UCF Wesleys endeavor to send a clear message to the students: There is more. There is more they can know about God, more power and transformation they can experience in their lives through knowing Him, more people on campus and in

their city who can come to know Him. As Clay Kirkland says, "Well beyond any program we have created, we have seen our greatest impact come through when a student who already knows the Lord reaches out and forms a relationship with another student, whether it's in their dorm or class, or a relationship they have formed outside of campus at their job. That is where we see the real transformation take place." In the same vein, Katie Nash remarks, "I hope that our students come out of their time at Wesley with the understanding that ministry does not just take place in the church, and that mission should be an overflow of what the Lord is doing in our own hearts; that ministry happens in classrooms, dorms, in coffee shops, and communities." ✝

Anna Egipto serves in The Mission Society's mobilization department and oversees its work with campus Wesley Foundations. She graduated from the University of Georgia, where she and her husband, Lem, were active in the Wesley Foundation.

To learn more about the ministries discussed in this article, check out their websites:

University of Georgia Wesley Foundation:
www.ugawesley.org

University of Central Florida Wesley Foundation:
www.cflwesley.org

Tribe Issachar: www.tribeissachar.com

Meet your campus missionaries from The Mission Society

University of Georgia (Athens, Georgia)



From left to right: (back) Rebecca Griffith, Caren Dilts, Clay and Deborah Kirkland with their child, Fields, Tate Welling; (front) Laura Newton, Amantha Claxton, and Jill Henderson. (Not shown: Laura Phillips)

University of Central Florida (Oviedo, Florida)



Katie Nash



Marshall Head

College spirit

Interest in faith increasing on U.S. campuses, reports *The New York Times*

In a May 2, 2007 article, *The New York Times* quoted Peter J. Gomes: "At Harvard these days," said Gomes, who has worked on campus for 37 years, "there is probably more active religious life now than there has been in 100 years."

"Across the country," noted *The New York Times* reporter, Alan Finder, "on secular campuses as varied as Colgate University, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of California, Berkeley, chaplains, professors and administrators say students are drawn to religion and spirituality with more fervor than at any time they can remember." ...

"All I hear from everybody is yes, there is growing interest in religion and spirituality and an openness on college campuses," said Christian Smith, a professor of sociology at the University of Notre Dame. "Everybody who is talking about it says something seems to be going on."

Lesleigh Cushing, an assistant professor of religion and Jewish studies at Colgate, said: "I can fill basically any class on the Bible. I wasn't expecting that."

— Excerpted from "Matters of Faith Find a New Prominence on Campus," *The New York Times*, May 2, 2007, by Alan Finder



Secrets of the Secret Place: Keys to Igniting Your Personal Time With God
by Bob Sorge

Wesley Foundation students love this book!

"Aside from the Bible, this book has had the single most profound effect in my walk with God," writes one online reviewer. "It's a life-changing book that I buy for everyone I know."



Investing in our 'Missionary Kids'

Fresh idea for a short-term mission trip with a long-term impact

In early January, 50 missionaries and 20 missionary kids (MKs) from across the Americas gathered along with several staff and some guests in the mountains outside San José, Costa Rica. The event was the Latin America/USA regional gathering of The Mission Society. Such events provide an important opportunity to minister to our MKs, many of whom are not in settings where they have opportunities to get together. Thing is, MKs love to get together. In fact, when we were discussing the role of a coordinator for MK ministry at The Mission Society, I asked the “professional opinion” of two of my children, Jonathan and Naomi, what are some of the best ways we can minister to MKs? They responded without hesitation, “Get them together!”

So we knew for the regional gathering to be a success, we had to have an excellent program for the 20 MKs, ranging in age from 1 to 17, who would be attending. We knew it had to go way beyond babysitting or cheesy programming! We knew we needed help.

What happened next changed everything. We started to wonder if a church would adopt our MK ministry as a short-term mission trip? We floated this idea by our missionaries. Laura Drum, missionary in Peru, put us in touch with Judy Foster, an active member of Christ United Methodist Church in College Station, Texas. Judy was very interested in the idea and agreed to form a team and help us develop this.

Over the months leading up to the gathering, Judy assembled a team of four women. They planned the program, working closely with Vicki Decker, The Mission Society coordinator of MK ministry.

No surprise; the event went very well. Parents were able to focus on their sessions, knowing their kids were having a



Among the 20 MKs who attended the Costa Rica gathering were (from left to right): Mary Beth Ivey, Kia McEuen, Faith Eisenberg, Sydney Carrick, and Bailey Carrick

great and meaningful time. The kids bonded immediately. One of our young teens told me during a Facebook chat that she left the retreat a “changed person” with new lifelong friends. Judy and her team worked tirelessly with the kids, from leading sessions with the older ones to holding and changing diapers on the little ones.

Giver, receiver

But as we so often see in God’s economy, the giver also receives. The feedback we

got from the four women was very positive. They had opportunities to interact on a very personal level with missionaries and missions specialists. They were able to see missionaries as they really are, to perceive the joys and the challenges in a way that a normal short-term trip would rarely allow. As Judy shared with me, “Every time one of us sat down to eat, or go on a walk or bus ride, we were all touched and taught deeply by you ALL” [emphasis hers].

This trip may not have sounded as exciting or task-oriented as a typical short-term mission trip. But the impact these women made by helping us further equip our long-term missionaries and by entering into the lives of our MKs will have an important, ongoing impact for the gospel, perhaps more so than if they’d gone and built something somewhere.

We hope to build upon this concept, expanding it to other settings and encouraging group members to bring other skills that could bless the missionaries or MKs, from hair cutting to tax consulting. God can use whatever we bring to Him for His Kingdom purposes! ✝

Jim Ramsay, former missionary to Central Asia, is The Mission Society's senior director of field ministry.



When “loving your neighbor” means loving your nearby state

With the help of three young moms, this Peoria, Illinois church “expanded its territory” to hurricane-torn Dulac, Louisiana. Don’t be surprised if this church’s story inspires yours.

When Julie Rolff noticed a list of upcoming mission opportunities in a publication of First United Methodist Church of Peoria, Illinois (her home church), the “hurricane relief” mission trip to Dulac, Louisiana caught her eye. Wishing her husband could go, too, but knowing that wasn’t a possibility, she found herself considering the trip anyway. Later, she would learn that two other young moms, like herself, were also thinking about joining the team.

Julie had never been on a short-term mission trip before. And even though her degree is in environmental engineering, she says, “I certainly did not feel qualified to participate in a construction-oriented mission trip. Of course, I found out as many others have over the years, that when we say ‘yes’ to God, we soon find out that He has much more important things in mind than our ability to mud drywall or swing a hammer!” Here, Julie talks with Roger Wright, The Mission Society’s midwest regional director for church ministry.

Did the mission trip to Dulac offer opportunity to meet both the physical and spiritual needs of people?

J: My first trip to Dulac in May 2007 was amazing! God had prepared me, called

me, and sent me to the home of a young mom about my age, who was raising two kids on her own and was still not living in her home almost two years after Hurricane Rita had flooded it in September 2005. Not only did God send our team to Nicole’s home, but in the weeks before our trip, our Sunday school class had just finished studying the book, *Share Jesus Without Fear*. With much trepidation, I soon realized that God’s call was for me was to share Jesus with Nicole (my first opportunity to witness to anyone after being prepared to do so). Nicole was gracious, and we had a terrific conversation that day as well as on many occasions in the months to come.

I understand now that God’s purpose and intent for my involvement in Dulac went far beyond that May 2007 trip. By September of that same year, the two other young moms and I began planning a return trip to Dulac with the goal of finishing Nicole’s home. But this time we would include our families as well! In December 2007, during Christmas break, a team of 39 from FUMC Peoria, including 16 kids, journeyed to Dulac, finished Nicole’s home, and in the process developed a real heart for the community of Dulac.

Many people would say, a short-term mission trip (STMT) that involves the entire family unit (rather than just or adults or youth) could become a headache. Why did you choose to make it a family STMT?

J: We knew that doing a family STMT would stretch everyone involved, but we are not to keep the blessings to ourselves. So it was a natural next step to make this a family-oriented mission trip. What better way to teach our children to love and serve Jesus than to have them work alongside us? At age six, my daughter learned that the most important thing she did that week was to show Jesus’ love to strangers by sharing hugs with them! Yes, this type of trip is complicated, but a STMT with families is an amazing experience – from growing new friendships, to learning to live with others, to being willing to give of ourselves.

Now that Nicole has moved back into her home, is the Dulac-Peoria relationship complete?

J: After my first trip to Dulac, I grew a heart for Nicole. After my second trip to Dulac, which included my family, we all had a heart for Nicole and now also a heart for Dulac. Today, after a third trip to Dulac, I know that God continues to

have plans for us in this community.... The people of Dulac are written in our hearts... I would never have guessed when I said “yes” to God back in March 2007 that by March 2009 I would be contemplating God’s plans for my fourth trip!

What are some ways you and your family have been personally blessed as a direct result of the ministry your church has now established in Dulac, Louisiana?

J: The overwhelming joy for me has been three-fold. First, that my family is walking every step of this journey with me; second, that my husband is as interested in serving and loving on this community as I am; and third, that I am a part of a congregation of people who has grown in their love and support for Dulac. Six mission teams have served there to date.



The December 2008 team to Dulac, worked construction in four locations, delivered new backpacks stuffed with school supplies to all of the 420 students at Grand Caillou Elementary School, assembled and delivered 60 food care packages with help from another Illinois team, and offered a New Year’s Day worship service that was attended by 50 community members. And to support all this, the Peoria FUMC congregation raised more than \$21,000! “In the midst of all these efforts,” says Julie Rolff, “God also led us to rent, load, and haul a truckload of used furniture that was able to serve three families and get at least eight people off floors and air mattresses and into beds! Praise be to God!”



Moving on out to the 'ends of the earth'

The event that inspired Peoria First United Methodist Church's ministry to expand – even to a neighbor continent – is available to your church

A Global Impact Celebration (GIC) is an annual event designed to celebrate the outreach ministries of the local church while casting a greater vision and challenge for global outreach and involvement. In 2007 Peoria First United Methodist Church held a GIC, which turned out to be a turning point. God used it to reinvigorate already-existing ministries, and to inspire greater outreach, not only to Dulac, Louisiana, but also to Liberia, Africa. Here, Charles Bush, chairman of that 2007 GIC, speaks of the event and its ripple effects in the church.

As a result of our church's 2007 Global Impact Celebration, the significant number of life commitments for mission and the funds raised as faith-promise commitments has rejuvenated our missions program. During the GIC, the notion was reinforced that we need to serve in areas other than just our community to be true to Christ's command in Acts 1:8. The faith-promise commitments raised have enabled us to provide scholarships for travel expenses to many mission team participants, as well as to fund more strategic initiatives.

During the GIC, the church signed a strategic partnership agreement with the Liberian Annual Conference. Since the GIC we have sent our second and third teams to Liberia. I traveled there in late 2007 and have since established a fairly active network with Liberian Methodists to help coordinate the 2008 team visit and other means of support.

The most dramatic and sustainable new mission initiative was indeed the development of the Dulac mission trips, born in the hearts of three young mothers open to the Holy Spirit who said, "Let's make this happen."

We became one church during the GIC: children, youth, adults of all ages, and folks from three Sunday services at two FUMC lo-

cations. A huge blessing for me as coordinator (and, I imagine, for the other leaders) was the opportunity to work with church members we didn't know and to expand our networking within the Body of Christ. The exposure to missionaries in a variety of settings has strengthened our church's "DNA" for missions.

What one Sunday school class can do

During the GIC, our Sunday school class hosted one of the missionaries on Sunday morning. Touched by her testimony and concerned over the general lack of resources and equipment at her disposal, one class member asked, "What do you need?" Within 10 minutes the needs were identified and more than \$1000 was raised. Just last Sunday, three class members presented a program covering their visit to Liberia in October 2008. Others have served Habitat for Humanity in Mongolia. This class developed "Buddy Ministries" with a local inner-city school many years ago. The GIC enabled the church to celebrate those community missions initiated by the class. A recent manifestation of the class's mission focus is the large number who are attending a Spanish class to help them better communicate with Hispanic Buddy Ministries' students and their parents.

The Mission Society's church ministry department provides mentoring to help guide your team through the planning of your church's GIC.

For more information, visit www.themissionsociety.org, or cr@themissionsociety.org, or call us at 1.800.478.8963.

Charles Bush, coordinator of the 2007 Global Impact Celebration for Peoria FUMC.

Focusing on missions has re-invigorated our church

The local church – not a mission agency – is God’s primary vehicle for accomplishing His mission in the world. The Mission Society’s church ministry department exists to help your church find and pursue its mission calling. As you will read, churches are being transformed as they more fully turn their hearts toward offering Christ to the world.

December 12, 2008

Dear church mission leader,
St. Johns United Methodist Church will be hosting our second Global Impact Celebration on January 21-25, 2009. This event is the result of a remarkable journey in which our church has been engaged for the last two years.

In 2008, St. Johns significantly increased our global outreach for Christ. Under the guidance of The Mission Society, we concluded an 18-month program, the highlight of which was our first Global Impact Celebration (“mission conference on steroids”).... As a result of this relationship, we have significantly increased our support of missions through prayer, volunteering, and donations. Our funding for missions has increased by 250%; we have established strong relationships with our missionaries; and we have started a local food ministry, all through this effort.

St. Johns highly recommends a partnership with The Mission Society to re-energize the local church for missions. The effort starts with a Global Outreach weekend followed by a mentoring process. During this period, The Mission Society assists the church in planning and executing a Global Impact Celebration.... Please contact me if you are interested in visiting with us to see how this program might be applicable to assisting your church extend its reach for mission.

Michael Norton, chairman
St. Johns UMC Global Outreach Leadership Team
Aiken, South Carolina

‘I never could have imagined the change’

“You enlarged our vision for missions and gave us the means to make God’s plan the center of our plans in a more personal way.”

– Rev. Blake Lorenz, senior pastor,
Orlando, Florida

“You will never believe the excitement the Global Outreach Weekend has generated in our church.”

– Rev. Michael Richards, senior pastor,
Vienna, West Virginia

“I recommend your seminar to any pastor, even older veterans like me. You helped us see significant ways that our total resources can be focused on global evangelization.”

– Rev. Walter Albritton, senior pastor,
Opelika, Alabama

“The church ministry team led us through the seminar on becoming a globally focused church. I never could have imagined the change that would occur in our church just one week!”

– Rev. Jorge Acevedo, senior pastor,
Cape Coral, Florida

For more information about resources and services available for your church, contact The Mission Society’s Church Ministry department at 1.800.478.8963, ext. 9046.



Oh brothers, where art y'all?



Wes Alexander (left), who served as an intern with The Mission Society to Morogoro, Tanzania, was a minority among the other intern training participants from The Mission Society that fall – five women and two men.

I have been working at The Mission Society since December 2006. At the time of this writing, I have participated in five missionary candidate events and three intern trainings, and I've noticed a trend.

Of the 47 missionary candidates from these five candidate events, what percentage do you think were men?

- a. 15%
- b. 25%
- c. 40%
- d. 50%
- e. 60%

Of the 37 participants who attended the past three intern trainings, how many do you think were men?

- a. 15%
- b. 25%
- c. 40%
- d. 50%
- e. 60%

If you guessed c for the first question, and b for the second question, you are correct. Put another way, two out of five candidate-event attendees were men, while one of the four intern-training attendees was a man. Statistics like these call to mind the reading I did for a Perspectives (missions) class. In the “Women

in Mission” chapter of the *Perspectives Reader* (4th ed.), Marguerite Kraft and Meg Crossman write: “Overall, probably two-thirds of the missions force has been, and currently is, female” (p. 296). Although the article is a few years old, I would imagine that the stats are very similar today. In fact, my experience leads me to believe the disparity is even greater if one considers only the United States. For example, I was a part of Oral Roberts University Missions from 1998-2003. During this time period, the average short-term missions team had three males for every seven females (just 30% men). Still another example comes from my involvement with the missions department at my former church. The average number of men on these short-term trips was 1½ men for every 10 women (just 15% men). I suspect you could provide some of your own examples.

I don't want to note the low percentage of males without also noting the high percentage of females in missions. We should rejoice about

the many women who have responded to God's call and are putting their faith into action! But why are there so many more women than men involved in missions? Are we less committed to the Great Commission? Are we too focused on laying a firm financial foundation for our families? Are sports and hobbies distracting us? Are we seeking to prove ourselves professionally before we start into missions?

I'm sure there is no simple explanation; many factors are at play here. What can be said is that, generally, we men seem to be well, slacking, when it comes to missions.

So I ask: Brothers, where art y'all? Might I encourage you to get engaged in God's mission? The Lord's army has a place for you. (In fact check out the next page.) ☩

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



Go ahead. Click on “Be a missionary.”

If you browse through The Mission Society’s website, you’ll probably encounter a link entitled, “Be a Missionary.” Sometimes people think clicking that link is going to set them on a whole new adventure that they’re not sure they’re ready for – as if that one move will automatically sign them up for a five-year term in Timbuktu.

Don’t be afraid to click the link! The Mission Society’s mobilization team understands that answering the call to go – saying yes – is a huge process. A God-paced process. Just as runners have a coach run alongside them on the journey, our team is here to come alongside you in the journey – to be a resource to you, to help you discern your call, whatever that may be. Go ahead and click the link. We’re here for you.

The Mission Society serves in 32 nations. Check out the complete listing of worldwide personnel needs by visiting us at www.themissionsociety.org.

Mission opportunities in North America:

MEXICO

Chaplain/dorm resident assistant

1-5 years

The Monterrey Theology School needs a single male to serve as a chaplain and residency hall chaperone. Applicant should have prior ministry experience.

Teachers

1-5 years

Qualified teachers are needed for a bilingual Methodist school in Monterrey, Mexico, grades K-12. Spanish is required for some positions.

Pastoral/theological educators

1-5 years

These positions offer opportunities to teach courses in the local seminary, as well as seminars and conferences throughout Mexico. Applicants should have pastoral experience and/or seminary-level training.

Refugee ministry in U.S. See page 16 for mission opportunities.



Indulge yourself in fellowship

Join us for dinner and a party

Celebrating The Mission Society's 25th anniversary
Norcross United Methodist Church, Norcross, Georgia
September 11, 2009, 5:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Featuring:

Dr. H.T. Maclin, veteran missionary to Africa and founding president and president emeritus of The Mission Society

Aaron Keyes, worship leader of Grace Fellowship Church in Snellville, Georgia
(check out his music online at www.aaronkeyes.com)

Dr. William O'Brien, veteran missionary to Indonesia who has served previously as executive director of the Global Center at Beeson Divinity School (Samford University), and executive vice president of the International Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention). O'Brien is presently facilitator for the Bridges of Hope Network, created to work among the tsunami survivors in Aceh, Indonesia.

Register online at www.themissionsociety.org or call our office at 1.800.478.8963 and let us know you will be coming. Seating is limited to 350, so register early. (More details, directions, and hotel information are provided on the online registration site.) There is no charge for the banquet. A love offering will be received.