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A FREE monthly, online magazine that provides you with missions and evangelism news, information and analysis.

MARCH 2006 issue

WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

AROUND THE WORLD

The youth outreach of Open Doors International is gearing up for a SHOCKWAVE—a global 72-hour prayer event for youth that will take place 3-5 March, both online and at prayer meetings throughout the world. The fifth annual SHOCKWAVE kicks off in New Zealand and works its way across the time zones, literally covering the entire world. Last year, thousands of young people from nineteen nations were involved. The goal is to raise awareness about the suffering of brothers and sisters in Christ. For details, go to: www.odshockwave.org (Mission Network News)

AROUND THE WORLD

Compassion International has become one of more than 260 Christian organizations around the world that have partnered in the Micah Challenge to combat child poverty globally. The Micah Challenge is a global Christian campaign that encourages Christians to engage with the poor and influence world leaders to meet the United Nations millennium development goals by 2015. Compassion International, a long-term Christian child development ministry, is committed to seeing children get out of poverty. "There are thousands of verses where God is communicating about the issue of poverty and wealth," said David Dahlin of Compassion. "It's the second most common theme in the Bible." (Mission Network News)

CAMEROON

"A day hasn't passed without people coming to see it and comment on it," said Dorothee Daneidjo, as she displays her dress with verses of the Bible printed on the material. "Sometimes people on the street ask me to stop because they want to read a little more and we start talking about Christian matters," said the 22-year-old Cameroon student. "I wear the dress to witness to what I believe in. I find it gives me plenty of opportunities to speak to people about the faith I have in Christ and that they too can have," added Dorothee. (Bible Society of New Zealand)

CANADA

After serving for the past eight years in South Africa, Jonathan Wilson will be serving as executive director for World Team Canada. Born in the United Kingdom, Wilson was a missionary kid for seventeen years in Papua, Indonesia. In South Africa, Wilson served as Pan African training director and helped establish and coordinate the Marriage Alliance of South Africa, a seventy-denomination initiative to protect marriage in the South African judiciary and legislature. Wilson will assume his role as executive director April 2006. (World Team)

INDIA

A record-breaking graduating class of over ten thousand students—most of them Dalits—recently produced the world's largest seminary graduation ever. The historic graduation of Dalit outcastes in India was sponsored by Hopegivers International. Although Dalits make up nearly twenty-five percent of the population in India, they are still considered "untouchable," often having to deal with oppression and exploitation by members of other social castes. However, according to Hopegivers president Dr. Samuel Thomas, "Today, the tide is turning. Millions of Dalits are finding hope and freedom through the Hopegivers message, and all of India is reaping the benefits of the release of their potential." Upon graduation, students received a bicycle and a one-way train ticket to their first assignment to share the gospel. (Hopegivers International)

MALAWI

Nazarene Youth International (NYI) Africa is receiving recognition beyond church walls for its work in AIDS prevention. At a recent youth convention in Lilongwe, Malawi, minister of youth, sport and culture Jafali Mussa applauded NYI for the "great work" being done by NYI in HIV and AIDS information dissemination. According to NYI spokesman Edward Mikwamba, Mussa also thanked NYI for assisting less-privileged people through mission teams in hospitals and communities. (Nazarene Communications Network)

MEXICO

As missionaries and nationals work on Bible translation across the globe, Wycliffe Associates serves to support that translation work. Wycliffe's Norm Every says he works to maximize translation efforts in the Americas by sending short-term teams to help with construction and administrative tasks. "My function is to get volunteers connected with opportunities to support Bible translation, and we have several things going on in Mexico right now in conjunction with translation projects." Volunteers can help speed the gospel going forward, says Every, as they get involved in support of Bible translation. "By us doing the construction, it saves a tremendous amount of resources for the SIL branch that is involved in the translation work itself." (Mission Network News)

MIDDLE EAST

A boom in Christian websites is occurring in the Middle East. According to the Strategic Resource Group (SRG), these websites are receiving nearly nine million hits per month and more than two thousand Arabic Bibles are downloaded from the Internet each month. One Christian organization that hosts chat rooms for Arabic-speaking visitors estimates that more than forty-two thousand people visit these Christian sites every day. More than half of the population in the Middle East is 25-years-old or under and most have easy access to computers either in their homes or in public venues such as Internet cafes and schools. (Assist News Service)

PHILIPPINES

World Vision's Australia office is mustering an emergency response to help the victims of the Philippines landslide. Officials fear that continuous rain in the province could slow down rescue efforts. While some survivors have been pulled from a school buried in the disaster, World Vision's team says those left behind desperately need help with basic survival needs. Please pray for their staff as they act as the hands and feet of Christ in this situation. (Mission Network News)

PHILIPPINES

The Metro Manila Franklin Graham Festival, held 2-5 February drew massive crowds to Rizal Park, totaling at least 317,600, including 125,000 on the final night alone. Throughout the event, 33,844 people responded to the invitation to put their faith in Jesus Christ. Saturday morning, 82,500 kids packed the grassy expanse, breaking the record for the largest children's event ever held in the venue. Crowds at the festival heard Graham's nightly messages in English and Tagalog, the two languages used interchangeably in the Philippines. Before the festival began, Graham addressed the President of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, and hundreds of other government officials and city leaders at the National Leadership Breakfast. (Metro Manila Festival)

SWITZERLAND

The leaders of two worldwide church groupings have proposed the creation of a new global body called the World Reformed Communion to unite the more than eighty million Protestants in their two organizations. "We ... believe that this new, united, Reformed body will be a blessing to the broader ecumenical movement and to the reconciliation of the world," said the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), and the Rev. Douwe Visser, president of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC), in a joint statement. (Ecumenical News International)

TURKEY

SAT-7 is partnering with TURK-7, a new media outreach to the Turkish people, to create indigenous television programs that will both grow the believer in the Christian faith and lead non-believers to Christ. According to one Turkish pastor, "Turkey is a big country and the number of Christians is still small. Television is a very effective method for communicating across the entire nation. The most exciting thing is that TURK-7 is helping Turks to proclaim Christian truths to their own people, in their own language." The TURK-7 staff is producing their own programs. (Mission Network News)

UNITED STATES

Registration is now open for Urbana 06, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship's twenty-first student missions convention to be held 27-31 December 2006, in the Edward Jones Dome at the America's Center in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. Jim Tebbe, InterVarsity's vice president for missions and the director of Urbana, says he believes Urbana 06, in its new location, will generate a new level of interest and excitement about missions and God's global plan. InterVarsity anticipates Urbana 06 will draw between twenty-five and thirty thousand attendees. Urbana 06 will address current realities in global missions including "Mission Through the Lens of AIDS" and "Slum Communities in the Developing World." (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship)

UNITED STATES

An estimated 100,000 Pentecostal and charismatic Christians are expected to come together in Los Angeles, California, 25-29 April to commemorate the centennial of the Azusa Street revival, an event that marked the emergence of the modern Holy Spirit movement. The five-day event will feature ministry tracks, cultural worship experiences, parachurch ministry conferences and an international teaching convention. There are six hundred million Pentecostal and charismatic believers around the world. The Assemblies of God, with fifty-three million adherents worldwide, is the largest single group. (Azusa Street Revival)

UNITED STATES

Ken Olson recently made a major contribution to what is an obscure, but necessary science if the gospel is going to go into all the world. Olson contributed a new symbol to the International Phonetic Alphabet—the first new contribution in twelve years. Linguists have agreed on the special alphabet when doing transcriptions of different languages. Ultimately the work leads to helping missionaries with translations. Olson proposed the symbol for what is known as the labiodental flap. "The sound is produced by drawing the lower lip back into the mouth—well behind the upper teeth—and then bringing it forward rapidly, striking the upper teeth briefly in passing," according to SIL International, the organization for which Olson is the associate international linguistics coordinator. The symbol looks like the combination of a "v" and an "r" and technically is known as "a right hook 'v.'" Prior to its inclusion, linguists used ad hoc letter combinations such as "vw," Olson says. (Covenant News)

ZAMBIA

Zambia's major denominations melded during January's global week of prayer for Christian unity. And while the churches are expected to play a pivotal role in national elections scheduled to take place by the end of 2006, civil society groups pressing for change wonder if that cohesion can carry over into the political sphere. Leaders of the three largest church groupings in the southern African nation released a joint statement urging church cohesion and the unity of communities. "Being mindful of what we hold in common allows us to face more effectively things which still divide us," they said. (Ecumenical News International)

ZIMBABWE

International Bible Society (IBS) released its Shona Bible translation on 27 January in Harare City, Zimbabwe, Africa. This translation makes the Word of God accessible in contemporary language to ten million people in Zimbabwe who speak the Shona language. More than three thousand church and government leaders welcomed the translation of God's word at the dedication ceremony. IBS president Peter Bradley presented the Bible to Her Excellency, vice president of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Arnai Joyce Mujuru. Leaders from Christian denominations and churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Christian business community also attended the ceremony. The Shona language is the dominant language in Zimbabwe and is composed of the Karanga, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau and Zezuru dialects. Most Zimbabweans prefer the Shona language, even though English is the official language of the country. (International Bible Society)

WORLD EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS REPORTS

Fellowship of Short-Term Mission Leaders

By John Tucker

Imagine a place where a leader can participate in the development of his or her ministry skills while equally focusing on the refreshment of his or her soul. Imagine a place where networking occurs, ideas are born and excellence in mission is promoted. For the past twenty-five years the Fellowship of Short-Term Mission Leaders (www.stmstandards.org/) conference has been a strategic oasis where these values are modeled. FSTML is an annual October conference that exists to bring God's glory to the nations by training, networking and empowering key leadership from all disciplines of Christian short-term mission.

Soul Care

One of the primary purposes of FSTML is to facilitate soul care among its participants. Ministry leaders would rarely, if ever, argue that the development of ministry skills is an important aspect in achieving maximum effectiveness for individuals and organizations. Undoubtedly, these same leaders would champion the necessity of refreshing the soul. And yet it is so countercultural for us to take the time in worship, genuine fellowship and prayer that is necessary to reinvigorate our passion for God. Maximum effectiveness in our lives cannot come without this soul refreshing. At FSTML, intentional planning assures that participants have the opportunity to feed their soul spiritual nourishment. Specific time is set aside for personal prayer and prayer for the nations. Worship and encouraging interaction are part of the daily schedule.

Advanced Level Leadership Training

Not only does FSTML focus on spiritual rejuvenation, it also provides advanced level leadership training. Training is a central focus for the conference as FSTML aims to empower leaders in the short-term mission arena. Plenary sessions and multiple workshops provide avenues of learning for participants. Generally, participants are drawn to the conference in search of greater depth of training. The themes challenge professional leaders from churches, agencies, schools and other sending entities to grapple with mission issues and incorporate their conclusions into daily practice. Recent conferences have dealt with issues such as crisis management, justice, standards of excellence and effective follow-through.

Oftentimes training in the short-term mission arena focuses on training team leaders for specific mission outreaches. This leaves key mission leaders little to wrestle with in their ministry once they receive initial team-leader training. FSTML seeks to offer ministry leaders training depth that will facilitate excellent short-term mission in their lives and organizations. For instance, participants in 2005 encountered workshops focused on marketing their organization's opportunities, risk assessment and creative access strategies. By moving beyond basic training principles, FSTML engages leaders on a level appropriate to their ministry position.

Network, Strategize, Dream, Relax

Time after time participants convey that one of the most valuable components of the conference is the free time that is provided. Yes, free time. Building on the first focus of soul care, FSTML intentionally schedules free time into the daily agenda. Although the concept of free time is not new, actually obtaining such time is rare. But in these moments that are afforded to participants, great kingdom advances have been made. Advances have been made in the hearts of individuals as they relax and play. But God has also chosen to advance his kingdom on a larger scale when participants network, strategize and dream. The worldwide impact of FSTML began in the early years of the fellowship as participants conceived the idea of creating the book *Stepping Out*. The impact of the networking and dreaming at FSTML continues into recent years as participants have been instrumental in developing, among other initiatives, the U.S. Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission (www.stmstandards.org/).

God's Mission of Justice

As one begins to search the scriptures, it becomes clear that justice and love for the oppressed are reflections of the heart of God. Micah 6:8 reminds us that the Lord God requires us to act justly. During the October 2005 conference FSTML dealt with the issue of justice in short-term mission. Gary Haugen

and Larry Martin of International Justice Mission challenged leaders to consider the role short-term missions could fulfill in dealing with issues of justice around the globe.

As conference participants were exposed to biblical references to God's heart for justice and modern day issues of injustice around the world, they began to grapple with ways their short-term missions could make an impact among the oppressed peoples of the world. In both large and small group settings, leaders had the opportunity to advance the cause of justice as ideas were put into motion that would equip short-term mission participants. For instance, ideas on how short-term participants could recognize and report problems of injustice were shared. Overall, the theme of justice and the values that annually pervade the FSTML conference gave attendees strategic tools to promote the advancement of God's kingdom.

Equipping Leaders for Twenty-Five Years

As FSTML celebrates twenty-five years of equipping leaders in the short-term mission realm, it looks ahead to 11-15 October 2006 when the conference meets in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, to continue promoting God's glory through short-term mission. The 2006 plenary speakers are Duane and Muriel Elmer, who will equip participants to facilitate within their short-term missionaries a culturally relevant gospel. Duane Elmer is author of *Cross-Cultural Connections: Stepping Out and Fitting in Around the World* and *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*. Additionally, participants will have the opportunity to attend a variety of workshops concentrating on topics for leaders at various stages in their personal development.

Individuals who are interested in registering for the 2006 FSTML conference may do so at www.fstml.org/. Information about the 2006 conference speakers, schedule, workshops and fees are now available.

John Tucker is an FSTML Conference Steering Committee Member and short-term mission practitioner. He currently resides in Cairo, Egypt, with his wife Erin and their son Ethan.

Philip 8.4.8 and Short-term Missions

By Carolyn Bennett

Nearly one million people immigrate to the United States every year. Many of these immigrants come from countries where evangelism is illegal and Christians are openly persecuted. Settling in immigrant communities within large metropolitan regions, they often form isolated subcultures and can live in the US for years without ever hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One Virginia-based ministry sees the incredible potential within these communities. Since 2004, Philip 8.4.8, a division of Accelerating International Mission Strategies (AIMS), has sponsored short-term outreaches to regions where immigrant populations have settled. Philip 8.4.8 is designed to serve as a mobilization strategy and equip believers to reach the nations through connecting them with ethnic communities in the US that have the least opportunity to hear the gospel. Philip 8.4.8 seeks to model national outreaches after the story of Philip the evangelist, found in Acts 8:4-8.

"Once churches have the opportunity to minister to unreached people groups in our backyard, we hope that they will develop a passion to reach unreached people groups in other countries around the world," said Philip,* coordinator of Philip 8.4.8.

According to Philip, partnership is the key. Before initiating any new outreach trip, he meets with existing ministries in the metropolitan region who are actively reaching the community with the gospel. He then connects them with other ministries in the area that have the same goal and brings in teams from other regions to help them accomplish those goals.

Philip 8.4.8 outreaches generally last one week and attract youth and young adult groups. However, interested laypeople of all ages are welcome to join each outreach. Each team is trained in evangelism techniques for the cultural group with whom they intend to interact. Once there, they have the opportunity to become involved in a variety of outreach techniques including street evangelism, park outreaches, tract

distribution, worship concerts, drama ministry and intercession.

"We have to think about training, discipling and mobilizing each generation in different ways," Philip said. "Generations X and Y are hands-on. They have to get out there and experience it themselves."

The World at Our Doorstep

The high level of immigration to the United States offers a great potential to reach the nations with the gospel. The 33.1 million foreign-born people (eleven percent of the population) who currently live in America¹ often settle in gateway cities—key metropolitan areas that serve as an entry point to the country for many immigrants. Major entry points such as New York City; Los Angeles, California; Houston, Texas; Miami, Florida; and Washington DC have become the new homes for more than half of the total immigrant population in the US.

As America's primary gateway city, New York City has welcomed immigrants from almost every nation. The first wave of Arab immigrants settled in the metropolitan region in the late nineteenth century; however, when Ford Motor Company began hiring Arabs in the 1930s, many Arabs relocated to Dearborn, Michigan. Today, New York City has the third largest Arabic population in the US, behind Detroit and Los Angeles.²

Since 1990, the Hindu population in the United States has grown from 227,000 to more than 760,000, an increase of more than 274%.³ Like immigrants from Arabic countries, immigrants from South Asia, particularly India, have settled in large metropolitan regions like Orlando, Florida, and formed cultural communities.

Philip 8.4.8 has developed partnerships and begun ministry efforts in Dearborn, New York City, Orlando and Washington DC.

Case Study: An Open Door in Dearborn, Michigan

Located just outside of Detroit, Michigan, Dearborn is known for its Arabic population. Of the 400,000 Arab Americans living in the Detroit metropolitan area, more than 150,000 live in Michigan's Wayne County where Dearborn is located. Several communities on Dearborn's south and east sides are more than ninety percent Islamic.

When Philip first heard about the Muslim community in Dearborn, he immediately called more than a dozen churches in the area and asked if they were actively reaching out to the Arab community. Only one church leader, Pastor Nicodemus, said they were.

After planting Harvest International Worship Center in Dearborn in the early 1990s, Pastor Nicodemus began talking to Arabs on the street. He wanted to learn about their culture and understand their beliefs. As Muslims began to convert to Christianity and join the small congregation, members of Harvest International joined their pastor in reaching out to those around them.

Although the outreaches were successful, Pastor Nicodemus wanted to do more. However, he knew he could not accomplish the task alone. For three years he spoke with other churches and organizations about sending ministry teams to help, but in the end, every effort failed. Then he received a call from Philip. In August 2004 thirty-nine teenagers, young adults and youth pastors from Philip 8.4.8 arrived in Dearborn.

The team focused on community outreach, talking with people in the neighborhoods, handing out tracts and offering to pray with anyone in need. They organized an outreach in a community park with live worship, music, puppets and drama. Although the team met some resistance, most people were very receptive to the group.

One team member said, "The trip opened my eyes to other beliefs out there. I now have a burden for the Muslim people and for every person I meet who doesn't know Jesus Christ."

When Philip brought two additional teams to Dearborn in summer 2005, they focused on finding individuals who specifically wanted to speak with a pastor, join a Bible study or receive information about becoming a Christian.

"After the first day, we had gathered fourteen positive responses," said Philip. "That's more than we had during the entire trip last year. We knew that we were experiencing a miracle from God." By the end of the two week trip, Harvest International had seventy-five individuals to contact for follow-up.

"Dearborn actually lends itself to reach Muslims in interesting ways," said the Islamic World Missions director* at Calvary International in Jacksonville, Florida. He participated in a 2005 Philip 8.4.8 outreach in Dearborn. "There's a broad spectrum of Middle Eastern Muslims within a close proximity, and believers have the freedom to reach them," he said. "You can go door to door and hand out literature. Those freedoms don't exist in other nations."

Since the first Dearborn outreach, Pastor Nicodemus' ministry has soared. He began networking with other ministries in the region, accepting invitations to speak at various churches and planning a summer internship program which will begin May 2006. He will continue to partner with Philip 8.4.8 for short-term outreaches and is working on a partnership with other organizations like Calvary International, that will send their missionaries to Dearborn before commissioning them to Arabic nations.

Changing Lives for Missions

The Philip 8.4.8 trips have also changed the lives of many teenagers and young adults who have participated. One parent commented that her daughter's attitude and temper were transformed. Another young adult decided to commit her life to missions work. Two of the youth groups that participated in the first trip to Dearborn have begun witnessing in their respective neighborhoods.

"This trip put a fire under every single person in our youth group," said Pastor Cory Elliott, youth pastor at Bethel Christian Fellowship in Virginia Beach, Virginia. "It woke us up as a youth group."

One young woman named Diana said the experience gave her a new boldness to minister to others around her. Growing up during the Civil War in Lebanon, Diana felt bitterness and anger toward Muslims. When she heard about the trip to Dearborn, she didn't want to go, but felt the Lord wanted her to participate. While there, Diana began to share her experiences with other Lebanese women she met. She connected with several Arabic families and continues to minister to them via email and telephone.

"All these years, I've been trying to get people interested in the Middle East," the Islamic World Missions director with Calvary International said. "When I saw these kids pouring out their hearts to Muslims right here in America, it blessed me to see them have a passion and a heart for the Arab people."

* Some names have been changed or omitted to protect the identity of persons ministering in regions that are hostile to the gospel.

Endnotes

1. Center for Immigration Studies, www.cis.org.
2. Arab American Institute Foundation. Estimates by Zogby International. www.aaiusa.org.
3. American Religious Identification Survey. City University of New York Graduate Center. www.gc.cuny.edu.

Carolyn Bennett is editor and publications coordinator for Accelerating International Mission Strategies (AIMS, www.aims.org).

Short-Term Missions...How Things Have Changed!

By Cindy Judge

Exact record-keeping on short-term missions (STM) has been impossible. But the numbers we do have are staggering. Some say close to one million Americans go on a short-term mission trip every year. STM can no longer be reported as a new movement. It is quickly becoming an institution. It has been around for over thirty years. It's tempting to oversimplify and say there have been many successful trips and many not-so-successful trips. Objective evaluation is difficult; however, this should not surprise us as it was the same with the initial years of long-term missionary work. Scrutiny and evaluation trail behind enthusiasm and passion.

This enterprise of short-term missions continues on its learning curve, working hard at evaluating itself. Similar to the business world, the first question often being asked is, "Who is the customer—is it the person who goes or is it the field being served?" There's been much debate about who benefits most by short-term missions. I propose that the benefits are many to all of the "customers."

To ask the above question would be somewhat like asking, "When an evangelist leads someone to Christ, who benefits most—the person who came to Christ or the person who had the privilege of leading him or her to Christ?" It all depends on who you ask. The benefits run both ways. A third party may also enter this picture—the body of believers that this new Christian now becomes a part of. Indeed, it's a blessing for everyone.

The Missionary in STM

There are three entities involved in this whole thing called short-term missions: (1) the group who receives the team, missionary or national, (2) the person who goes and (3) the group that sends or commissions the missionary to go. There are definite roles that each party plays. Some say unequivocally that the person who goes always will benefit the most from a short-term mission trip. The individual comes home from a cross-cultural foray a changed person. He or she has grown, become aware of the world, seen God use him or her, been stretched beyond his or her personal comfort zone and been challenged to see this or her universe in a new way, both figuratively and literally.

Now we may raise our conscientious eyebrows at the expense and energy of sending teams overseas only with the purpose of changing the team participant. Estimating or evaluating the worth of a changed American Christian is difficult to say the least. However, in seeking to understand this value, we must see what organizations that have set up these trips have learned about the benefits to the individual. Many organizations acknowledge that the participant comes back blessed beyond measure and may want to go beyond this first experience to reach others. Some go overseas as long-term missionaries. Within a few months, a person is called to go, steps out in faith, obeys, prays, trusts, works in community with other believers, uses his or her gifts, perseveres and sees God at work. One mega-church surveyed its staff members and in answer to their most significant lifetime experience of spiritual growth, the majority cited a mission trip.

The Recipient of the STM

We must also look at the effect of short-term missions on the hosting group--the recipient of a short-term mission team. The list of benefits is as endless as the one for the person who goes. People come to faith in Christ, receive needed resources, receive special know-how, are inspired by fresh energy and find spiritual encouragement. They work and worship as the body of Christ across cultural barriers. There are cooperative efforts and results that God greatly blesses on the mission site only because the short-term team is present. Nationals love meeting and working alongside short-termers. They feel cared about and are served in ways that uniquely bless them.

Partnership is not just a buzz-word in short-term missions. North Americans are slowly becoming better at deciding how to serve a need that is well-defined. They accept an invitation to come because they have been developing reciprocal partnerships. Integrity is beginning to play a key role in setting up short-term mission trips.

STM Excellence

There are several websites that offer solid, best practices in short-term missions. A group of Canadians and now a US-based group has put together the Standards of Excellence (SOE) in Short-Term Missions, www.STMstandards.org. Many agencies, colleges and churches belong to this watch-dog group that makes certain these standards are practiced when setting up and implementing any short-term mission work. These standards seek excellence and even a seasoned mission agency must strive to reach them. The group asks an organization to "join an impressive network of organizations offering opportunities for resource sharing, improved training, minimized risk and mentoring."

The Standards of Excellence are explained under these seven points:

1. God-Centeredness
2. Empowering Partnerships
3. Mutual Design

4. Comprehensive Administration
5. Qualified Leadership
6. Appropriate Training
7. Thorough Follow-up

Not only do we have standards of integrity for setting up a short-term missions project, the standards have become even stronger for the acceptance of the individual who will participate on a project. One mega-church who once sent thirty-plus STM teams a year has strict criterion for participant applicants. Here are a few of their standards for applicants.

* Applicant possesses the skills or gifts needed for the identified project, and expresses interest in the purpose of the particular short-term team.

* Applicant demonstrates a level of maturity and life experience to be able to fit well as a team player, and to respond to the leadership of another person.

* Applicant is known to possess characteristics that will enable effective work within a cross-cultural environment.

More resources and websites are now available to help a novice. Some advertise services like: "Extensive directory of links and ministry opportunities categorized by skill. Great for finding medical, professional, orphanage and teaching opportunities. Offers free personal assistance. Search by keyword" (www.missionfinder.org). Or "Brief descriptions of several thousand opportunities offered by over eighty mission organizations. Search by age, location, timeframe, skill set, agency or dates. Offers free personal assistance" (www.rightnow.org). In our information age, STM has moved forward with the aid of the Internet.

Many of these excellent resources are listed below. There is significant expertise and God-honoring sensitivity being invested in the short-term mission enterprise. It is thrilling to serve alongside groups who have listened to the critics as well as the cheer-leaders and moved to such high standards of ministry in Jesus' name.

* **AGRM's Short-term Urban Missions Directory**—Inner city missions opportunities for groups and individuals throughout North America.

* **The Finishers Project**—A service designed to provide adult Christians with information and challenges for processing and discovering ministry opportunities in the missions enterprise – short-term, part-time or as a second-career.

* **globalmission.org**—Offers a database of long-term and short-term mission opportunities.

* **globalopps.org**—A missions service agency which equips mission-committed Christians to serve as bi-vocational tentmakers and assists them in finding international jobs.

* **MissionFinder.org**—Extensive directory of links and ministry opportunities categorized by skill. Great for finding medical, professional, orphanage and teaching opportunities. Offers free personal assistance. Search by keyword.

* **Oscar:** The UK Information Service for World Missio—A gateway to useful UK information, advice and resources.

* **RightNow.org:** World Connection—Brief descriptions of several thousand opportunities offered by over eighty mission organizations. Search by age, location, timeframe, skill set, agency or dates. Offers free personal assistance.

* **ShortTermMissions.com's Search Tool for Mission Trips**—Full details on over a thousand one-week to three-year short-term mission opportunities from over fifty mission organizations. Search by length, country, region, start month, agency or keyword.

* **urbana.org's MSearch**—Post a resume or search mission agency profiles, options and ministry

openings of mission agencies that exhibited at Urbana. Offers details on career and short-term mission opportunities.

Cindy Judge serves as director of global outreach of Wheaton Bible Church, in Wheaton, Illinois, USA. Judge authored the popular mission team member preparation guide, *Before You Pack Your Bag, Prepare Your Heart*.

The Talking Bible and Short-term Missions Projects

By Harvey Hoekstra

Short-term Missions

There is little doubt that “short-term missions” have become increasingly effective, meaningful and popular. Individuals who participate in these missions are not only a blessing to the people they serve, but they themselves are often enriched, inspired and challenged to make foreign missions a more significant dimension of their own lives. Churches are also blessed when their members participate in these trips and report back to their congregations. And long-term missionaries are often gratified when their own ministries are significantly enhanced by the contributions of short-term missionaries.

I personally recall, with much gratitude, the tremendous help short-term personnel were to Talking Bibles International, www.talkingbibles.org, when we were beginning our work in the early 1950s in southwest Ethiopia. One team of five men spent several weeks helping us open the station and building our first permanent home. Another group of college-age students spent an entire summer helping us to develop an airstrip so Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) could land its planes safely in our remote area. These groups were followed by many others. Short-term mission volunteers can and do make a big difference on the world’s mission fields. We could not have done our own work without them.

Using the Talking Bible in Short-term Mission Projects

Over the years, the Talking Bible has greatly enhanced the value of many short-term mission projects. Short-term missionaries make marvelous colporteurs. Already many of them have carried Talking Bibles in their luggage to distribute to people in remote areas who are not able to read. Some groups have carried scores of Talking Bibles in their luggage—Bibles which otherwise would have to be shipped or mailed in a risky, time-consuming and often expensive process.

Recently, for example, a short-term team traveled to Malawi in southeastern Africa. They carried with them over two hundred Talking Bibles in the Chichewa language. The people who received the Bibles were so happy that some of them literally danced with joy before the Lord. When the missionaries returned to their sending churches, they shared the unexpected thrill of seeing the gratitude and delight of the people who had received the Talking Bibles.

Another short-term missions team from Our Savior Lutheran Church in Minnesota, USA, recently traveled to Kingston, Jamaica, where they distributed nearly sixty Talking Bibles to blind children at the Salvation Army School for the Blind.

Many times, short-term missionaries are able to strengthen a long-term missionary’s work as well. Luke Rider, a missionary in Mozambique with YWAM (Youth with a Mission), said this of the group that came to visit:

“I was spending much of my time building a local church and preparing for the arrival of the team. A team of eight people arrived and stayed for eleven days. They carried in their luggage Talking Bibles to be given in the very first distribution in Mozambique. We distributed forty-two Talking Bibles. To see and feel the impact left by the Talking Bibles has left me encouraged and full of vision for [what I am doing].”

Some short-term missionaries carry with them two or three Talking Bibles in the language of people they may meet along the way. When they are able to establish a meaningful relationship with someone they meet, the missionaries are able to give this person a highly valued gift that will be treasured for a lifetime. What a tremendous joy and surprise it is for a cab driver, cook, tour bus driver, night watchman, teacher

or student to receive a Talking Bible in his or her own language. Even though the donor may never see the recipient after the gift is given, the Talking Bible will often make an eternal difference in the life of the person who receives it. And as frequently happens, when someone is brought to the Lord through listening to a Talking Bible, he or she will share the good news with his or her family and friends.

Personal Experiences with Short-term Missions and the Talking Bible

In the days before we had Talking Bibles, I always carried a few cassettes with the gospel message in languages I expected to encounter on my journey. Two experiences especially stand out.

West Africa. In West Africa, my wife and I stopped mid-morning for a cup of coffee at a small restaurant. Although the place was empty when we arrived, a man soon came out from the back room. He appeared to be from a group in whose language we recently recorded some tract-like messages about Jesus. When he came to our table, I didn't say anything; instead, I began playing my tape recorder. Recognizing that we were Americans who likely didn't know his language, the man shouted excitedly, "That's my language! That's my language!" He was hearing about Jesus in his own language—apparently for the first time. He stood perfectly still and listened to the entire cassette before he asked us what we wanted to drink.

We were thirsty, but when we realized what was happening, our earthly thirst subsided. His thirst was greater than ours—and far more significant. We were so grateful that we were able to help quench his thirst because we had decided to take along with us the "water of life." At the time, I could never have imagined that someday we would be able to carry with us a Talking Bible of the entire New Testament on just one tape.

Hungary. On another occasion my wife and I were traveling to Romania and we stopped at a train depot in Budapest, Hungary. A man in an old army trench coat wearing an officer's cap helped carry our luggage. Along with a small tip, I handed him a cassette which had a label, printed in Hungarian, about Jesus. He showed no special response. Five or ten minutes later, however, as I was wandering around, I came across the man again. He stopped, looked me in the eye and said excitedly in English, "Thank you, pastor! Thank you, pastor!" By then he had read the label indicating that the cassette was about Jesus and knew what a treasure he had received. When I saw his joy, my own joy bells started ringing, too. What a privilege it was to share God's precious word with someone who was so grateful to receive it.

This is the kind of experience that short-term missionaries can expect when they have a Talking Bible or audio cassette with them in an appropriate language. And an experience of this kind may be the beginning of a radically changed life—both for the one who gives as well as the one who receives.

Using the Talking Bible in TESL Projects and Literacy Programs

Millions of people around the world have a strong desire to learn English as a second language. TESL programs (Teaching English as a Second Language) are universally popular and are helping tens of thousands of people learn to speak and read English. Among those enrolled in these programs are students, housewives, well-educated business and professional people and many others. TESL programs not only provide a great practical service to those learning the language, they also often provide wonderful opportunities for the educator to share the gospel.

TESL program personnel can effectively use the Talking Bible in their teaching. Since students greatly increase their fluency in a language by listening while reading, teachers can help students learn to speak and understand English by using the Talking Bible along with a printed text. Students are able to HEAR what they SEE. Under ideal circumstances, they will be able to listen to specific passages repeatedly.

Teachers who are not permitted to use a biblical text in their classes may at least show what can be done by way of "hearing while seeing." When appropriate, they may even let individuals or small groups borrow their Talking Bible for use outside of class. Students with Internet access may also be shown how they can download written and audio scriptures without charge. Those who desire to purchase their own Talking Bible—and have the funds to do so—may go to www.audioscriptures.org.

By using the Talking Bible to help students learn English, missionaries not only teach students more effectively, they also give them a wonderful opportunity to hear the gospel in a non-threatening learning environment.

For many years Audio Scriptures International (the predecessor of Talking Bibles International) has produced an attractive two-pocket album for speakers who desire to learn English. This album contains two cassettes, one in English and one in the student's own language, with selected passages from the gospels. A printed booklet with the same passages in English is provided along with the cassettes. By listening to the English cassette and following along in the printed booklet, the student steadily improves his ability to understand and speak English. In addition, the student hears an attractive and compelling message about Jesus.

Concluding Thoughts

Within a few months we plan to begin manufacturing a digital solid-state Talking Bible. Its near-perfect fidelity, search-and-find features, easy-to-use button arrangement, low-power consumption and light weight make the new Talking Bible more useful than ever. A new era has dawned in communicating the message of the gospel to non-readers wherever they may live. We eagerly await the time when hundreds of thousands of new believers will echo with shouts of joy the message heard first on Pentecost when people from many nations exclaimed, "We hear them in our own tongues declaring the mighty acts of God" (Acts 2:11b).

Dr. Harvey Hoekstra is chairman of the board for Talking Bibles International, www.talkingbibles.org. He and his wife served as missionaries in the Sudan and Ethiopia for several decades. Hoekstra has authored several books and holds a doctorate in missiology from Fuller's School of Intercultural Studies.

Future of Short-Term Missions

By Seth Barnes

Short-term missions (STMs) have become the common fashion for many churches. Most mega-churches will list their short-term projects in a brochure for their members. Though exact total numbers are impossible to find, it is thought that more than four million people annually go on short-term trips from the United States alone. The pace of change in the short-term movement has been as remarkable as the overall growth in numbers.

A number of years ago, I wrote an article on the top ten trends in short-term missions. Many are still in effect, but ten stand out. Each of these ten are undergirded by five factors that drive the pace and nature of the changes afoot in the market.

Driving Factors

- The STM market has matured—STMs are no longer a novelty, though they are becoming increasingly specialized.
- Increased terrorism and confrontation between Jihadist Muslims and Christians has complicated travel.
- The cost of transportation has been decreasing due to ever-growing, worldwide linkages.
- The cost of communication is decreasing (thus making STMs easier to organize) due to the prevalence of Internet telephone services and cell phones.
- The economic growth of developing countries has introduced new possibilities. Countries like China and India have growth rates approaching ten percent; this is coupled with large populations of unreached people.

A generation ago, author Alvin Toffler introduced the concept of "future shock." According to Toffler, "Future shock is the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time." We are seeing this in STMs. Change is occurring so fast that it is passing up many STM practitioners. The five factors above propel the pace of change in the market and have resulted in these ten overarching trends.

1. Internationalization of the Movement

We are seeing a huge increase in indigenous workers. One US-based ministry, Christian AID, claims to support ninety thousand indigenous workers alone. In China there is a movement called "Back to Jerusalem" (<http://www.backtojerusalem.com/>) which calls the Chinese Church to take part in the Great Commission. This movement has begun sending short-term and long-term missionaries. Indian missionaries are being sent out both short and long-term by the thousands. Emmanuel Ministries International (<http://www.hopegivers.com/>) in India graduated over ten thousand missionaries from its Bible schools last month.

In contrast, the US Church is in decline, following a trend similar to the European Church of forty years ago. In his book *Revolution*, George Barna estimates that only one third of the seventy-seven million people attending church weekly will still be attending a local church in twenty years.

2. Web-based Networking

Databases like <http://www.shorttermmissions.com/>, <http://www.mnnonline.org/> or <http://www.missionfinder.org/> facilitate the process of connecting an individual with a STM that meets his or her criteria. Those setting up STMs will engage in increased networking. Databases will continue to merge and expand, linking an increasing number of international workers. The percentage of short-term missionaries that find opportunities through the Web will continue to rise. At Adventures in Missions (AIM, <http://www.adventures.org/>), over fifty percent of individuals use the Web to find a STM trip.

3. Cheaper Projects

Fueled by a commitment to low-cost projects, Youthworks (<http://www.youthworks.com/>) has increased from having four hundred participants in 1994 to thirty-seven thousand participants in 2005. Missions committees are becoming more sophisticated and asking for greater accountability for funds. Increased "competition" inevitably pushes prices down. As project costs come down, it becomes easier for more STM participants to go.

4. Increased Excellence

Agencies are increasing their emphasis on preparation and follow-up. Delta's "Next Mile" project (<http://www.thenextmile.org/>) is a collaborative attempt to address issues associated with pre and post-trip situations. The seven standards of Excellence outlined by www.stmstandards.org lists close to one hundred subscribing agencies. More missions committees are improving their effectiveness in STMs by asking, "Why are we doing this?" More short-term agencies are using STMs as an opportunity to disciple participants. AIM features "listening prayer" as a key component of the ministry.

5. Partnerships

Church partnerships that start out as summer projects progress into long-term partnerships with multi-year commitments and the exchange of pulpits (pastors preaching at the partner church). This is a relational generation and STM leaders today are giving relational ministry priority. Long-term, suburban-urban local partnerships are growing in communities throughout North America. Additionally, the Charismatic Church is growing much faster than the Evangelical Church around the world and will likely be the source of an increasing number of partnerships.

6. More Sponsoring Agencies

More than forty thousand North American churches, agencies and schools currently sponsor short-term missionaries and this is sparking greater innovation and opportunity. Denominations such as the Southern Baptists have established their own internal short-term missions agencies (<http://www.worldchangers.studentz.com/>). Other associations like Willow Creek and Saddleback focus on cause-specific missions projects such as AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

7. Demographic Stratification

The following are several examples of how mission agencies and churches are using demographics to specialize their trips:

- Teen Missions International (<http://www.teenmissions.org/>) offers "Peanut trips" whose requirement is that "you must be [age] seven before the project ends."

- More agencies like OnMission (<http://www.teenmissions.org/>) are offering "vacations with a purpose" which target couples and families.

- Christian colleges like Taylor University (Upland, Indiana, USA) or Wheaton College (Wheaton, Illinois, USA) feature short-term missions in their athletic calendar and as a part of their academic curriculum.

- AIM offers four-day men's projects featuring construction of homes in Mexico.

The short-term mission project has become a standard item on many youth ministry calendars. However, many of these trips are taken every other year. Many students have experienced the inoculation effect. They say, "Yeah, I've been on a bunch of mission projects—I've done that."

8. Safety Concerns

Tourist terrorism, such as the bombing in Kuta Beach, Bali, will likely spread and become a global blight. US immigration policy has tightened. If other countries follow suit, STMs will become more difficult to organize. Muslim outrage and rioting such as took place outside Paris, France last year is likely to spread. The 11 September 2001 bombings on the World Trade Center led to more parental concerns about youth projects and now constrain STM agencies in their offerings. The possibility of another terrorist attack looms large. In addition, outbreaks such as the Asian Bird Flu, if pervasive enough, could completely shut down the STM movement for a time.

9. From Phenomenon to Fad

Hybrid projects are increasingly being offered. Consider the following examples:

- Some time back, a man called me proposing a short-term missions cruise. The idea was that at each new port, the cruisers/missioners would pour down the gangplank and distribute tracts to the locals.

- Brio magazine-sponsored trips to Peru for 13-year-olds which cost US\$2298.

- Radio station-sponsored trips.

- High school-sponsored trips (where no one was responsible for disciplining participants).

- Women's project to China where a major attraction is shopping.

- Drama projects to Europe where a major attraction is sight-seeing.

The reality is greater numbers of short-term groups are spending money with little missiologically impact.

10. Shorter and Longer

Two-week projects were common twenty years ago; today, the six-day project is standard for high school students. High school groups are looking to travel less in order to save money and time. Most people are tactical, not strategic – they are more motivated to fill their calendars than they are to push for missiologically sound partnerships.

On the other hand, FYMissions.com and Missions Year are examples of ministries that offer one-year experiences. SVM2 calls participants to two-year commitment to missions and hearkens back to the Student Volunteer Movement that began with the Haystack Revival a hundred years ago.

We live in a fast-changing world. Change in the way we do short-term missions is inevitable and is driven by a variety of factors. We can't know what the changes will be, but we can count on needing to deal with them.

***Seth Barnes** is founder and executive director of Adventures in Missions, www.adventures.org. AIM has taken over sixty thousand people on missions projects.*

Thousands Prepare for Azusa Street Centennial

Around the world delegates are looking forward to the "Spiritual Experience of a Lifetime" in Los Angeles, California, USA this 25-29 April 2006.

It was in 1906 that William Seymour, a nearly blind African-American preacher, came to Los Angeles and started a revival meeting in a small home. It wasn't long until the crowds were in the street and the move was made to an abandoned stable on 312 Azusa Street. No one could have imagined that those initial meetings would spawn a worldwide movement that today numbers over six hundred million adherents. Today, Azusa Street is synonymous with revival and dozens of denominations can trace their roots to the events of 1906.

To commemorate the Azusa Street revival, a five-day celebration is scheduled which will feature informative sessions, tours and lectures on historic sites, conferences and 125 "ministry tracks." From Tuesday, 25 April through Friday 28 April, nightly events will be held simultaneously at four different venues in Los Angeles, including the West Angeles Cathedral, Crenshaw Christian Center, the historic Angelus Temple and the Los Angeles Convention Center.

The climax to Centennial week will be a day of celebration at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum as thousands will gather for the Centennial Assembly, followed by a youth convocation where the next generation will be commissioned for a lifetime of ministry. The day will be preceded by "Reach L.A.," an event that is being billed as the largest one-day benevolent outreach in US history.

To find out more about the Azusa Street Centennial go to www.azusastreet.com/.

This article was originally written for the Assemblies of God, <http://ag.org>.

Commissioner Shaw Clifton Elected Eighteenth General of the Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has announced that its new world leader and the eighteenth General of the Salvation Army will be Commissioner Shaw Clifton. Commissioner Clifton, who currently heads up Salvation Army work in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, was elected by the High Council of the Salvation Army, which is made up of senior Salvation Army leaders from around the world. Commissioner Clifton will succeed the current world leader, General John Larsson, when he retires in April. Commissioner Clifton will become head of the Salvation Army, with 1.5 million members in 111 countries. The Salvation Army is also known as one of the largest providers of social welfare in the world and was most recently involved in relief work after the hurricanes in the southern part of the United States, the 7 July London bombings and the South Asian tsunami.

Commissioner Clifton becomes the General-elect and will be the ninth British General of the Salvation Army. Prior his present position he was in charge of Salvation Army work in New Zealand and Fiji and prior to that in Pakistan. During his Christian ministry, he has also headed up the work of the Salvation Army in Massachusetts, USA, and before that he was a regional commander in the Durham and Tees area of the UK. Commissioner Clifton has also served as vice principal of a Salvation Army secondary school in the former Rhodesia and has held several appointments, both in the UK and at the Salvation Army's International Headquarters, including the position of Legal and Parliamentary secretary.

Commissioner Clifton holds a bachelor of Law and holds a bachelor of divinity and a doctorate in the history of religion from the University of London. He is the author of several books on Salvation Army practice and doctrine including *What Does the Salvationist Say?*, *Growing Together*, *Strong Doctrine*, *Strong Mercy*, *Never the Same Again*, *Who Are These Salvationists?* and *New Love*.

Commissioner Clifton shares his Christian ministry with his wife Commissioner Helen Clifton, who becomes the Salvation Army world president of Women's Ministries. They have three children.

The announcement of the new General was broadcast live on the World Wide Web for the first time. Speaking just after his election Commissioner Clifton said,

"I feel deeply honoured to be called by God to this role in global Christian leadership. The Salvation Army, as ever, stands ready to present the Christian message in 111 countries of the world and will never cease to do all it can to meet human need, without discrimination, whether that need be poverty, lack of education, human trafficking, homelessness or alienation from society. The need grows and grows but God's people rely on his inspiration to remain relevant and practical to the peoples of the world."

General John Larsson, the current leader, retires in April, having spent much of the three years of his leadership visiting Salvation Army projects worldwide. During this time, General Larsson has seen the most extensive international emergency response in the Salvation Army's 140-year history following the South Asian tsunami, when local Salvation Army staff and volunteers were mobilized in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Forty-three million dollars (£24.2m) was pledged and eighty percent of this has already been spent on rebuilding homes, school equipment and support for local business. During General Larsson's tenure, the Salvation Army's work expanded into two new countries, Poland and Lithuania.

In addition to its more than 1.5 million members worldwide, the Salvation Army has over 100,000 employees who communicate in 175 different languages. Programmes include accommodation for homeless men, women, children and families; drug rehabilitation centres; schools; hospitals and clinics. It runs over five thousand HIV/Aids projects, micro-credit schemes, training centres and daycare facilities. Support is also offered through nearly fifteen thousand local church and community centres.

(This article was edited from a Salvation Army news release.)

Hopegivers Urges Christians to Establish Individual "Prayer Night"

Officials with Hopegivers International, a Georgia (USA)-based ministry that seeks to rescue orphans from the streets of India and share the gospel with them, are calling on fellow Christians in the USA and abroad to establish a monthly night of prayer for the persecuted Church and other believers in need.

The regular International Night of Prayer initiated by the ministry takes place on the second Friday of each month. However, an increase in persecution against Christians in India, coupled with the rapid growth of the ministry work in that nation, led Hopegivers founder Dr. Samuel Thomas to urge individual believers to establish their own prayer night.

Thomas says Christians must make intercession a priority in their lives. "The main thing is that when we work, we work; but when we pray, God works," he observes. "So when we want God to work in our ministry, in our lives, in our families, we need to spend more time in prayer."

Thomas maintains that apart from enriching and enhancing their own lives through increased prayer, believers can also play a vital part in supporting the work of ministries like Hopegivers by incorporating a dedicated night of prayer into their routines.

"I think we as Christians have no idea the power of prayer we have as a child of God," Thomas says. And, although some people believe they must close their eyes and stop other activities when they pray, he insists, "No, you can drive and pray. You can be in a meeting or waiting in the reception area of the doctor's clinic, at the airport or wherever you are."

Every believer "can constantly be praying for the saints and for the persecuted Church all over the world," Thomas asserts. He urges Christians to remember this, even as they remember to pray for the work of the Church and parachurch ministries in reaching out to the needy.

This article was recently published in Agapepress, www.agapepress.org/.

International Bible Society: The Bible and HIV/AIDS

The International Bible Society (IBS) is using the life-changing power of scripture in the battle against the deadly HIV/AIDS virus. In 2004, IBS launched its scripture-based Reach 4 Life program in South Africa and has subsequently expanded it into other African countries, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the United States.

Behavioral change has been shown to be the most effective weapon against HIV/AIDS. Uganda's abstinence-based program, which now serves as a model for countries around the world, is credited with reducing that country's HIV prevalence from eighteen percent in the early 1990s to seven percent in 2005. Combining Uganda's successful approach with the power of God's Word to change lives, IBS-South Africa developed the Reach 4 Life New Testament and built an HIV prevention program around its book. The program strives to reach young people by offering reasons why they should abstain from sex until marriage and live a positive, moral life. The young people then get tools that will help them succeed in their pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

Colin Bishop, IBS-South Africa director, is passionate about helping stem the tide of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. "Reach 4 Life is designed to prevent the next generation of young people [from] catching the deadly HIV/AIDS virus and going to an early grave,"

The Reach 4 Life book contains the full IBS New International Version (NIV) New Testament plus 250 pages of straightforward notes in youth-friendly language, providing a holistic message of abstinence. It tackles issues such as sex, alcohol and drugs, and zeroes in on topics including promiscuity, pregnancy, and most specifically, HIV/AIDS. While the program warns youth about the risks of walking the "low road," it positively calls teens to walk the "higher moral road," as given in God's Word.

In Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the United States, IBS and its dozens of ministry partners provide Reach 4 Life books to junior and senior high school-aged youth in schools (where allowed), churches, sports venues and other places where kids gather. In South Africa, where the program has been in place for two years, teachers and youth participate in Reach 4 Life clubs that offer further education and support for safe, God-honoring lifestyles.

IBS has received hundreds of testimonies from youth choosing to either remain or become abstinent as a direct result of their encounter with Reach 4 Life. Thabo Phati, coordinator of Into Africa Sports ministry, recently said of the program, "Reach 4 Life is great! It's helping my ministry to South African youth because it makes the Bible relevant to current situations such as the huge problem we have with AIDS. The kids are reading the Bibles!"

Reach 4 Life website: www.r4l.org.

This article was edited from a press release of the International Bible Society, www.ibs.org.

Tackling Bible Ignorance in New Zealand

New Research shows New Zealand's children are uninformed of the central stories in the Bible.

When asked to name one story or passage from the Bible, only fifty-four percent of Kiwi kids were able to do so, compared with ninety-one percent of United Kingdom children. Only sixty-nine percent of New Zealand children were able to name five Bible characters, compared with eighty-eight percent of UK respondents.

Chief executive of the Bible Society in New Zealand Colin Reed warned, "A biblically illiterate young generation today is an inevitable forerunner of an increasingly secular society tomorrow."

Jill Kayser of the "kids friendly initiative" of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ)

made a plea for church members to improve their children's knowledge. A 2004 Church Life Survey found that only twenty-one percent of members of any denomination, excluding Bretherens, read the Bible daily.

Kayser believes the reduction in religious education in schools is a significant contributor to Kiwi kids' lack of Bible knowledge. "School boards and principals have become hyper-sensitive to offering anything religious or Christian in their school programme for fear of rocking the boat," she added.

The CWM-member PCANZ supported the survey, along with the Bible Society in New Zealand, the Churches Education Commission, Scripture Union and Children's Bible Ministries.

To learn more: www.presbyterian.org.nz/3669.0.html and www.cwmission.org.uk/news/view_news.cfm?FeatureID=2726

New President Leads AIMS into a New Era

For the past twenty years, Dr. Howard Foltz faithfully served Accelerating International Mission Strategies (AIMS, www.aims.org) as founder and president. As the ministry has grown and expanded, Foltz has decided to move into a different leadership role within the organization and turn over the daily administrative duties to a new president. In January, Daniel O. Crosby officially joined the AIMS ministry team as the organization's new president.

Crosby brings fourteen years of ministry experience and leadership to the AIMS team. He began leading short-term missions groups in 1991 with Teen Mania Ministries (based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA) and helped establish Big World Ventures, a missions organization that introduces nearly one thousand youths to missions every year. In 1996, Crosby joined Living Stones Fellowship Church in Crown Point, Indiana, USA, where he served as missions pastor and began Fuel International, a mobilization and advocacy missions organization. As Crosby joins the AIMS ministry in January, Fuel International is expected to assimilate as well.

During his service at Living Stones Fellowship Church, Crosby met Foltz and began a long-term partnership with AIMS. Foltz helped the church make their short-term missions program more effective, while Crosby served as AIMS' East Africa coordinator.

"I know of no one else who shares Dan's experience, gifts, and understanding of AIMS," said Foltz, who will continue to lead AIMS as CEO. Foltz will work closely with Crosby in an effort to see the vision of AIMS realized in this generation.

After seven years of mentorship under Foltz, Crosby anticipates the transition to be smooth. Building on the foundation Foltz began, Crosby has developed a five-year plan to mobilize six major regions in the world for missions. These regions include China, India, the Malay World, the Horn of Africa, Tanzania and the United States. Crosby has deemed these areas "epicenters," out of which he believes God will bring in the resources to complete the Great Commission.

"We believe, through prophetic insight, that these epicenters will be focal points through which the earth will be shaken and the unreached will be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ," says Crosby.

Crosby's wife of fourteen years, Maria, joins him as he initiates the new level of ministry at AIMS. Their two children have traveled with them to more than fifteen nations around the world. For twenty years, AIMS has challenged the Church to take the gospel where it has never been proclaimed. During that time, AIMS has equipped more than seventy-five thousand national pastors and businesspeople to minister more effectively, produced dozens of seminars and launched a humanitarian outreach called Compassion Aid Network. As a result, twenty-nine million people have heard the gospel (many for the very first time), fourteen thousand churches have been planted in partnership with national denominations and church movements and more than 2.2 million people have received Jesus Christ.

This article is edited from a news release from Accelerating International Mission Strategies (AIMS, www.aims.org)

WORLD PERSPECTIVES

What's Happening in Short-Term Mission?

By Roger Peterson

Should short-term mission be granted status as a new, bona fide missiological strategy? New it's not—but bona fide, and potentially strategic it can be.

Yet before we ponder either the age or strategic possibilities of what Ralph Winter (www.uscwm.org) termed one of the "least anticipated major mutations in modern mission," let's first try to wrap our fingers around a definition. Short-term mission has always been set apart from career or long-term mission by the distinction of time. But how much time—two weeks? Two months? Two years? That's subjective, and best determined on a case-by-case basis with a given sending entity and receiving field. A better definition would still encompass time, but rather than prescribing a fixed number of weeks or months or years, would use the term "temporary." A better definition would also add the terms "swift" and "volunteer" to more accurately describe what short-term mission really is.

Short-Term Mission is Temporary

A short-termers' on-field work is intentionally temporary by design. Although long-term career work can be cut short for various reasons, traditional long-term career missionaries tend to view their on-field contribution in primarily one location over the course of their lifetime. Short-termers view their on-field contribution as temporary, fully expecting to return back home and re-engage in whatever primary activity they left behind.

Career missionaries often buy the equivalent of a one-way ticket, because they're not sure when or if or how they'll return back home. Short-term missionaries almost always buy round trip tickets, because they know exactly when they're coming back home.

Temporary is not meant to suggest either good or bad. It is meant merely to help provide understanding of what short-term mission is and isn't, and therefore how it can best be used as an innovative strategy when long-term career strategies are not a workable option.

Short-Term Mission is Swift

Perhaps the greatest asset short-term mission brings to the table is its ability to swiftly, rapidly place missionaries on-field. Traditional career missionaries often spend years in pre-field training. Short-termers can be deployed within just a few weeks or months—and some within just hours.

Certain types of work may require extended training for maximum effectiveness, such as Bible translation or frontier church planting within an unengaged unreached people group. But many types of strategic mission work in certain fields do not require multiple years of preparation. Jesus tells us that many fields are "ripe unto harvest" right now, and simply need laborers—now! Not theologians, not ripened missiologists, not seasoned thinkers—but laborers, people willing to sweat, work hard and do whatever needs to be done. (Remember, Jesus' only requirement for missionary service is empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Everything else—no matter how much sense it makes or how good it sounds—is man's requirement.)

When a field is crying for laborers, it sometimes takes years to form and send career missionary teams. Unfortunately some career teams fall apart during their pre-field preparation, bonding and deputation process. Worse yet, some crumble the first months on-field, producing virtually no kingdom return on the hundreds of thousands of dollars supporters invested in their intended efforts. But in just a few months short-termers can be recruited, trained and sent. And there are times—many times—when the rapid, swift short-term strategy is actually the better financial strategy to employ.

Short-Term Mission Usually Consists of Volunteers

Most short-term missionaries are not paid a salary or wage. They are volunteers who donate their time. Long-term career missionaries receive a salary (a fixed guarantee or raised monthly support). From the United States Internal Revenue Service's perspective, all long-term (paid) missionaries are either employees

or subcontractors, and are taxed accordingly. They're professionals—and not volunteers—by definition.

A paid professional also suggests a certain competence and expertise in the person's place of business or work. Because of more extensive training, long-term career missionaries are often screened and placed because of this expertise. On the other hand, short-termers often do not have the same extensive training, and do not therefore have a professional level of competence with respect to comprehensive missiology. Therefore it is usually correct to define short-term missionaries as non-professional volunteers.

Yes—short-term is also done by paid professionals. But most of the time, short-term mission is done by non-paid, non-professional volunteers.

How Long Has Short-Term Been Around?

Short-term mission strategies have been used as far back as the early biblical times. Moses used a short-term strategy at least twice: Consider the temporary forty-day, twelve-man fact-finding team he swiftly deployed from Kadesh into Canaan (Numbers 13-14); or his temporary five-day, two-man team swiftly deployed—with less than a day's notice—from Shittim to Jericho (Joshua 2). Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Nehemiah, Jonah, Jesus, the Apostle Paul, Philip, Barnabas, Peter, Tychicus, Titus, Apollos, the women, the twelve disciples and the seventy (seventy-two, actually) disciples were also involved in short-term mission strategies that were all temporary, swift and usually done in a non-professional volunteer context. How long has short-term mission has been around? More than three thousand years.

Current Short-Term Mission Trends

With an eye toward bona fide strategic use of short-term mission for world evangelization, practitioners need to note the following four trends affecting the bigger short-term mission picture:

1. Exponential Growth

In 1965 student researcher Thomas Chandler noted only 540 individuals from North America involved in short-term mission. In 1989 an estimate by a Fuller School of World Mission doctoral student put the number at 120,000. Three years later it had more than doubled to 250,000. By 1998 Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA) vice president and former InterVarsity Mission Urbana director John Kyle's research put the figure at 450,000.

In 2003 Peterson, Aeschliman and Sneed estimated at least one million short-termers were being sent out from a globally-sent perspective each year. In 2004, Robert Priest, director of the doctoral program in Intercultural Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, reported he was beginning to locate data suggesting the number could be as high as four million.

Who is sending all these short-termers? In the United States alone, there are currently at least forty thousand sending entities (thirty-five thousand churches, thirty-seven hundred agencies and more than one thousand schools) that do the sending.

Why the explosion of growth? Among the myriad of possible answers lie six plausible explanations over the past six decades—all of which are sociologically immense and therefore outside of any missiological ability to direct or control:

1940s: World War II. Many mission societies began soon after the war ended. There was a flood of energetic, enthusiastic young people coming home from the war. Many had traveled far and wide, seeing devastation in much of the world first hand. For the first time in history we saw relatively young people who had experience in worldwide travel and who now had a global perspective. Combine that with a passion for God's glory among the lost, and it's easy to see why direct hands-on involvement in Christian mission began growing after the war.

1950s: Modern Airplane Travel. The idea of the average citizen flying commercially didn't really take hold until a decade after the war. By the mid 1950s more planes were in the air, air travel was not seen as the exclusive domain of the rich or the military and the cost of a flight was within the financial reach of more citizens. As a direct result, "average" western Christians could now go virtually anywhere in the world with relative ease and speed.

1960s: The Peace Corps. US President John Kennedy launched the Peace Corps in 1961. By 2005, more than 182,000 Americans had become Peace Corps volunteers in one of 138 nations. This government-sanctioned “blessing” to travel abroad, to volunteer time to make a difference in a developing country for a cause greater than one’s self--did this have a positive impact on the growth of Christian short-term missions? I think it’s safe to assume that it did.

1960s–1990s: Rise of Postmodernity. Thanks in part to the growing societal distrust of leaders in the 1960s (due in large part to the confusion and manipulation surrounding such mega-events as the Kennedy assassination and the Vietnam War), young people began fighting stock answers and prodding behind what they were now beginning to perceive as leadership rhetoric and spin. They began demanding that experience and action match what was said. Experience therefore was now being equated with “truth.” The experience-equals-truth equation (which was becoming one of the characteristic hallmarks of emergent postmodern thinking) was further accelerated by the mesmerizing sight/sound/sensory experience now being generated by the film, television and music industries. The impact of these two sociological phenomena on current postmodern Christianity is that it compels its pew-sitting participants into the actual hands-on “experience” of missions.

1990–2000s: The Internet and World Wide Web. Contact with far away places is no longer the domain of the news media or the highly-networked socialite. Average people now easily communicate with missionaries in far away places, making the world seem a much smaller place. As my writing colleague Wayne Sneed notes, “Before the Internet, Joe the missionary was someone we heard about from the pulpit on Sunday nights. Now, going five thousand miles to help Joe my friend (who emails me every week) is revolutionizing Christian mission.”

The Holy Spirit. Rapidly growing numbers alone don’t prove God is behind the flurry of short-term mission growth. Yet the Lord of the harvest cries out to us to pray for laborers, and commands us to go and make disciples. And two thousand years later? With somewhere around 4.8 billion people currently crawling their way along the wide road to hell, only an insane person would refuse to recognize the church’s colossal failure. But because short-term mission allows swift, immediate response by any believer to the action explicitly demanded by the gospel; because short-term allows temporary engagement by Christian people not called, or not yet called, into full-time professional ministry (realistically, that’s the overwhelming majority of the church); and because short-term mission allows lay non-professional volunteers (again, that’s the overwhelming majority of the church) opportunity to perform what God commands of all disciples—regardless of age, gender, race, culture, training, social status, economic status or experience—perhaps short-term mission is a current “tool” the Holy Spirit has launched in order to accelerate completion of the Father’s command.

2. Codified Standards

The missiological validity of short-term mission has been rightly questioned on countless occasions—especially when it pertains to frontier mission work among unengaged and unreached peoples. The anecdotal evidence abounds on both sides of the fence: there are stories of scandal and selfishness; there are stories of success and indelibly changed lives. But until recently, no “standards,” no “best practices,” have existed to help mission strategists separate the short-term wheat from the short-term chaff.

Developed over the course of two years by more than four hundred people from across the United States, the “U.S. Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission” (SOE) was recently launched in October 2003 (www.stmstandards.org). It formalizes the ethical and operating procedures many sending entities believe should be standardized. The SOE helps improve any short-term mission program by mandating periodic training and peer review for sending entity leaders. For the first time in US history, a national code of ethics now exists to help donors, parents, volunteers, churches, field personnel and others to help distinguish effective short-term mission programs from glorified vacations.

3. Agencies No Longer the Only Sending Entity

The number of short-term mission sending agencies is on the rise (around 3,700 US agencies currently send short-term missionaries). Many of these groups are small ma and pa operations that know nothing of the EFMA or IFMA or other similar traditional mission networks. But what they do know is that God called them to send as many short-term groups as they can muster, to help a certain people in a certain country somewhere in the world.

However, these thirty-seven hundred agencies pale in comparison to the thirty-five thousand US churches which do the same. Thousands of people in thousands of churches also believe that God has called them to send their own church teams to help certain people in certain countries somewhere in the world. Increasingly the church sees itself as the direct recipient of the Great Commission, and is beginning to put its local feet to the worldwide task.

Christian schools (colleges, universities, high schools, home schools) are also hearing the Great Commission call—and responding personally. Schools now send thousands of short-termers, often issuing academic credit for the effort. Some of the major school sending entities include Wheaton College, Master's College, Bethany College of Missions, Azusa Pacific University, Messiah College, Vanguard University, John Brown University, Northwestern College (IA), Northwestern College (MN), Bethel University, Trinity International University, Biola University, Taylor University, Point Loma College, Gordon College, Oral Roberts University and others.

Other Christian institutions—none of them chartered or organized for Christian mission—are also beginning to respond personally to the Great Commission. Christian radio stations, campus fellowships, community hospitals and other groups have founding charter documents that state the purpose of the given group, and the purpose was something other than cross-cultural Christian mission. Yet these groups, too, are beginning to send short-term missionaries themselves.

4. Improved Literature

Until recently, very little solid printed literature existed to guide short-term mission practitioners in their work. The little that was available was often self-published and usually provided only anecdotal evidence to support the bias (either for or against) of the given author. Or it was a graduate study so entrenched in the given school's academic requirements that the average practitioner couldn't make use of it (nor could the average practitioner easily get a copy of the study in the first place).

Fortunately we are now entering a season in the short-term mission industry where better editors and known publishers are beginning to release quality books and other material authored with solid content which is directly applicable to the short-term practitioner's needs.

Short-Term Mission In the Future

Should the Lord tarry, the next few years will likely challenge the prevailing mission community at-large to grapple with these three changes:

1. Fields Will Limit their Short-Terms to Proven Groups. Receiving mission fields will begin to recognize the value of short-term groups submitting to the United Kingdom Code of Best Practice or the Canadian Code of Best Practice or the US Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission. As a result, many fields will begin limiting the short-term missionaries they receive to only those who comply with one of these code-setting networks. Receiving fields will therefore have demanded—and can now enforce—a higher quality of short-term mission.

2. Formal, For-Credit Academic Training in STM Methods. Several Christian schools now provide courses in world missions—and many of those provide entire degree programs in some aspect of missiology or Christian cross-cultural study as well. But as of this writing, I know of no credit-granting institution which provides an entire for-credit degree program in short-term mission. But some savvy school administrator somewhere will soon recognize not only the importance of providing for-credit courses, but an actual entire degree program in effective short-term mission methods and strategies. The first school to actually figure this out will have applicants lined up a mile long waiting to get in.

3. New Short-Term Mission Networks Will Bypass Traditional Networks in Attendance and Membership Numbers. Traditional mission networks such as the IFMA and the EFMA—as good and necessary as they are—have plateaued and now struggle to maintain one hundred member mission societies. Unless such groups are able to re-tool their understanding of who the new mission sending entities are, the overwhelming majority of the forty-thousand US-based short-term sending entities won't give them a second thought.

Short-term sending entities are already beginning to band together, completely bypassing the traditional mission networks. The UK Code of Best Practice was launched in 1998 and achieved sixty member "organisations" within its first few years. The US Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission is just two years old (as of this writing) and already has eighty members—and is forecasting membership of more than eight hundred sending entities within the next five years. The National Short-Term Mission Conference (held every January in either California or Florida) draws around three hundred attendees each year, helping to train short-term mission team leaders and improve short-term mission programs.

Older conferences and associations must make radical changes in order to incorporate the newer short-term practitioners into their much-needed spheres of influence. Older conferences and associations have an immense wealth of experience and insight to draw from—all of which is desperately needed by short-term mission practitioners. But history shows an overwhelming refusal for many such older groups to adequately adjust to the changing times. And the result will be newer short-term mission networks which spring up and completely bypass the very groups that could—and should—be helping them.

Conclusion

Short-term mission has been around for a long, long time—at least three thousand years. It has been sometimes composed of sloppy work and selfish agendas. But with or without the help of the older traditional mission networks, the pressure of forty thousand US short-term sending entities and their one million or more short-termers has already created its own standards of best practice, better training and launched networks designed to improve the effectiveness of short-term mission efforts.

Short-term mission can be a bona fide (and perhaps the best?) missiological strategy when the field need is for swift, temporary, non-professional volunteers.

CASE STUDY #1: A SCHOOL

Bethany College of Missions (BCOM), Minnesota, USA

Although recently amended to a much more intensive short-term phase, a core piece of the original four-year curriculum requirements of Bethany College of Mission was short-term mission. Not short-term mission trips. But short-term mission outreaches. Not just one—but two of them prior to graduation.

Between their freshman and sophomore years, all students were sent out in teams (six to twelve students per team) on three-week outreaches around the globe, including many fields where Bethany's career missionaries work. Students didn't waste time just observing missionaries or national people, but engaged hands-on in the work being done by the receiving missionaries and their national hosts. Many of the college faculty were trained to lead these teams. Returning for their sophomore year, students (and the faculty who accompanied them) continued their study of mission and the Bible no longer from a theoretical vacuum, but now from the womb of actual hands-on missionary experience—student and teacher together. One year later, students then spent their entire junior year (nine months) overseas on a second short-term outreach (usually in pairs or much smaller teams). Students tackled the local language, wrestled with the culture, survived its gastrointestinal consequences and at times even battled the ideologies of missiology with the local missionaries. All the while, students remained engaged in hands-on missionary work as determined by their field receiving hosts. Some students had a great nine-month outreach, while others crashed and burned. Returning back home for their senior year, the faculty spent the remaining year applying balm to students' battle scars and working through all the issues encountered while on the field. When students graduated that fourth year, most were ready for some serious kingdom work wherever God sent them in the world.

CASE STUDY #2: A MISSION AGENCY

Youth With A Mission (YWAM), Worldwide

Loren Cunningham launched YWAM in 1960 as an evangelistic outreach program focused on getting youth into short-term mission. Now forty-five years later, YWAM's website lists nearly sixteen thousand full-time staff and more than twenty-five thousand short-termers in more than 149 different nations. Yet when speaking off the record with some YWAM leaders, unofficial estimates run as high as 300,000 or more short-termers per year. YWAM is unquestionably the largest mission sending group in the world—not because of their financial fund raising savvy and ability to pay high buck salaries—but because of their innovative use of short-term missionaries.

In their early years, YWAM's growth didn't really take off until they initiated their DTS (Discipleship Training School). Although it varies from one YWAM base to another, the usual three-month DTS consists of about two months of training living in community (students and staff together) followed by a one-month short-term mission outreach, with everyone trusting the Lord to provide all the financial support needed. DTS training focuses on knowing God, then on making him known, using an extremely high-level of very personal student/teacher interaction involving key teaching topics that result in personal issues resolution and much prayer. DTS students are taught to hear the voice of God—and then obey. What makes YWAM unique is that it is the only missionary organization that has had ministry outreach within every single geopolitical nation in the world. No other missionary society has come remotely close to accomplishing this. But YWAM has, because they've come up with a relatively simple short-term mission system to swiftly and temporarily send volunteers to every corner of the globe.

CASE STUDY #3: A CHURCH **Perimeter Church, Atlanta, Georgia, USA**

Perimeter Church (thirty-five hundred members; five thousand weekly worshippers) began in 1977. Perimeter held its first mission conference in 1979, sent their first short-termer (one person for two years) to Sudan in 1982, and their first short-term team in 1986. Fast forward to 2004, where Perimeter now trains a cadre of church volunteers who in turn train, prepare and debrief the dozens of "GO (Global Outreach) Journey" short-term teams the church sends out each year.

The innovative factor in Perimeter's use of short-term teams is that they work primarily within the 10/40 Window, including many restricted access nations. Each of Perimeter's "GO Journey" teams works with one of Perimeter's national church planting partners, specifically assisting their long-term church-planting efforts. And throughout the pre-field, on-field and into the post-field portions of each short-term outreach, Perimeter leaders are also intentional about helping develop world Christian attitudes and life-change behaviors in each of their short-termers.

Perimeter's short-term teams work well in the "mission frontiers" of this challenging part of the world, because Perimeter has invested (and still continues to re-invest) time and money with their national church planting partners in order to make it work for everyone involved—the senders, the goers and the receivers.

CASE STUDY #4: A CHURCH **Southeast Christian Church, Louisville, Kentucky, USA**

SECC began in 1965, growing in less than forty years to more than seventeen thousand weekly worshippers. SECC's first short-term mission was a large team of sixty people (too big, says Global Missions minister Brian Wright) to Jamaica in 1990. In 2002, SECC sent fifty-seven short-term teams—more than 750 SECC members—to twenty different nations.

What makes SECC's short-term mission outreaches innovative and effective are two items: their strategic and accountable link to the field; and their three-level "line upon line, precept upon precept" methodologies. SECC's "Great Adventure" mission outreaches go only to SECC-supported partners (strategic link to the field), and are planned within three levels:

- (a) Exploration (closer, easier, less costly, about five days);
- (b) Excursion (outside the U.S., more cross-culture, about 10 days); and
- (c) Expedition (culturally and geographically far away, two weeks or longer).

CASE STUDY #5: A RADIO STATION **KTIS AM/FM, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA**

Started in 1949 when Billy Graham was president of Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota, KTIS has grown to more than 250,000 weekly listeners in the central Minnesota and western Wisconsin area. Additionally, their SkyLight Network now feeds programming to more than 250 Christian media affiliates around the United States. KTIS currently places in the top five of one of the highly competitive "morning drive" Twin Cities markets which consists of dozens of well-financed secular stations.

In the late 1990s, Music & Promotions director Dan Wynia wound up in Belize for a few days—and came back to the station with an unquenchable burden to help ramp up evangelistic broadcast efforts in Belize. KTIS has since provided money, equipment and technical expertise on several occasions—most of that delivered through short-term efforts.

More recently (2003 and 2004), KTIS partnered with my organization, STEM Ministries. After selecting six of their own people, we went live on-air and recruited another two dozen people to form a team of thirty short-term missionaries (more than seventy listeners made preliminary application for this team). These “average listeners” were trained and joined the KTIS staff to provide a three-day media seminar for Christian broadcasters in Belize, some on-site technical trouble shooting, prayerwalking for the peoples of Belize, some construction and building efforts and ministry to HIV-infected prisoners.

KTIS discovered an innovative way to put international feet to the Gospel they broadcast locally every day. They discovered how to help transform passive listeners into active missionaries. Their secret? Short-term mission.

Editor’s note: For Standards of Excellence in short-term missions, go to www.stmstandards.org/

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Bonding through Short-Term Mission: A Lifeline to the Unreached

By *Chris Leake*

Short-term mission has missed the point of the Great Commission. Something hundreds of thousands of Christians are doing every year with the term “mission” in its title has very little to do with the Mission—making disciples of all nations. The Greek for “all nations” in Matthew 28:19 is *ta ethne*; therefore, Jesus commanded us to make disciples of every ethnic group on the face of the earth. According to the Joshua Project, over 6,700 ethnic (people) groups are still unreached with the gospel, and the combined population of these groups is 2.5 billion, or nearly forty percent of the world’s population.¹

Despite this overwhelming need, only twenty-six percent of all long-term missionaries are dedicating their efforts to taking the gospel to these forty percent who have no opportunity to hear it.² Short-term mission, with a proper focus, can play a pivotal role in mobilizing more Christians to fill the tremendous gap in Great Commission labor.

Bonding and Short-term Missions

Bonding is a crucial issue presently hindering short-term missions (STM) from realizing its Commission-catalyzing potential. In *Bonding, and the Missionary Task*, Thomas and Elizabeth Brewster share how God prepares newborns to develop a deep bond with their parents during a heightened state of awareness upon entering the world.³ Interestingly, researchers have noted newborn humans and animals will bond with whomever/whatever is present in the short period of time following birth—even with a surrogate parent of another species. The Brewsters draw a parallel between this phenomenon and missions, arguing the first couple of weeks a missionary spends in a foreign country represents an important bonding period. If missionaries spend this time immersed in the new culture and language, they embrace their new home and establish strong relationships with nationals. Conversely, the worker who arrives on the field and is immediately ushered into a mission compound bonds with the expatriate missionary community, rather than with the local culture. This missionary usually struggles adapting culturally, is not as fruitful in ministry and has trouble staying on the field.

Short-term mission involves a similar bonding scenario. It takes people who are willing and eager to follow God's call and serve in missions and throws them into their first experience on the field. This becomes the bonding period. During this critical initial plunge, the bright-eyed participant undergoes a period of extreme receptivity to the leading of God.

Perhaps you know people who have made significant decisions, commitments or changes in life direction as a result of STM participation. But with what are they bonding, and what types of commitments will they make as a result? Few will deny the role of STM in mobilizing long-term mission laborers.⁴ Ask any full-time, foreign missionary if his or her first time on the mission field was during STM involvement, and chances are the answer will be yes. Is it possible, though, that the way we are doing STM is one of the reasons we are seeing so few long-term laborers going to the most unreached areas of the world? If we do not bring short-termers into contact with the unreached and teach them this need, they will not bond with the unreached.

Working on the Hearts of Short-term Missionaries

I am a field missionary who has been involved in about twenty-five mission trips. Since I first began going on short-term mission trips in high school I have felt God using them to mold me. I was prepared to do anything for God, but during those first years I never gave a passing thought to cross-cultural ministry—even after three trips to foreign countries. In my high school reasoning, it made more sense to serve Jesus at home, where I already spoke the language and knew the culture. And to my relief, no one challenged this perception. It was not until my sixth mission trip that I heard that although God had a heart to reach every ethnic group, very few people were going to the 6,700-plus groups with no access to the gospel. To take people as spiritually receptive as some short-termers are during short-term mission trips and not connect them to the 2.5 billion souls who have not heard about Jesus is a crime. Should not all first-time mission trip participants come away understanding the plight of the unreached and the role they can play in reaching these least-reached people? We need to give them the opportunity to bond with the greatest evangelistic need in the world.

We, as mission and sending organizations, need to consider taking more mission trips to unreached people groups. If we give short-termers the opportunity to stay in the homes of the unreached, eat the food they eat and learn their language and culture, they may better understand the long-term, relational nature of making disciples of the nations. More STM participants may then decide they could live and serve among the unreached full-time.

Short-term Missions and Unreached People Groups

I live in southern Mexico, a place which is home to dozens of unreached indigenous people groups. At Global Frontier Missions we host mission teams throughout the year who come and serve these people groups. Many of the teams adopt unreached people groups, pray for them regularly and build long-term relationships with members of those groups. Another example of STM to the unreached is one trip some fellow missionaries took to North Africa. While there they prayed, trekked among Berber villages and stayed in Berber homes. Taking short-termers to sensitive, unreached areas requires thorough training and careful management of their expectations. Indeed, there is great difficulty in expectation management with Western-minded teams. They will not show the JESUS film to crowds of people, they cannot hand out tracts door-to-door and they may not see anyone saved. But they can go, they can build friendships and they can pray. Most importantly, they will come to understand that millions of people have no opportunity to hear of Jesus and that reaching these people is a long-term project.

The world's current urbanization trend provides another opportunity for STM among ethnic groups with no Christian witness.⁵ Migration patterns make it possible to reach the unreached in large cities of North America, Europe, Australia and other urban centers. There are strong, indigenous churches in southern Mexico that were planted by native leaders who accepted Christ while working in the United States or Canada. Organize a group to go to Toronto (Canada), Minneapolis (USA), Barcelona or Sydney and befriend Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus. Prior to going, bring in someone who understands the culture of the target group in order to prepare your team for relational ministry. Develop a long-term partnership with someone who lives and works among the people group with which you hope to share the gospel. Model Great Commission Christianity through STM—reaching unreached nations and discipling them.

Mobilizing Short-term Missionaries to the Least-reached Areas

Missionaries, mobilizers, pastors and leaders of STM need to unabashedly present God's call and share the

incredible need of the 2.5 billion unreached during every STM effort. We do a tremendous disservice to the cause of the Great Commission when we allow receptive people to participate in STM without challenging them to dedicate their lives to reaching those who presently have no chance of hearing the gospel. We must cast a vision for long-term involvement.

Paul Borthwick recently summed up the issue at the National [USA] Short-Term Mission Conference: "If short-term missions were the key to transforming societies, Tijuana should be the most Christian place on earth, with Ensenada, Mexicali, and Haiti not far behind."⁶ The world will not be reached if no one serves long term. Jesus became one of us and lived among us in order to reach us. He did not simply take a two-week trip down from heaven. Nor did he simply send John the Baptist a check for a four-wheel-drive camel so John could preach repentance in remote villages. Why do we think we can reach the nations this way? If we cannot, why do we give our short-termers the impression this is possible?

Believers typically undergo a revolution of mission-mindedness on their first mission trip; too often, however, when they want to know how they can further help, we tell them we are praying for funds for a new vehicle or building. Is this the best we can do? Did Jesus say, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send more checks in the mail?" Such an approach may actually deter otherwise-willing people from long-term service on the field by convincing them the best thing they can do is go home, take more mission trips and send money. I am not saying buildings, vehicles or giving are wrong. Nor am I criticizing the vital role of the sender or of the other wonderful callings on the home front. Indeed, we need all of these. We just need to make sure we are challenging people to go where the gospel is unavailable. We need to remember that three missionaries for every one million Muslims cannot complete the Great Commission with any amount of money.⁷

Importance of Short-term Missions in the Great Commission

For the field missionaries who wrote off STM long ago, will you reconsider how short-termers might fit into the big picture? True, it is impossible for some in sensitive areas to host any kind of team, but could you recruit an apprentice to serve alongside you for a few weeks, months or even years? How wonderful if God were to use you in the life of this "Timothy" to instill in him or her a burden for the unreached.

When STM participants are in the critical bonding stage, let us preach Malachi 1:11, Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 24:14, Romans 10:14,15, and Revelation 7:9,10. Let us challenge them to the hardest, most sacrificial calls possible – the ones that require forfeiting numerous comforts and possibly their lives for the Lord's sake. God will direct their paths, but woe to us if we do not teach from scripture God's heart for the nations, present the needs of the unreached and challenge short-termers to dedicate their lives to going to those who have not heard of Jesus. Woe to us involved with STM if our participants do not gain a consuming burden for the nations that drives them to pray, give, go and mobilize. May we never stand before God and say, "Everyone got really fired up on our mission trips, but we never thought to mention the whole unreached people thing."

Will we someday offer him long-term fruit, or will we present him with a bunch of spiritual highs achieved on self-serving mission trips? We cannot afford to miss the critical bonding opportunity STM provides.

Endnotes

1. www.joshuaproject.net/
2. Winter, Ralph D. and Koch, Bruce A. 1999. "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge." Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. 3rd ed. Carlisle, United Kingdom: Paternoster. p. 519.
3. Brewster, E. Thomas and Elizabeth S. 1982. Bonding, And The Missionary Task. Pasadena, California, USA: Lingua House.

For the purpose of this article, I am defining long-term missions as a minimum four-year term. STM has traditionally been defined as anything less than a four-year term, but in this article I primarily have in mind mission trips of the one- or two-week to several-month variety. For a study conducted by Short-Term Evangelical Missions Ministries (STEM Ministries) of the ability of STM to produce long-term missionaries, see the following work:

4. McDonough, Daniel P. and Roger P. Peterson. 1999. Can Short-Term Mission Really Create Long-Term Missionaries? Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA: STEM Press.
5. Greenway, Roger S. 1999. "Finishing the Task: The Challenge of the Cities." Perspectives on the World Christian

Movement: A Reader. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. 3rd ed. Carlisle, United Kingdom: Paternoster. 553-58.

6. Talk given during the first plenary session of the 2006 National Short-Term Mission Conference, 19-22 January, Los Angeles, California, USA.

7. www.svm2.citymaker.com/page/page/1940803.htm

Chris Leake serves with *Global Frontier Missions*, www.globalfrontiermissions.com, in Oaxaca, Mexico, which exists to reach the unreached and mobilize Christians to do the same. His role includes church planting efforts and coordinating short-term mission teams.

The Springboard of Short-term Missions

By Warren Janzen

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was obvious by the suction cups that they were octopus tentacles. It was also obvious by the delight with which the pastor's wife served them (cut up, in a large bowl, with chop sticks perched on the side) that I too was supposed to enjoy them. They looked raw, two-toned pinkish and like they would get stuck to the inside of my throat. Just then I remembered the time-tested wisdom of a friend: "When you get into a tricky situation, just think what a great story it will make!" They didn't stick to my throat, the pastor's wife was delighted to see me eat the entire bowlful and it was one more experience which helped me understand that I could adjust to a culture dissimilar to my own.

My short-term assignment in Osaka, Japan opened up for me the breadth of God's creation. I was fascinated by the difference in the people and the culture. As I had to depend on God in various situations, I came to experience his power and leading in my own life. As I drew closer to God's heart through his word, prayer, music and the experience of his creation, I felt my own heart propelled toward those whom he loves and for whom Jesus died. I was drawn toward those who had not yet heard the gospel.

At the very same time God was working in the heart of a young woman who was on a short-term assignment in a remote mission hospital in the mountains of western Nepal. Her life was changed through her service to people who often had to walk long distances to reach the clinic.

We both saw firsthand what God was doing in other countries. We both experienced the provision, the power and the protection of God in a variety of situations. Most of all, we saw the heart of God for his creation, and we bonded with that heart. God used these experiences to bring Dorothy, my wife, and I together and eventually to bring us to Japan where we served for over fifteen years with SEND International, www.send.org. Our experiences are not unusual. Over eighty percent of the SEND career members have had short-term experience. Their time overseas captured their hearts and refocused their minds.

Establishing a Ministry

In addition to the impact these trips have on individual missionaries, we have also seen a significant impact on whole ministries overseas. We've seen the investment of short-term teams as they establish a ministry. In Macedonia for example, Eric led a succession of short-term teams into this region. Through the teams, contacts were made, new ministries were opened and the first church planting work was established. Some of those short-term workers eventually returned as career members to form the core of our team there.

Growing a Ministry

We've seen the investment of short-term teams grow a ministry. Rick had a passion to reach troubled youth. With only a few resources (but much faith!), he began connecting with kids in western Russia. Youth meetings and summer camps provided great opportunities for evangelism and discipleship. Summer teams began flowing into western Russia, and people saw firsthand what God was doing among the youth of this area. These short-termers returned to North America changed. Having an expanded vision of what God was doing and of what he could do through them, some have returned for multiple short-term trips while others have committed the rest of their careers to reaching these troubled youth. This ministry has now expanded into four cities and includes a national staff of eleven people, most of whom came to Christ through this ministry and were discipled by Rick. We also have a small business and radio outreach.

Recently we've established a growing SEND church planting team. A drug and alcohol recovery center has been opened and includes a leadership training course where young men are mentored to be leaders in their community, sharing the life-changing work of Jesus in their lives with others. With new team members being added, we have a vision to see this type of ministry expanded across Russia.

The Spin-off of Ministry

We've seen the investment of short-term teams spin off completely new ministries. Conversations with officials in Albania opened the door in a country where communism had stifled initiatives and developed habits that were hurting the country. These officials were asking for farmers from North America to come on short-term teams and teach Albanian farmers to run independent and productive farms. For a number of years SEND led teams of farmers into Albania to share their insights and practices. Farmers sharing with farmers broke down barriers and allowed for more open communication. As this work grew, these men from North America established their own organization to continue the project. Godly farmers discovered through short-term opportunities that God could use even their well-developed skills to be a platform for sharing the gospel in another country.

For all the above people, the world opened up through a short-term trip, a trip where God bonded their hearts with his own. These short-term experiences were not an end in themselves, but acted as springboards to the rest of their lives. It began with a series of experiences where they stepped out in faith and saw God's heart for his creation.

There is a Chinese proverb that tells of a frog in a well. A farmer comes by and asks the frog, "How big is the sky?" The frog looks up through the top of the well and, pointing, says "That big." The farmer lowers a bucket, brings the frog out of the well, places him on the ground and then asks, "How big is the sky?" The frog is amazed as it looks from horizon to horizon. Stretching its front legs wide it responds, "This big!"

My short-term experience brought me out of my well and catapulted me into the vastness of God's heart. It took me from what I knew to the boundless reaches of God's creation. I found that the deeper I experienced him through the ups and downs of living overseas, the more I was propelled toward those he loves and for whom he died. My short-term experience became a spring board to a life invested in seeing changed hearts and changed communities among the least reached. Where will your short-term trip take you?

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Urbana and Short-term Missions

By Kristine Whitnable

Since its beginning in 1946, Urbana, InterVarsity's triennial student North American missions convention, has challenged delegates to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ and join in God's mission of bringing the gospel to the whole world. Stacy Woods, first president of InterVarsity, said in 1951, "To me one of the greatest motives in this whole matter of foreign missions is ordinary everyday obedience to our sovereign Lord and Master."

At Urbana, students have listened to God's call on their lives and responded. However, over the decades, the nature of their commitments have changed. Of the seven hundred students who attended the first convention in Toronto in 1946, nine went out to spend their lives in Afghanistan as career missionaries. Many others lived out life-long commitments in service around the world. In the 1970s the missionary agencies at Urbana were asking students to commit to two years overseas with the assumption that they would decide whether or not to make a lifetime commitment to the foreign mission field. At Urbana 03, many mission agencies offered short-term experiences of one to two weeks.

General Trends in Short-term Missions

With faster communication, easier travel and a more mobile population, the very nature of short-term

missions has changed. Rather than being sent by mission agencies, many individuals go overseas with groups organized through local churches. These churches often have little expectation that the participants will return to the mission field for a lifetime of service. According to Abram Huyser Honig, "Between one million and four million North American Christians reportedly participated in STMs [short-term missions] in 2003, and the number keeps rising."

The goals and results of these experiences differ from program to program and person to person. Some assume that the goal of STMs is to change the life of the person sent overseas. For instance, people going overseas may seek to simply develop a broader view of God's mission and their role in it. Robert Priest and Terry Dischinger studied seminary students and found that experience in a well-organized short-term mission did change the ethnocentricity of the participants. They had more positive feelings toward the ethnic group visited during the project.

On the other hand, Kurt Ver Beek, professor of sociology and Third World development at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, surveyed 205 people involved in a short-term project: 127 North Americans who went to Honduras to rebuild houses devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and seventy-eight Hondurans who had their homes rebuilt. The study found that neither group had experienced notable life changes. While the participants reported that they gave more to missions and would like to keep in touch with the people they met in Honduras, the church mission budget was not significantly increased and letters or emails were not sent.

Another goal of STMs might be to benefit those being served by improving their physical situation and by sharing the gospel. Judgment differs as to how well this goal is met by the short-term missionary project. According to Jo Ann Van Engen, "Short-term missions groups almost always do work that could usually be done (and done better) by the people of the country they visit."

However, Erik Lawrence, the short-term coordinator for Africa Inland Mission (AIM), sees benefits in sending short-term missionaries to the field. "Most of the missionaries who serve long-term with AIM went on a short-term trip prior to committing their lives fully to serving as foreign missionaries. In this way, it could be said that the greatest benefit to the people we serve is that even though a person may come and work for a few weeks and go home, they sometimes commit to returning to Africa and give many years serving the people there."

Making the Most of Short-term Mission Trips

InterVarsity offers students short-term opportunities both in the United States and abroad. These programs are often organized to benefit those being served. For instance, urban projects offer tutoring to children in American cities and many of the global mission projects involve teaching English to students overseas. However, the thrust of the programs echo the basic message of Urbana, namely, submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ and obedience to his commands in one's life. Studies have shown that students who have participated in these short-term projects are changed. After graduation, ten percent of the participants purchased a home in the inner city and nearly twenty percent began attending a church where the congregation was primarily a different ethnicity. Of those who traveled overseas on an InterVarsity global project, one-third changed their major in college in preparation to serve overseas after graduation.

In a session entitled "What If I Don't Go Overseas?" at Urbana 73, Dr. Donald Curry spoke about what he learned on his short-term missions trip. He repeated the message of Urbana, challenging students to yield to the claim of Jesus Christ on their lives.

After graduating from medical school, Dr. Curry worked in a mission hospital in rural India for twelve weeks. He was motivated by a desire to be more like Jesus and thought that he could be a more godly Christian in an overseas setting. However, during his time in India, Dr. Curry discovered that "in rural India, just as much as in urban Canada, lay the potential for living a dull, humdrum Christian life, one dictated by the norms of the society."

Dr. Curry spoke about the parable of the master giving talents to his servants to be invested and the profit returned to him (Matthew 25:14-30). Dr. Curry told the Urbana audience that he saw three lessons in the story for those who would be obedient to God's command to declare the gospel to the outermost parts of the earth.

"In this parable, Christ was speaking to me. I was one of the servants," he said. "Three things struck me as I considered the analogy. The first was that I have been given talents to invest, whether I feel particularly gifted or not. All three servants were given something. I cannot use the excuse that in Jesus Christ's Great Commission I have nothing to offer, so I will sit on the sidelines and let my pastor or the missionaries that my church sends out do the work. If I have made a commitment to Jesus Christ, I have been given a role to play; I have been given a talent to invest for his glory."

"Second," he continued, "I noticed that faithful investment and not ability was rewarded; both servants that invested were given similar rewards. The Lord is not calling me to be successful in this world, though this may come, but to be faithful. Third, it seems from the parable that the surest way to lose everything is not to invest, not to risk what I have been given."

Dr. Curry suggested several areas where we are asked to take risks for the sake of the gospel. He challenged Urbana delegates to allow themselves "to get into stretching experiences. By this I mean situations where you do not feel entirely secure in your ability to control the outcome." He admonished them that, "unless we are willing to risk financially now, the chances are good that we never will." He concluded by telling the delegates that they should be willing to gamble in relationships, "allowing others to know you as a person at the risk of their rejection."

Urbana continues to declare the message of submission to God's purposes in a person's life. Jim Tebbe, InterVarsity vice president of missions and director of Urbana 06, makes this clear. "All of us in missions know that short-term missions are with us to stay," Tebbe says. "Nevertheless I would argue that there should be no such thing as a short-term missionary. People may go to another country for a limited period of time but God calls them to stay involved with his purposes in the world for the rest of their lives. It is not just going but also through prayer, staying in touch, giving and support of others who go that all of us can continue to be part of God's mission. Short-term implies that you stop doing it when the limited time is over. A missions trip should be just the very beginning."

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Developing Relationships in Short-term Missions

By Ryan Brown

Irecently received a bad haircut. I had a feeling it was going to be a bad haircut when halfway through, the stylist stopped and stared at me with a concerned look on her face. She said, "You know what? I'm not going to charge you for this."

In the past, when it has been time to get a haircut, I have typically chosen the first available stylist at the cheapest barbershop I could find. In light of this recent experience, however, and in anticipation of the photos that will be taken at my upcoming wedding, my fiancé has encouraged me to be a bit more selective in finding a stylist.

You might ask, "What does any of this have to do with short-term missions?" The answer is that whether concerning haircuts or short-term missions, relationship has a cost.

I can certainly see the value in having one particular person cut my hair. In time, this stylist would become familiar with my preferences. He or she would know what I liked and expected. The problem is not in recognizing the value in the relationship with a new hairstylist. The problem is that a haircut now requires a lot more work: making appointments, scheduling times, etc. It's one thing to value relationship; it's another to actually pay the cost of relationship.

The same could be said for short-term missions. We all want our short-term mission trip to have a long-term impact, but how many of us are really willing to pay the price?

I remember my very first short-term mission trip. My friends and I had heard the rallying call of the Great Commission to "go" and so we went with great passion and conviction. My well-intentioned youth pastor

loaded us up in a rented van and we headed to Mexico to paint the walls of a church. During the day we painted the church while locals from the community watched from a distance. During the evening we held a service. I had a blast with my friends from the youth group that week, but in retrospect I can't help but wonder if we had missed out on a tremendous opportunity. I do not remember the name of the community we went to or the names of any of the people we met. My fear is that this anonymous community has no memory of us either. My fear is that the only testament to our time in Mexico is the church walls that are now in dire need of a new paint job.

In reflecting upon this first mission trip, I can't help but wonder what could have happened if rather than simply going and then returning, we had made an effort to stay in contact with that small church. What if, rather than us painting the walls as members of the community watched from a distance, we painted alongside these community members and served them as they refurbished their church building? What if we had committed to praying for them and they had committed to praying for us? What if we had committed to returning a year later to again serve the community and the church body there? What if during the year prior to a second trip, we had engaged our church and community and challenged them with ways they could also get involved? What if, rather than focusing exclusively on the "go" part of the Great Commission, we had paid attention to the whole commandment to "go and make disciples"?

While going is a good starting point, it's simply not enough. As Christians, we've been called to go and make disciples – a much higher cost of relationship. At Food for the Hungry (FH, www.fh.org), we believe the short-term mission trip offers a unique opportunity to speak into three types of relationships: (1) the relationship with the receiving culture, (2) the relationships with fellow team members and (3) the relationship with the sending church, churches or individuals.

Relationship with the Receiving Culture

In viewing the relationship with the receiving culture, we stress the importance of focusing on relationships in the local community. For most team members, there will be a strong desire to focus on the task or project rather than the people encountered along the way. In the case of my first mission trip, our youth group focused on painting the walls of the church rather than on the community members who watched from a distance. How much more impact would the trip had if instead we simply laughed with them and taken breaks to play with the kids, even if it meant the community had to finish painting the church after we left?

Luis Sena, a colleague of mine who was born in the Dominican Republic (DR) and has headed up the work for FH in the DR for years, recently told me why he stresses the importance of relationship over task to the teams we send him. Like nearly all countries, Luis states that in his country there is a vast divide between the "haves" and the "have nots." When the impoverished in the community see this vast divide and realize that the affluent are making no attempt to bridge it, the poor members of the community feel they are inherently unlovable. In contrast, those who come on a short-term mission trip are often viewed as affluent. When we come into these communities, play with their kids and generally display the love of Christ, it makes it easier for many in these impoverished communities to believe that they are lovable and that there is a God who loves them. In many ways, Luis's observation seems to be the flipside of the idea expressed by the Apostle John when he states, "If we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we have not seen?" (1 John 4:20).

Relationships within the Team

In viewing the relationships within the team, it is important to recognize that transformation does not begin and end during the time in-country. Before a team ever steps foot on foreign soil, FH facilitates study and worship time together so that team members begin investing in each other and understanding more fully the ministry they are joining together. When they return, we encourage ongoing accountability among team members so that the trip acts as a turning point in their lives for ongoing future ministry.

Relationship with the Sending Church

The role that a short-term mission trip can play in transforming the local church is rarely fully explored. For most of us, our understanding of God has been limited by our experience of God. If our experience of God has been limited to Sunday morning services, a weekly small group and fellowship within a community of believers amazingly similar to us, our understanding of God may end up very narrow. For many Christians, this type of routine will be the totality of their Christian experience.

I recently had the opportunity to travel with a small group to Ethiopia. One of the group members was not a Christian. Upon returning home, he told friends and families that he "saw God" while in Ethiopia. It's amazing and paradoxical that the creator of heaven and earth would choose to reveal himself through hurt and need; however, in the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus states, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). Challenging team members to be a voice or advocate for the hurting and needy may very well transform the sending church or community.

Recently, upon returning from Rwanda, a group I work with gave a presentation in their church and conveyed to the congregation what the experience meant to them. A group of older ladies from the church was so moved that they organized an auction that raised several thousand dollars for the community in Rwanda. Though these older ladies may never step foot on African soil, they were still transformed. According to the above passage in Matthew, these ladies raised several thousand dollars for Christ.

Unfortunately, most of us lead lives which seem to be ruled by the tyranny of the urgent--to the great neglect of deep and lasting relationship. Though we understand the importance and value of relationship, we often sacrifice it on the altar of busyness.

While I firmly believe that God used my first mission trip to Mexico, I also believe we missed some tremendous opportunities to forge relationships and see a greater, further reaching work being done. While pursuing the relationship with that small church in Mexico would have required an additional investment of time and resources, I wonder how the community in Mexico, my youth group, my church and even my own life might have looked different had we done just that.

Ryan Brown oversees the Short-term Team Ministry at Food for the Hungry (www.fh.org/main_teams) which sends over sixty teams each year to thirteen different countries.

Eight Weeks to Change Your Life

By **Anne Marie Fields**

What if eight weeks actually could change your life? When you are 5-years-old, you can already tell people what you want to be when you grow up. In high school, although you may not know what you will study in college, you have already picked your secondary school. By the time you've finished a year of college, your life is set in one direction. Right?

Wrong. In a world where we are simultaneously told to "stop and smell the roses" and that "the world doesn't wait for us," we have to decide what is most important. We must ask ourselves if we are missing something in all our rushing around. We must honestly ask ourselves that if God were to call us to do something for him, would we hear? Would we act?

Melissa, a short-term missionary with the Latin America Mission (LAM), was finishing her second year of college and looking for an internship. She knew what she wanted in life, and was taking all the right steps to get there. Then God whispered to her about what he wanted for her life. Melissa decided to attend InterVarsity Christian Fellowship's World Missions Conference, "Urbana 2003." While attending a seminar by Dr. David Befus, president of LAM, God planted a seed in Melissa's heart. The following summer, Melissa participated in Spearhead, an eight-week program where college-aged participants serve in a local church or Christian ministry, live with a host family, take intensive Spanish classes and share their faith. I recently had a chance to ask Melissa about her experience in short-term missions, and how God led her to Siguatepeque, Honduras.

Q: What has brought you to Honduras?

A: In October 2003, I was interviewing with a top company for a summer internship position. I blew the interview within the first three minutes. I couldn't believe it; I didn't understand what happened. That December I went to Urbana and attended Dr. Befus' seminar. His message really hit home. There was something about this opportunity that encompassed everything I was concerned about: what I was studying, what I was passionate about, what little Spanish background I had at the time, but most importantly, my faith.

So I kept the [idea of short-term missions] in the back of my mind. The spring semester rolled around and I was thinking to myself, "I really need an internship; it will help me get a job when I graduate." So I interviewed again. This time I aced my first interview. They offered me a summer internship. I was thrilled, but at the back of my mind, I thought about the opportunity to go on a short-term mission trip to Honduras. As I prayed about it, I felt God asking me to take a step of faith. There were many issues in going to Honduras. I'd have to leave it in God's hands. For me it was one of two choices: take a step of faith or take the easy route where everything was already figured out. I weighed the options, talked with others and prayed. I knew that God was calling me to take a step of faith.

Q: As you adjust to life in Honduras, how do you see yourself in relation to the world? Has your perspective changed from when you lived in the United States?

A: An important question to ask is: How do others here see me and how does that impact me? Through conversations with friends, comments I have heard and observations I have made, I have realized that I am viewed differently because of the color of my hair and my skin tone, both of which for many symbolizes opportunity and wealth. This realization has greatly challenged me and changed my perspective of myself in relation to the world. My perspective has changed from a concept of having to a concept of serving.

Q: Now that you have lived in Honduras for eight months, do you feel inclined to stay, or are you eager to leave?

A: The pastor of my church was preaching about poverty on Christmas Day. He talked about different types of poverty, but it was the last one that really hit home, it was poverty by choice. Poverty is a real thing here; it's the norm. Naturally I asked myself, "Poverty by choice? Why would anyone want to be poor by choice?" The pastor went on to talk about everything that Jesus had in heaven . . . streets of gold, a throne, angels who sang of his praises and his holiness day and night. But Jesus' love is larger than comfort and splendor. He left everything to come to earth, amongst the dirt floor houses, the streets filled with trash, the crops growing on rocky mountain sides, the broken hearts and the broken homes. He chose to leave everything he had to show his love to each one of us. He did this even though we were covered in sin and therefore separated from God.

If Jesus could leave everything he had to demonstrate his love for us, by his strength I want to follow his lead. I want to serve him with everything I have, so that others may have and experience God's love for them.

Q: What do you love most about your life in Honduras? What do you like least?

A: The thing I love most are my friends who are always quick to give a hug, to lend a listening ear or to pray with me. I have had the privilege of getting to know their families and to learn more about who they are. This is invaluable.

The thing I like the least is losing my independence. In the United States, it's easy to travel wherever you want, at any time of the day, in your own personal means of transportation. Here, that's not possible. Other times, losing your independence may take the form of conforming to cultural norms. One example is that the women in my church wear a head covering to the communion service. After several weeks I realized that whether or not I agreed with them on the issue, the more important thing was to follow Christ's lead and to participate in communion.

Q: What is your greatest social, economic or spiritual concern for Hondurans?

A: My biggest concern for Hondurans is the lack of hope in the culture and in the people. This is evident in the country's high unemployment rate. There is a widespread inability to pay for necessities. The lack of hope can also be seen in the large numbers of people who move to the United States each year--illegally. It is also manifested socially, especially in the family. Too often parents do not demonstrate love for their children. It comes out in the workplace as well. If someone has a great idea, the rest of the group is quick to dismiss it. They don't want something new or unknown. And they don't want to see others succeed. These attitudes directly influence the people's view of spirituality. If their jobs, their families and their government have failed them, who is God that he won't fail them as well? But God has promised us a hope and a joy that only he can give. Those who do believe in Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior know the joy that God has given. It's real and it's life changing.

Giving donations, training sessions or technology will not fully advance one's standard of living or the

economic state of the country. What we need to focus on is transformational development, addressing one's economic, social and spiritual needs by realizing that our true identity is in God.

Anne Marie Fields serves with Latin America Mission (LAM, www.lam.org).

PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

Ten Suggestions for Short-Term Mission Workers

By Justin Long

The 2001 edition of *Operation World* noted **200,000 long-term missionaries in 2,900 agencies (among Protestants, Anglicans and Independents;** *Operation World* doesn't survey Catholic or Orthodox missionaries). About 97,000 were deployed as foreign missionaries, and 104,000 were deployed within their country in cross-cultural situations.

This labor force has been globalized: the top missionary-sending nation is still the United States, but South Korea is now second. The sending forces by region are:

- Africa, 12,400 home and 3,100 abroad;
- Asia, 69,000 home and 13,600 abroad;
- Europe, 22,800 home and 16,000 abroad;
- Latin America, 10,100 home and 3,800 abroad;
- North America, 71,000 home and 50,000 abroad;
- Pacific, 9,400 home and 3,500 abroad.

(There are also additional workers in sensitive areas that are not categorized into the numbers above.)

There are numerous partnerships around the world dedicated to recruiting and deploying workers: COMIBAM, MANI, CAPRO, IMA, PMA, STAMP and PJRN, among others. When we talk about "long-term, cross-cultural workers" we might mean Korean, Chinese, Indian, Nigerian or Brazilian workers. Indeed, if we were to look at workers in cross-cultural settings within their own country (not just those sent to other countries), India might very well be the top mission-sending country even though most of its workers remain within its borders.

The reality, however, is that although 200,000 missionaries sounds like a lot, this number is really not that large. With 3.6 million Protestant/Independent churches worldwide, the ratio is about one missionary per eighteen churches worldwide. (There are of course regional differences: Africa sends one missionary per forty-eight churches; North America sends one missionary per seven churches). Moreover, about ninety percent of these 200,000 workers are deployed in open, unrestricted areas. This means that less than ten percent work in the closed areas of the world.

There are more short-term workers being sent out each year--even to the unreached world. Although short-term work can be very helpful, there are also many pitfalls. Short-term workers often cannot function effectively without the support of long-term workers. They may take a long time to both recover from culture shock and be able to contribute effectively while they are on the field. They often do not know the language and cannot relate deeply to most locals. Because short-term workers often do not understand the relationships between the locals and the long-term workers, there is the risk of damaging those hard-fought, well-earned relationships. It may also take longer for short-term workers to appreciate a culture's strengths, which from their view may be perceived as weaknesses. They can often fail to understand that ministry in Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist areas is very different from ministry among the nonreligious, atheists or Christians of a different tradition.

Ten Commandments for Short-term Workers

Because there are so many short-term mission teams going into places with great cultural diversity, it

is important to equip these teams for their travels and ministry. Here are my "Ten Commandments" for short-term workers.¹

1. Do not put anything before God. Do not push your organization, denomination or church as the greatest in the world. Do not make comparisons. In restricted-access nations, the scarcity of workers often leads to partnerships you would not often think possible. Do not automatically assume these partnerships are bad. Go as a servant to the local workers.

2. Do not introduce new concepts, ideas or doctrines that take away from the work of locals. You are only going to be there for a short time. Lift up the local work wherever possible. Realize you are not likely to achieve in a few days what locals have not achieved in years. You are part of a process; you are sowing seed. Ask how you can best serve those who are coming after you.

3. Live a pure life as a witness for Christ. Watch what you say and do. You are in a different culture and you may find temptations in unexpected places.

4. Honor times of rest and worship. Be sure to keep fellowship with the rest of your team. Do not let anything divide you. Remember stress and culture shock can bring out the worst in people--including you. Be open, transparent, full of grace and forgiving.

5. Honor the local workers, so that you will stay long in the land where you are serving. Security is often a big concern in restricted-access countries. Obey any restrictions that they place upon you, realizing these are for their protection as well as for your own. Honor the local government, "rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." The country's political system may be different from what you are used to. However, this "foreign" system may work well for the locals. Political debates are not likely to push local ministry forward.

6. Do not "murder" ministry options with idle talk. There are many complex situations on the field which you, with a few weeks' experience, are not equipped to solve.

7. Keep your relationships clean and pure in all ways. Honor the relationships the local team has, and seek to raise local workers up at all times. Strive not to say or do anything that will destroy relationships local workers have with others.

8. Keep your financial dealings above board and honest. Do not be lazy: do not steal time. Seek to bless, not to take. Do not make local workers spend an incredible amount of time or resources taking care of you. Be flexible and learn to adapt.

9. Be both truthful and discreet. Be sure to find out ahead of time what you should and should not say to those who ask about your trip. Be careful what you put in print. Be sensitive to email security requirements. While you are on the field, communicate any problems you are having, but try not to share your whole life history in the email. Seek to minister to others rather than wanting others to minister to you.

10. Do not introduce anything that can cause jealousy or envy. In most parts of the world any westerner will be considered "rich." Do not show off. Do not offer things you should not or make empty promises in the spur of the moment.

Above all, use your short-term trip to evaluate your own long-term calling. Everyone should work so that the Great Commission is completed. Your trip can help you develop a vision, understand the sacrifice and work required, build partnerships and become personally involved. Use it to the utmost, and once you are back, sit down and prayerfully identify ways you can continue to expand your involvement.

Endnote

1. See also Paul Cull's "Ten Commandments" (www.strategicnetwork.org/kb/286). Although there are some variations, there are also many similarities to the ones I've listed above.

Justin Long manages strategicnetwork.org and is senior editor for Momentum, a magazine devoted to unreached peoples.

Into Their World....The Hijazi of Saudi Arabia

By **Laurie Fortunak**

According to statistics from 2000, nearly seventeen million Hijazi Arabs lived in Saudi Arabia. No doubt that number has increased since then and with less than one percent of the Hijazi having accepted Christ, this people group has a great need to hear the gospel. The Hijazi Arab are more commonly known as the Saudi Arab and live predominantly along the Red Sea coast and in urban centers. The Hijazi, who make up the majority of the Saudi Arabian population, speak Hijazi Arabic (also known as Arabiya).

More than half of Saudi Arabia is desert and because of the hot climate, the Saudi Arabs dress in lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Scattered throughout the desert plains are fertile oases where towns and villages are often located. Although Saudi Arabia has become self-sufficient in producing many dairy and poultry products, the lack of water has made only less than one percent of the land useful for farming.

Traditionally, farming and raising livestock have been the staple economic activities; however, since the development of the oil industry, the government has placed a high emphasis on improving roads, airports, seaports and the power industry. Today the government is the largest employer in Saudi Arabia, with over thirty-four percent of the population holding civic-related jobs.

Due in part to the economic boost from the oil industry, literacy rates have increased from three percent in the early 1960s to sixty-two percent today. Teacher training institutes have also been established to reduce the country's dependence on other Arab countries for teachers.

Although nearly all Hijazi Arabs are Muslim, they represent many Islamic sects. Since the mid-1700s when Mohammed ibn Adb al-Wahhab formed a fundamentalist sect, many Saudis have seen themselves as the holders of the true Islamic faith. Mecca, the holy city where many Muslims make an annual pilgrimage, is located near the coast of the Red Sea.

Sharing the gospel with the Saudi Arabs is not only challenging to the Christian, it is also costly to the convert--new-believers may lose their families, jobs or even their lives. With very few mission organizations working in this area, John 4:35 becomes even more important: "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest."

For information on the Hijazi of Saudi Arabia, visit:

www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code5/892.html

www.peopleteams.org/Selection.htm and click on specific region of the world (North Africa and Middle East to learn more about ministries in Saudi Arabia)

(Information compiled from www.joshuaproject.net)

(Note: The website links above are intended to provide you with more information about this people group. Some of the links are to groups that are not religious in nature but who provide information and background that may be helpful in researching this people group. The content of each of the websites linked to is the sole responsibility of the linked-to organization. Views expressed on these websites do not necessarily reflect the opinions and beliefs of the staff or writers of Lausanne World Pulse or those of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Institute of Strategic Evangelism, Evangelism and Missions Information Service or Intercultural Studies Department.)

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STRATEGY, TRENDS AND STATISTICS

How Do We Grow Our Churches?

By Peter Brierley

A couple of years ago the Salvation Army asked Christian Research to undertake a wide-ranging survey on why churches grow. We went to four thousand churches that had either significantly grown or significantly declined in the past ten years. Both groups were asked the same series of questions and the answers were compared to pinpoint any significant differences. We also asked the ministers of each congregation to complete a series of questions that indicated the gifts he or she brought to his or her leadership role.

As you may imagine, it proved to be a fascinating survey. Some items were specifically associated with decline, such as if a minister worked by himself or herself and had no colleagues with whom to form a team. It was also noteworthy that the reverse of some items (in this case, having a leadership team was not a significant factor for growth) was not necessarily associated with growth.

The same was true for certain styles of worship. Churches that only used their organ were more associated with decline than those which used a variety of instruments. While a range of musical styles may well encourage growth, it does not, by itself, necessarily mean growth will take place.

Preaching is important for attracting people to a church, especially larger churches. Does the style of preaching matter? For instance, is an expository style more favourable to growth than a preacher who follows the lexicon or seeks to be topical? The survey indicated that a particular type of preaching was not associated with growth, though it was important that the preaching was seen to be relevant to the hearers. Explaining what the Bible meant in a manner which people understood was vital in getting people to come to a church; however, other factors were essential if they were going to stay.

Misconceptions on Factors Relating to Church Growth

The survey showed that some characteristics were definitely not associated with growth, even though many would expect them to be. For instance:

- Was a church in an area where there were few if any other churches likely to grow? No.
- Was a church which had the majority of congregants living close by more likely to grow? No.
- Was a church which had a connection with a school (like many Anglican and Catholic churches have) more likely to grow because of its accessibility to young people? No, not for that reason.
- Was a more wealthy church likely to grow? No. Money was not a significant factor.
- Was a church in a suburban area, where there were potentially more people in its neighbourhood, more likely to grow than a more rural or urban-centred church? No. A church's environment was not significantly associated with growth.
- Was a church with a particularly attractive building likely to grow? No. The building was seen as unimportant.
- Was a church which followed certain types of evangelism (e.g. regularly holding Alpha courses) more likely to grow? No, although the Alpha course is undoubtedly successful in seeing many people come to faith. However, the course itself was not found to be directly correlated with growth.
- Was a church with an above-average proportion of intelligent people (e.g. with graduate or post-graduate qualifications) more likely to grow? No. In fact, the management guru Meredith Belbin used to say that a team made up of only doctorate holders was an unsuccessful team.

- Was a church with many activities, especially youth activities, more likely to grow? No, although this does not mean that parents with young children will not come and join the groups for a certain amount of time. Growing your fringe, while critically important, does not guarantee growth.
- Was a church with convenient parking, easy bus-stop access, clean toilets or with other similar advantages more likely to grow? No. These are useful extras, though!

Factors Associated with Growth

What then, you may be asking, were the factors which can be unambiguously identified with growth? The answer from the survey was very specific—a clear vision and strong leadership.

The church needed to know where it was going, and how it was going to get there. Its activities were not undertaken as “good things to do,” but with a motivation that would find fulfilment in the church’s key purposes. For instance, a Mums’ and Toddlers’ Group would be held not just because the local community welcomed it, but because it was a way of reaching out to people who could later be invited to, say, an Alpha course.

How does a leader get his or her vision? Sometimes from talking with other people, sometimes from the Holy Spirit’s leading through prayer and meditation, sometimes as he or she sees the needs in the community, sometimes by answering questions such as Why does this church exist?, What will it have become in ten years’ time? or What is the most important thing to change this year? Where there is no vision, “the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). In fact, where there is no vision, the church perishes, the leaders perish and the nation perishes. Vision is thus not an option; it is the key factor without which churches are unlikely to grow.

What kinds of leaders are most likely to implement their vision? The research showed that there was only one type, out of eight giftings, that was associated with growing churches. Twice as many fast-growing churches have ministers who are “Shapers” (to use a Belbin description) than declining ones. Shapers frequently compel something to happen by the sheer force of their personality. These leaders can see why certain actions are important, and will do everything necessary to ensure they happen. People are much more likely to join a church that has a clear vision and has leaders who know how to see its fulfilment. That is how churches grow, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

Readers who are interested in obtaining the free booklet Leadership, Vision and Growing Churches, which offers a summary of this survey’s results, are welcome to write:

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Brierley may also be contacted via email at admin@christian-research.org.uk.

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LAUSANNE REPORTS

Ethnê06 . . . Launching A Global Prayer and Strategy Initiative Focused on the Least Reached Peoples

By S. Kent Parks

Ethnê06, www.ethne.net, is a global gathering of people, churches and organizations focused on ministering to Unreached People Groups (UPGs). The gathering will be held 7-10 March 2006 and is designed to energize the body of Christ for continuing work among the twenty-seven percent of the world which has little or no access to hear or experience the gospel. These people groups receive only about 2.4% of all missionaries and less than one-tenth of one percent of global church monies.

Although variously called Unreached People Groups (UPGs), Least Evangelized Peoples (LEP) or Least Reached People Groups (LRP), Ethnê06 has chosen to link the terms to highlight those people groups that are the least served. (For definitions on these terms, see www.ethne.net/definition.htm.) Although significant progress has been made in the last thirty years, these UPGs/ LRP's still number in the thousands—and these peoples will still be “least reached” in 2050 unless drastic efforts emerge immediately.

Intersection. This consultation serves to be an intersection for UPG/LRP strategy discussion for Lausanne and the World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission. This meeting will provide an opportunity for leaders to meet face to face, develop relationships, pray and plan new strategic initiatives among UPGs.

The specific idea arose from discussions at the 2001 Great Commission Roundtable, the Singapore 02 UPG Consultation and the Thailand 2004 Lausanne Forum Issue Group on Hidden and Forgotten Peoples. UPG-focused network leaders from every continent have become part of the Ethnê06 convening group. We believe that intentional “trans-national” collaboration and strategy is a biblical necessity, brings glory to God and is crucial to accelerate movements to Christ among all peoples.

Leadership. SEALINK (the SEAsia UPG network) serves as the core of the convening group. The SEALINK steering committee invited key leaders from around the world to join as a part of the larger Ethnê06 convening group. Shortly after the Ethnê06 meeting in March 2006, the responsibility will be passed to another regional network that will serve as the core of the next planning group for the next meeting.

Leadership from the following networks are part of the larger Ethnê06 convening group: SEALINK, Philippines Mission Association, India Mission Association, Malaysia Center for Global Ministry, Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association, Indonesian Evangelical Alliance (PII), Indonesian Research Network (PJRN), US Center for World Mission, COMIBAM, Central Asia Consultation, CRAF (Francophone Africa Partnership), APP, China Source, SEANET, SW Peoples Partnership and others.

Vision and Purpose. Ethnê06 is global, ongoing, biblical and multi-generational. It focuses on the importance of each generation (baby boomers, gen-Xers, first-generation or even fourth-generation believers) in sharing the gospel.

The vision is “peoples joining together to glorify God among all peoples.” The purpose is “to energize the body of Christ for continuing initiatives among the “one-fourth world” which has almost no access to the gospel” by:

- Celebrating progress among the least reached
- Assessing current opportunities and resources
- Accelerating movements to Christ among every people

Most significantly, Ethnê06 seeks to stimulate Global Prayer Initiatives and related Strategy Initiatives as well as a Global Youth Ethne meeting in 2007. These initiatives are not an effort to set a specific goal, but an effort to stimulate each other to greater efforts and effectiveness through collaborating and by sharing spiritual and cultural giftings. This prayer and strategy initiative will be mutually launched June 2006. Global Prayer Digest will provide daily prayer requests and Joshua Project is offering specific links to data by region.

Consultative Groups. Much of Ethnê06 will be focused on consultative groups which will develop

strategic plans together by gathering people from different nationalities, giftings and vocations. Thus, rather than dividing into a pastors' group, a church planters' group, a member care group, a translators' group or a "fund-ers" group, these different gifting will be combined into several working groups. The following are descriptions of the strategy groups that will be organize

Wholistic Gospel Movements (WGM) will develop integrated efforts among UPGs to see the body of Christ started, reproducing, serving and transforming their own communities and other unreached peoples, cities and nations.

Frontier Crisis Response Network (FCRN) will explore ways to cooperate in crisis situations including natural disasters, war, economic disasters and terrorist attacks in a way that will ultimately lead to gospel movements in transforming societies, especially through increased cooperation of crisis responders around the world.

Harvest-Linked Prayer Strategies will launch and facilitate the first year of an ongoing prayer and harvest initiative by (1) increasing awareness of the remaining 6,900+ Least-Reached Peoples (LRP), (2) connecting prayer movements to specific strategic initiatives and (3) developing models, resources and training globally.

LRP/UPG Workers in a Changing World will identify and offer solutions to challenges and issues related to placing, training and caring for laborers in various sending and receiving contexts among the LRPs/UPGs.

Program. Workshops during Ethnê06 will include: (1) Raising up the Next Generation of Mission Leaders, (2) People on the Move (nomads, immigrants, students, generations), (3) Communication Strategies for Missions, (4) Member Care among the LRPs, (5) Mission Mobilization Processes and Models (globally, locally, regionally) and (6) Information/Resources (opportunities, gaps and joint projects).

There will also be ten seminars during Ethnê06, including: (1-4) Strategy Group Reports, (5) Assess and Inform (Key Research, Gaps, Future Trends), (6) Maximizing Church-Centered Initiatives, (7) New Generation Leadership Transition in LRP Missions, (8) Partnership Principles, (9) Business as Mission and (10) Ethne: Shaping a LRP/UPG Global Network—Steps Forward.

S. Kent Parks is facilitator for Lausanne's Least Reached Peoples Special Interest Group. He also serves as co-facilitator for Ethnê06, www.ethne.net. Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 35, released by the 2004 Forum Issue Group on Hidden and Forgotten People (Least-Reached) is available online: http://community.gospelcom.net/lcwe/assets/LOP35A_IG6A.pdf. (Document opens as a PDF file.)

LEADERSHIP MEMO

Charity and Justice

By *Lon Allison*

While in Washington DC, USA, in February 2006 for the National Prayer Breakfast, I met two men (one from Europe, the other from Africa) who got me thinking about charity and justice. The breakfast is an annual two-day meeting first held during the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower in the 1950s. The purpose of the National Prayer Breakfast is more than a national call for prayer. It is a call for humility, peace and justice in the world. The men and women who spoke and prayed were eloquent, and as far as I could discern, sincere.

However, two specific men got me thinking deeply and praying passionately. The first was an Irishman named Bono. He is best known as lead singer and lyricist for the rock band U2. He has also become a global spokesperson and lobbyist for the poor and AIDS stricken in Africa. His keynote address impacted the four thousand attendees at the breakfast deeply. He challenged our idea of charity by stating it was inadequate for healing the world. Charity, he argued, is too easy. It is, in his own words, "give and go." It meets the immediate need but avoids the deeper issues that cause the need. According to Bono,

"Justice is a higher standard. Africa makes a fool of our idea of justice; it makes a farce of our idea of equality. It mocks our pieties, it doubts our concern, it questions our commitment. 6,500 Africans are still dying every day of a preventable, treatable disease, for lack of drugs we can buy at any drug store. This is not about charity, this is about justice and equality."

He later added, "Where you live should no longer determine whether you live."

Bono was right. Most readers of Lausanne World Pulse would agree. While we must provide immediate charity or relief for those in acute need, we must never be content to stop there. We must rally our considerable forces in the global Church to resource, argue for and instigate justice in the institutions of every place we journey. Justice is more than charity. It is a clear mandate of Jesus. I spent much of the day pondering and praying over Bono's call to justice over charity. I wanted to find ways to unleash my ministry organization to pursue justice, to make it happen all over the world.

Later that night another speaker pushed me even further. This speaker was a lawyer and pastor in Malawi, one of Africa's poorest nations. He challenged our ability to bring justice to any place or any land. He argued that "unjust people" cannot bring justice. He used his own testimony of previously hating all white people to prove his point. He had started a movement to remove Jesus and Jesus' followers from his country. Instead of seeing the blessings of Christianity, he had seen its abuses, and it hardened his hatred for all people in power. For him, the abuse of power appeared as white versus black, foreigner versus indigenous, indigenous wealthy versus indigenous poor. His country was poor because people in power made it poor for their own gain.

The irony is that his rage only led him to perpetrate what he despised. As he found success in his own life, he used it to abuse others in order to gain power. It was then that he met a humble white man, a missionary, who spoke of another man named Jesus. Through time and friendship the soft-spoken missionary helped his Malawi friend release his rage and hatred to a living Jesus. He described Jesus as antithetical to a man of power. He spoke of him as a servant and a man of deep charity (love). In Jesus he found the model of "servant power" that changes society through love (charity).

This powerful and angry Malawi man was faced with his own depravity and saw in Jesus his need to be made "just" on the inside. This need was more than institutional; it was personal. He was made new in the newness of the risen Christ. And once he received Christ's presence and inner justice, he became free to bring charity (love) to Malawi and Africa. This man needed a personal conversion before he could convert his land.

Bono calls us to justice over charity (relief). This pastor from Malawi calls us to charity (the love of Christ) before we can make life just. It is not one way or the other; it is always both.

I find myself wishing I could have brought the two leaders together. They needed to hear each other. I fear that Bono believes that if we provide enough resources to Africa, it will get to the people who need it. History and human nature say differently. Unless we are first made just in Christ, we will not make just societies.

As an evangelist leading an organization that "stimulates global evangelism," I want to make sure my team and those we train understand that "saving souls" is not enough. We are to encourage justice and support those in the kingdom who are pursuing justice while also reminding them that hearts must be changed. We have all heard that it is possible to be so earthly minded that we are no heavenly good. Souls and societies for now and for ever should be our kingdom cry.

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