

*Your heart for mission inspired me in a big way! Thanks for sowing a seed in my life.* – Pastor Mark Batterson, New York Times Bestselling Author

# HARVEST CONNECTION

Connecting You and Your  
Church to God's Final Harvest



Dr. Howard Foltz

Your heart for mission inspired me in a big way! Thanks for sowing seeds of mission into my life.

**Pastor Mark Batterson**

*New York Times* Bestselling Author

Lead Pastor of National Community Church, Washington D.C.

All mission outreach is smart, but strategic missions are smarter. Dr. Foltz and AIMS helped our church be smarter about missions and intentionally aim more effectively at the target groups mentioned by Jesus. Jesus said in Acts 1:8 to aim at Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. AIMS is uniquely positioned to help churches aim at the unreached ends of the earth.”

**Pastor Terry Roberts**

Faith Christian Family Church, Warrenton, MO

Thank you, Dr. Foltz, for helping the Ethiopian churches to stand on their own feet. Many Westerners have helped us to stand in *their* shoes but you have helped us Ethiopian churches to stand in *our own* shoes. That is the difference.

**Abera Negasi**

Ethiopian Missionary to Pakistan

AIMS’ spiritual mantle connected our Church to the root of Christ’s Great Commission. AIMS’ mandate to mobilize the Body of Christ to reach the unreached is moving the Church to fulfill the glorious future when every Tribe and Tongue is represented before His throne. *Harvest Connection* contains powerful training, which will equip your ministry to reap the precious fruit that heaven longs for.

**Pastor Thant McManus**

Evangel Worship Center, Concord, NC

Current Chairman of the AIMS Board

AIMS changed my life and I am now doing missions in my country of Liberia. I believe I owe it all to AIMS.

**John Willie**

AIMS Conference Attendee, West Africa

Through the teaching and training of *Harvest Connection*, I have had the privilege of traveling and ministering with Dr. Howard Foltz since 1985. I have experienced first-hand the fruit of seeing tens of thousands of pastors raised up, trained, and sent out to establish churches among the unreached people groups around the world. It’s been one of my greatest blessings in life to serve Howard Foltz and AIMS as their Chairman of the Board. And as a businessman and minister, I have witnessed how AIMS has embraced the true Spirit of market-place ministry, to raise up Kingdom Entrepreneurs, to bridge the gap between ministry and business in order to help build and establish the Kingdom of God.

Over the past 30 years, I have seen Dr. Howard Foltz operate as a true apostle, a missionary statesman, and most of all, a trusted friend.

**Dennis R Jones**

Business Entrepreneur / Missionary

Author of *Climbing Out of Adversity*

Our partnerships through AIMS with Dr. Howard Foltz as part of our active missions strategy has been nothing less than a God-send. This man of God has been used a spearhead of the modern mission's movement worldwide. Dr. Foltz has presented *Harvest Connection* to our congregation and this provided for an incredible focused strategy that has proven successful for the movement of the kingdom of God into unreached people groups in every area of the world. Our partnership with AIMS has equipped our local church with a successful strategy to reach the unreached! He brings a dynamic teaching style and specialized missions knowledge that is cornerstone to any person or organization that desires to carry out the Great Commission!

**David Swann**

**Pastor of Faith Christian Family Church, Clovis, NM**

The LORD JESUS said that there was a Harvest in His Field that was ripe and waiting. Dr. Howard Foltz understands the Harvest like few people. I have had the privilege of traveling with Howard to see firsthand the principles of the Harvest. His materials will transform a church's heart like no other that I know. Bring him into your church to utilize his skills to mobilize your Church for Missions. I have used him four times at my church. His influence has radically fueled our growing Heart for Missions.

Please know you have my deepest respect and highest appreciation.

**Pastor Steve Pearson**

**Church of the Savior, Lexington, KY**

VISION, ENERGY, and INSPIRATION are some of the things which come to mind when I think of the ministry work of AIMS and Howard Foltz. Howard is a catalyst for spiritual renewal and vision casting, and as such, he is highly appreciated in international circles. No ground is too hard and no place is too far from the reach of the 'spark plug' ministry of AIMS. Teaching, training, and materials development are there expertise and hallmark. Howard takes seriously 2 Timothy 2:2: *entrust [these things] to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*

**Mike Karlake**

**President of Providence Computers, Chesapeake, VA**

I used to think that we only received missionaries, and didn't realize we can also send out our own missionaries. Dr. Foltz opened my eyes to see that the church in the Middle East can send out missionaries.

**Middle East Believer**

To us, the AIMS Ministry and the message of *Harvest Connection* is a powerful demonstration of the very heart of our "God who *so dearly loved the world* that He gave His one and only Son!" And the passion of Dr. Foltz and the message of *Harvest Connection* is also a fulfillment of the end-time passion of Jesus who declared, "this Gospel of the kingdom *will be preached* in the whole world as a testimony *to all nations*, and *then the end will come!*" I thank our Lord for raising up this Ministry through His faithful servant, Dr. Howard Foltz!

**Pastors Charles and Dotty Schmitt**

**Immanuel's Church, Silver Spring, MD**

Over the more than 25 years that I have known and worked with Dr. Howard Foltz, I have seen RESULTS; people and churches that are ignited for the harvest and become the answer to their own prayers to “send forth laborers.” One consistent key is the quality and strategic focus of this proven *Harvest Connection* seminar (now in book form) that is a must for your church. The other key is the dedication and sacrificial service of the AIMS team and members that are leaving a legacy of equipping “finishers” in this 11th hour harvest time (Matthew 20:6-7). This purchase could be the best decision you made for the urgency of our time!

**Dr. Joseph Umidi**

EVP/Dean/Professor Regent University  
Founder, Lifeforming Institute

*Harvest Connection* is an informative and engaging presentation. The quality content revealed to me God’s heart for the nations and ignited in me a passion for those who have never known Christ as Lord.

**Pastor Jeff Falkowski**

Trinity Evangelical Church, Marble Hill, GA

The Great Commission was given hands and feet in an incredible way through Dr. Howard Foltz. I saw how God’s army can be mobilized to reach the unreached in ways that had seemed unattainable before.

**Ethiopian Believer**

AIMS training established me as the first director of the Mekene Yesus Missions Department. Our missions outreach is based on the AIMS training.

**Ethiopian Leader**

Dr. Foltz’s passion for missions is contagious!

**Filipino Student**

The influence of Dr. Foltz on me and so many others will only be measured in heaven. As my professor at Regent University, he made some powerful impressions upon my life. Going into Cambodia with the first AOG missionary team was highly influenced by his repeated call to go to the unreached. Targeting Muslims and tribal people while we ministered to the Khmer was also part of his influence.

The church I now lead has a strategic missions focus due to his influence. I have told people that *World Christian Perspectives* and *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization* courses were the two best classes I ever had. Dr. Foltz taught both of those classes! I have since taught those classes myself and we planted my first church in the USA using a Gypsy couple in a Mexican population. Rio de Vida church is now 2½ years old and thriving! The “*planning strategy*” worked and we are blessed to have another unreached people group in our city on their way to heaven.

Thank you, Dr. Foltz, for your dedication and commitment to the task. You are a field marshal, a general, and missions statesman. I count it a privilege to have studied under you and I count it a joy to minister with you in this vast harvest field.

**Pastor Wes Lindquest**

Calvary Lighthouse AG, Lakewood, NJ

# Acknowledgments

My wife Pat and I were both born in Colorado, USA. We are “mountain people.” Colorado has 56 peaks over 14,000 feet high. One of them is Mount Antero (I’ve climbed it and 38 of the other “14ers.”) Antero is a unique mountain because precious gems can still be found on its terrain. My state still has gold and silver mines, which continue to add wealth and historical color.

Like Colorado, my personal history and missionary career is filled with relational gems, gold and silver of significant experiential wealth and color. My life has been bountifully enriched with many human “gems” and treasured relationships. After my relationship with Christ, my greatest treasure is my wife of 53 years, Pat. What a beautiful, marvelous, and talented gal! She was called to be a missionary before we met. She helped initiate Teen Challenge ministries in Texas and overseas, is co-founder of the AIMS ministry discussed in this book, and along the way moved our household over 20 times. She helped support the Teen Challenge ministry in its beginnings and then continued on with a 17 year career as an ER and SICU registered nurse. Together we raised our two wonderful sons, Stan and Steve, great and significant gemstones in our lives.

Other “gems” are Pastor Charles Blair who discipled me in missions, my Teen Challenge “family” of 22 years, hundreds of ministry partners in AIMS like Jerry Smith, Gezehen Asmamaw, Carolyn Hedgpeth, Jill Wiegand, Pastors Ron Johnson, Terry Roberts, and Lance Stoddard, who are all mentioned in this book. My ministry would have been miniscule without partners, friends, and coworkers like these.

Another “treasure” was my 23 years of teaching at Regent University. The relationships with colleague professors, my students, and with Pat Robertson and the CBN leaders, was a rich treasure indeed. It was at Regent University that I met Carolyn Bennett Frasier, my friend and uniquely gifted editor who helped me write this book.

I have many wonderful staff and colleagues in our AIMS ministry; I just wish there were space to name each of them. All of them have contributed immeasurably to my life and ministry. In writing this book, my Administrative Assistant, Kassie Fisher, and her husband Dereck contributed greatly to the artwork, design and proofing. Finally, Jeremiah Zeiset and his editing team at Aneko Press provided excellent insight and guidance in the production of this book.

My prayer is that this book will be as enriching to its readers as the experiences behind it have been to me. To God be all the glory!

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Church to God's Final Harvest

Dr. Howard Foltz



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*Harvest Connection* – Dr. Howard Foltz  
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First edition published 2014

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*eBook Icon: Icon design/Shutterstock*

*Editors: Sheila Wilkinson and Ruth Zetek*

Printed in the United States of America

Aneko Press – *Our Readers Matter™*

[www.anekopress.com](http://www.anekopress.com)

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Life Sentence Publishing, Inc.

203 E. Birch Street

P.O. Box 652

Abbotsford, WI 54405

**RELIGION / Christian Ministry / Evangelism**

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-62245-304-7

eBook ISBN: 978-1-62245-305-4

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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## Chapter 1

### It's a Real World – Are We “Real” Christians?

*People who don't believe in missions have not read the New Testament. Right from the beginning, Jesus said the field is the world. The early church took Him at His word and went East, West, North and South.*  
—J. Howard Edington

**T**he Old Testament prophet Isaiah promised: *Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor* (Isaiah 55:5). I've seen this happen repeatedly around the world. In this chapter, two of my partners in ministry will share amazing stories with you. These stories represent the impact of the material in this book on church leaders in the United States and throughout the world.

Jerry Smith, a representative of Accelerating International Mission Strategies (AIMS), has used our Equipping for the Harvest conferences. He has traveled to Ethiopia numerous times and developed personal relationships with the people there. His encounter and friendship with Gezahegn has enhanced our

partnership with Ethiopia and established a ministry model that has been shared with dozens of other countries.

Ron Johnson Jr. is a pastor and personal friend of mine in Crown Point, Indiana. When his church adopted the Somali people of Tanzania, God opened doors they never imagined. His story is a prime example of how pastors and churches in the United States can have a lasting impact among unreached people groups around the world and how they can change their own congregations as well.

### The Story of Gezahegn in Ethiopia

(as told by Jerry Smith)

In 1996, Dr. Howard Foltz and AIMS began a new training initiative in Ethiopia. In partnership with the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), Dr. Foltz taught the material in this book to a group of Ethiopian leaders in the Fellowship. The Harvest Connection seminar (Appendix C, #1) was well established and had already challenged and equipped leaders in Asia, India, and the Soviet Union. It was about to be birthed in Ethiopia in amazing new ways.

For one man who sat in the audience that week, the ideas were life changing. That man would one day launch a ministry directive among Muslim groups in the Rift Valley, the largest valley in the world, stretching from Egypt into Central Africa. That ministry would send over four hundred missionaries, including sixty former imams (Muslim teachers or mosque leaders) into unreached areas of Ethiopia, Sudan, and other surrounding countries.

When I (Jerry) returned to Ethiopia in 2000, Dr. Foltz and I were unaware of what had happened behind the scenes since that first training. Neither had we anticipated what was to come. That year, the ECFE handpicked a hundred key leaders out of the first training group to learn how to mobilize others

for missions advancement in Ethiopia and beyond. This conference in the capital city of Addis Ababa was one of the first Equipping for the Harvest conferences (Appendix C, #5) to be held around the world.

As the participants gathered in the assembly hall of a Lutheran church, the afternoon African air quickly became warm and stuffy. Despite the heat, several of the Ethiopians wore heavy jackets throughout the day. To create a breeze, I opened the doors at the front of the hall, not far from the podium, but became frustrated when several of the Ethiopians stood up and shut the doors.

This happened several times. During a break, I approached one of the brothers who shut the doors. Wrapped up in a heavy army coat, the man wore boots and long heavy pants. He smiled as he explained that he was from a city called Awassa that was much farther south and at a much-lower elevation. "Because of the high altitude here, I am always cold."

I didn't get to spend any more time with the man. I didn't even learn his name. He was very quiet, humble, and unassuming, and he didn't promote himself or any agenda. Several years later, when I was traveling through Awassa on my way to a town on the border of Kenya called Moyale, I officially met the same man named Gezahegn (pronounced gez-AW-hen) Asmamaw and heard his story.

In October 2003, I stopped to rest in the city of Awassa on my journey from Addis Ababa to the southern Ethiopian city of Moyale, where Somalis, Oromos, and Amarahs live just south of the border. Considered the most Christian city in Ethiopia, with a high percentage of Ethiopian evangelicals within its borders, Awassa is also the headquarters of the ECFE and the agricultural center of the country. Outside its borders lies the Rift Valley, containing one of the largest concentrations of unreached people groups, most of whom are Muslim or animist.

As I sat with Gezahegn, our host, Shiferaw, and my American compatriot Patty in a restaurant at The Pines Hotel that night, Gezahegn spoke up. “Dr. Foltz is my spiritual father.”

I was stunned. Who was this guy? I had never heard Howard ever talk about this guy. His statement intrigued me, so I asked him to explain. That conversation became the beginning of a wonderful and lasting friendship.

As a young man in the 1980s, Gezahegn decided to join the Red Army of Ethiopia under Mengistu Haile Mariam, leader of a communist military group called the Derg. They governed Ethiopia during the Red Terror in the late 1970s until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991. For eighteen months, Gezahegn trained rigorously in Moscow to serve later in communist counterintelligence and operation of the SAM (Surface-to-Air-Missile) sites that were used to shoot down enemy aircraft.

Gezahegn remembered his excitement in Moscow when he saw snow for the very first time. Amazed, he ran outside to stand and stare as the white flakes fell from the sky, ignoring the laughter of the Russians around him.

During his time in the army, Gezahegn met Jesus Christ. As a new believer, he developed strong leadership skills in evangelism, as well as in the military. From the very beginning, he didn’t hesitate to tell others about his newfound faith and soon began equipping others to share their faith as well.

In 1996, Gezahegn attended the first Harvest Connection seminar in Ethiopia that was led by Dr. Foltz. The material in the seminar changed his life.

“What Dr. Foltz taught us revolutionized my understanding of ministry,” he said. “I had been preaching and converting people, and I had been training other leaders to do the same. But when I received Dr. Foltz’s training, I became aware of unreached people groups for the first time. I saw their priority and how important it was to mobilize others to do the work.”

Unlike most individuals who hear the gospel and choose not to believe, unreached people groups have very little or no access to the gospel at all. Many live their entire lives without hearing the name of Jesus Christ even a single time.

Gezahegn was so moved by Dr. Foltz's teaching that he immediately put what he learned into practice. He began translating the material in *Triumph: Missions Renewal for the Local Church*, the first edition of this book, into Amharic, the national language of Ethiopia. He identified four men, and using the materials he had received at the seminar, he trained them to share the gospel with tribes and peoples who had no opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ.

The next day, Gezahegn took me to his office to show me what he was doing. His office was typical of offices seen all over Africa and Latin America – a cement building with whitewashed walls and open windows with light curtains blowing in the breeze.

While there, Gezahegn showed me photograph after photograph of Ethiopian missionaries, which at that time included more than forty former Muslim imams, who were evangelizing their own people. Then he pointed to a map of Ethiopia and its bordering countries. On the map, he had pinned small flags, indicating even more missionaries, their locations, and the people groups being reached.

Gezahegn became excited as he spoke: "We are now looking at sending more missionaries not only up north and out west, but also to Sudan and other regions outside our country!"

According to his reports, more than two hundred new churches had been planted and forty thousand new believers had been baptized throughout the Rift Valley. Of those believers, over half of them are former Muslims.

I sat there amazed, as Gezahegn explained the spiritual and preaching strategies they developed to connect with the Muslim people around them.

“In some Muslim areas, one missionary will dress in traditional Muslim clothing – you know, long robes with a head-piece on. The other brother will dress like you or I. They enter a village from opposite directions and meet in the middle of the village.” Gezahegn continued: “The ‘Muslim’ brother begins a public conversation as to what the Christian believes and teaches, and a dialogue follows. This allows the people to hear the presentation of the gospel in a way that feels familiar and non-confrontational. We have seen many Muslims come to Christ doing this.”

I was fascinated. Gezahegn then told me of another way they proclaim the good news to villages.

“We send teams of prayer warriors to walk around a village, praying and binding the powers of darkness. Eventually, those who have demons begin to manifest themselves. Someone will actually begin to ask if there are Christians in the area and go out looking for them.” He continued: “The prayer team then enters the village and ministers to the demonized, liberating them from their demons. Thus, the missionaries are able to preach the gospel to the village.”

Gezahegn then looked intently at me and said, “This is all the result of what I learned from Dr. Foltz. What I did was read *Triumph* (Dr. Foltz’s first book). Then I put everything into place, step by step.”

As my relationship with Gezahegn has grown over the years, so has his vision for what he calls the Rift Valley Vision Program (RVVP), where he serves as founder and director. He oversees more than four hundred Ethiopian missionaries, including more than sixty former imams who are reaching out to people in their own country and bordering countries with the gospel. Gezahegn also serves with the ECFE as coordinator of evangelism activities in southern Ethiopia.

Story of Living Stones Fellowship Church,  
Crown Point, Indiana  
(as told by Senior Pastor Ron Johnson Jr.)

I first met Dr. Howard Foltz while working on my second master's degree at Regent University in practical theology. He was one of my professors and encouraged me to enter the doctoral program. That's where I learned about what he was doing in missions.

In the mid-1990s, I invited Dr. Foltz to visit our church, Living Stones Fellowship, in Indiana, to present the Harvest Connection seminar. We always had a heart for missions, but after the seminar, our congregation became energized. I invited Dr. Foltz back to lead another seminar called Final Focus (Appendix C, #1).

As Dr. Foltz was introducing himself to our students, I mentioned to him that we had adopted an unreached people group – the Somalis of Tanzania. This caught his attention. “The Somalis? Do you know anything about the Somalis?”

Throughout the next few years, our church put together action steps to begin ministry among this adopted people group. We registered our church on the Adopt-A-People Clearing House for the Somalis of Tanzania. Teams began to pray specifically for the Somalis.

In 1999, Living Stones Fellowship sent a team to Tanzania to search out the land and pray. They located a refugee camp of six thousand Somalis, 99 percent of whom were Muslim. Half were under sixteen years old. The camp was divided into six districts and governed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the Tanzanian government. Violence was high, so no outsiders were allowed to enter.

“Every day God brought somebody across our path who was critical to us in reaching out to the Somalis,” said the missions pastor at Living Stones Fellowship and leader of the trip. The

team met several national pastors who were trained by AIMS. They were already developing strategies to work with the camp. They also met a member of the government and received permission to enter the camp.

The conditions of the camp were deplorable. The one medical clinic did not have the medicine or doctors available to treat the people. Many of the refugees suffered from malaria and other diseases. There was no water or sanitation system in the camp. The team prayed for individuals within the camp, asking God for healing, but they wanted to implement tangible aid.

During the next four years, Living Stones Fellowship's missions board sent out nine different teams to dig wells, paint schools, develop a water filtration system, construct homes, and build relationships with the refugees. The children were the first to welcome the teams, as they ran behind the vehicles when the teams arrived. Eventually, the women joined them. But the men never participated, particularly the camp leader.

In 2003, the church sent a team to build houses, offer a medical clinic, and run a children's camp, while they fielded a training team to equip Tanzanian pastors. On this trip, the men finally joined with the women and children in welcoming the group of foreigners to their camp. For four days, the men worked alongside the team and leaders in constructing homes. Relationships began to form. One afternoon, one of our team members sat down with the camp leader and twenty-two of his Muslim leaders and shared his testimony about how he was once a hard worker just like them. He explained how he met Jesus Christ and how that meeting changed his life.

"God sent us here, not just to build your houses, but to plant a seed in your hearts," he said.

As the leaders met with their families that night, they discussed what was said. The next morning, the camp leader stepped forward, followed by his twenty-two leaders, and

prayed to accept Christ. The camp leader immediately donated land for the construction of a church. On Sunday, July 20 of that year, their first church service was held in the national language of Swahili.

Our church continued to train and send missionaries to Tanzania until teams were transferred to AIMS partner Go To Nations, which began serving as the church's sending arm for this project.

Living Stones International (our international name) now has their own missions-sending structure, including a college to train missionaries in-house. All of this is part of the ongoing vision to plant churches overseas. We've continued to build relationships with seasoned missionaries and have sent several missionaries to work in places like Asia and Europe.

The church is also focused on reaching cross culturally in our own city. Recently, we planted a church in East Rogers Park on the north side of Chicago, one of the most ethnically diverse zip codes in America. Within a five-mile radius, about two hundred different nations are represented, and fifty-three different languages are spoken in the local high school.

Amazingly, we don't have to keep going to them; they are coming to us. Our goal is to equip and train these new immigrants in America. God has sent us people to encounter Him and then return to their own people. That's part of the long-term strategy. All that was fueled through Dr. Foltz's work and seminars. It's created a missions culture where people expect to be sent out from our congregation.

For me, it is exciting to read the end of the story in the book of Revelation about every nation, tribe, tongue, and language gathered around the throne. That passage really struck me. The Lord is looking for local churches to be a part of making history. We know the end of the book. We know that every nation,

tribe, tongue, and language will be there. But many unreached people groups still exist.

It moved me to say to our congregation, “You know what? Let’s be a part of making history! Won’t it be exciting to stand in heaven some day and hear Living Stones’ name called out? To hear a big cheer? To see a bunch of Somalis there saying, ‘Thank you. Thank you. Thank you?’”

From an eternal perspective, that chapter is already written, but it is happening in real life, and we can be a part of making history. That has continued to add strength to the missions culture here. Let’s not watch the news; let’s make the news. Let’s not just watch history or read about history; let’s be a part of making heaven’s history. When we realize that a handful of normal, everyday people can be a huge tool in the Lord’s hands for changing history, that’s powerful.

Thank God for AIMS!

## Chapter 2

### The War is Real

*The Bible is not the basis of missions;  
missions is the basis of the Bible.*  
—Ralph Winter

Tom Brokaw's bestselling book, *The Greatest Generation*, describes the sacrifice of the generation of Americans who defeated their formidable enemies in World War II. They faced the triple threat of the German Führer Adolf Hitler, the Italian Premier Benito Mussolini, and the Japanese Prime Minister General Hideki Tojo. They fought their way up the string of the South Pacific Islands and simultaneously liberated Europe from the incredible menace of two powerful war machines. Brokaw calls those threats "instruments of conquest in the hands of fascist maniacs."<sup>1</sup>

During that war, Andy Rooney, who bore the reputation of a beloved but opinionated presence on CBS's *60 Minutes*, was a correspondent for the army's newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*. While in college, Rooney turned toward pacifism.

But all that changed when he was drafted right after graduation. As a reporter, Rooney watched as American troops landed in Normandy. He was there when the French and

American troops liberated Paris. He crossed the Rhine with the first American soldiers. And he visited Buchenwald, one of Germany's infamous concentration camps converted into a mass extermination center with gas chambers and crematory ovens. It was here that "inferior people" were systematically removed from society. Rooney wanted to see for himself if the things he had heard about that terrible place were true. Brokaw related: "When he arrived, he was stunned by what he encountered, and embarrassed. 'I was ashamed of myself for ever having considered refusing to serve in the army,' he wrote. 'For the first time I knew that any peace is not better than any war.'"<sup>2</sup>

### Any Peace Is Not Better Than Any War

In no way do I intend to minimize the sacrifice of that generation, nor debate the desperate seriousness of the conflict they waged in order to free individuals from the hands of fascist madmen. The tragedy of that period lies in the millions of human beings whose lives were taken or destroyed. Before the end of World War II, even outside the confines of the various battlegrounds, Nazi nationalism had resulted in the deaths of six million Jews and countless Poles, Russians, and other peoples. As one pair of authors noted: "Genocide, the attempted destruction of whole ethnic groups or peoples, was the greatest of the Nazi sins against mankind."<sup>3</sup>

It's a terrible chapter in the history of mankind. So, while I don't want to diminish it, I do want to compare it to the spiritual situation still evident in many parts of the world. Satan is a spiritual dictator, and he is intent on the eternal destruction of individuals and the eternal genocide of entire ethnic groups. In fact, Justin D. Long, Information and Team Mobilization Strategist with ActBeyond, has noted that fifty-nine million people die each year. Of these, twenty-two million are Christians, and thirty-seven million are not. The sobering statistic is that

of the thirty-seven million non-Christian deaths, sixteen million never heard the gospel in a way they could understand.<sup>4</sup>

Nearly all of those individuals are part of what we call unreached or unevangelized people groups. Let me break that term down for you. A people group is simply a group of people who share a common language, ethnicity, and culture. Jesus referred to people groups when He commanded His followers to *make disciples of all nations* (Matthew 28:19). The word we have translated *nations*

*47,000 die every day  
who have never heard  
the good news.*

does not mean a body of land within a geopolitical boundary in the original context. The Greek word is *ethne* – the root of our word *ethnic* – which literally means “people groups.”

Within this context, according to missions statisticians, over 40 percent of the world’s seven billion people (that is, more than three billion people) have never heard the gospel even once. They represent the more than sixty-five hundred people groups that we call unreached. Geography, religion, language, and politics keep them isolated from Christian beliefs and, therefore, make them the most difficult to reach. These groups have had virtually no opportunity to hear the good news of salvation in any form.<sup>5</sup>

### Who Are the Adivasi?

The Adivasi people of India are one of these people groups. During the day, they work in fields, tending their crops. At night, they sleep in thatched huts in the jungles of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu in southern India. As Hindus, the Adivasi worship many gods, and until recently they had never even heard the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

Without outside intervention, individuals and entire people groups like the Adivasi will remain in Satan’s grasp. They will spend the rest of their lives as prisoners of war in

Satan's strongholds in regions dominated by Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and various other "isms." Then they will spend eternity without Christ.

Of course, we know from Scripture that God is patient, not wanting any single individual to perish (2 Peter 3:9). That means it is His will for every single person to hear the gospel and have the opportunity to respond. Nevertheless, not everyone in our world has the same easy access to the good news that we enjoy in the United States.

But one Adivasi village did experience that hope, because dedicated Christians decided to intervene. In 2004, an Indian pastor who had attended an AIMS missions mobilization training in Chennai, India, discovered a village at the end of a long dirt road in the jungle of the Vindhya Mountains. At the end of the training, he decided to focus his attention on the Adivasi people in this region. He traveled to the village and began building relationships with the people there. Since their primary language was Tamil, and he spoke Tamil, he could easily share the gospel with them. Within a few months, fifteen men in the village had accepted Christ. This grew and grew until a network of churches was started. The visible kingdom of God came to this Adivasi village.

Consider the number of churches in your community. Try for a moment to imagine living in a community where there is no church at all. This is the spiritual situation facing almost half of the world's population. Most of these people live in countries dominated by religious systems or political regimes that are hostile to the life-giving message of the gospel. They are stricken by poverty and bound by injustice. Yet Christ offers hope for this present life and eternity. The gospel can transform individual lives and entire societies. But we must see the task for what it is – a spiritual war against the powers of darkness.

## Let's Start at the Beginning

In Genesis, we see that God's purpose in creating the world was to provide the context for His kingdom from the very beginning. He created mankind to dwell on earth as a fellowship of regents (co-rulers or administrators) who would partner with Him in the task of governing creation.

When Adam and Eve sinned and fell out of that fellowship, God wasn't surprised. He knew it would happen and planned for the restoration of His strategy (1 Peter 1:18-20). Adam and Eve's failure to choose the way God had prescribed did not shock the One who had created them. But it also didn't minimize His desire to build His kingdom. And that, to paraphrase Paul Harvey, is the rest of the biblical story. Scripture demonstrates that God is accomplishing this great kingdom purpose through His two great missions – creation and redemption. These two missions are defined by God's very character. They are the eternal expression of who He is, and they will inevitably be played out in history.

### His Mission to Create: The Context

I once heard a story about a couple of scientists who decided they didn't need God anymore, because they were able to create life themselves. They scheduled a conference with God to inform Him of this new development. "To prove it," they said, "we'd like to challenge you to a contest. We'll create a man, and you create a man."

"Okay," God said. "You go first."

So the two scientists knelt and began digging up some dirt to fashion their man. "Oh no, you don't," God said. "You have to make your own dirt first."

That humorous story gives a glimpse into what the Bible really means when it gives the account of creation. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1).

In the original Hebrew, the word that we have translated as *created* describes the process of calling something into being from nothing (see Glossary of Terms). God didn't start with any "raw material." As the Creator, He is the ultimate source of everything that is real. He spoke and created the earth, the cosmos, and all that exists in the vegetable and animal kingdoms. And He started with nothing.

In addition to being the Creator, God is also an architect. He is a master designer, building order and precision into His creation. When Adam and Eve sinned, chaos entered creation.

*God is a God of mission – a Creator, Designer and Builder of His Kingdom.*

God already had a plan to restore order. Every local church and believer needs to understand this overarching plan to redeem the world and the specific role God has in mind for their involvement. Only as that happens – as we understand His vision,

His heart, and His design – can we successfully mobilize forces, prepare for battle, and wage war with the efficiency that will lead to success.

Finally, God is a builder. That which He creates and designs, He uses to build His kingdom. Genesis describes man's creation like this: *Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. Let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground* (1:26). God created men and women to oversee His kingdom, extending His rule to the ends of the earth.

### His Mission to Redeem: The Battle of the Ages

When Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan's deception, war broke out on earth. God intended that man would live in and advance a kingdom of light. But Adam and Eve chose to follow the serpent's suggestion rather than obeying God's directives.

And in that moment, through Adam and Eve's sinful choice, the forces of darkness seized control of man's domain, attempting to extinguish the light of God's eternal purpose.

In the aftermath, the Lord declared war on the vile intruder when He told Satan: *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel* (Genesis 3:15, emphasis added).

*Enmity* is a warfare word. Derived from the word *enemy*, Webster's dictionary defines it as "positive, active, and typically mutual hatred or ill will." Although Adam and Eve failed to pursue God's intention for creation when they surrendered to Satan's forces, God didn't give up His original intention of building His kingdom on this earth. He knew before He ever created Adam and Eve that they would fall, and He had already planned for His second mission – the mission of redemption.

The Scripture we examined earlier makes that obvious. Satan's various powers make up the kingdom of death and darkness. Prophetically, Eve's descendants make up the kingdom of life and light (Ephesians 5:8). The last part of Genesis 3:15 describes Eve's offspring as a singular *he* when it says, *he will crush your head*. That *he* is really *He* – Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus' eventual incarnation and birth, through the reverent submission of a woman to God's holy will, He is the only individual in all of history who was born to a woman without the requirement of an earthly, biological father (Isaiah 7:14). So He is Eve's descendant.

And because He has crushed Satan's head, we who live within Christ's kingdom also have victory over Satan and all of his demonic powers. Satan can still tempt and try to deceive, depress, oppress, and lead us astray. But because of Christ's incarnation and His submission to the Father's plan, even in the face of unimaginable personal suffering, our victory is assured.

The apostle Paul described his ministry as "waging war." He

said he used *divine power to demolish strongholds* (2 Corinthians 10:4). If believers and local churches truly intend to live out God’s Word on a daily basis, they must acknowledge the reality of this war. But they must not stop there.

### A Lesson from the Past

As events unfolded in Europe and Asia leading up to World War II, Western democracies remained pacifistic. Collectively, they faced the same dilemma that Andy Rooney faced as an individual. They had to choose which atrocities to accept and which events to battle over. They had signed treaties after World War I regarding the conditions that would guarantee peace. When dictators violated those detailed conditions, Great Britain, France, and the United States were simply unwilling to risk war for the sake of guaranteeing those agreements.

So these madmen attempted the same thing Satan did when he tried to overthrow the kingdom of light and life – they usurped power and authority that wasn’t theirs. And like Satan, they introduced chaos to the world as they tried to build their own kingdoms. Two historians summarized the situation like this: “Force was used by those who wished to upset the international order, but never by those who wished to maintain it.”<sup>7</sup>

Britain and France were forced to respond to the crisis, since it was in their backyard. But the United States maintained its isolationist pacifism – until December 7, 1941. On that day, without warning, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Our military was caught off guard, and almost twenty-five hundred people were killed. The temporary crippling of our naval fleet allowed Japan to move without hindrance into the western Pacific. The next day, we declared war on Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy and all of their puppet states declared war on the U.S. Suddenly, the war was all around us.

In those days, Americans found out that a war won’t go

away just because you ignore it. Individual Christians, and the churches they represent, must learn that same lesson. Satan's weapons are just as real and just as potent as those used in physical battle. The war between the kingdoms of light and darkness is just as real as any physical war – and it won't go away just because we ignore it.

## Chapter 3

### The First Mandate – How It All Started

*The one aim of the call of God is the satisfaction of  
God, not a call to do something for Him.*  
—Oswald Chambers

Coming into the twenty-first century, we are reminded that large religious blocs remain untouched by the gospel. In fact, despite two thousand years of Christian missionary effort, these groups are not just ambivalent toward the message of evangelism and discipleship – they are actually hostile to it. The world’s 1.6 billion Muslims may be the hardest people to penetrate with the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. But there are also more than 1 billion Hindus, 483 million Buddhists, and 662 million people of other ethnic religions, not to mention the countless individuals who don’t fit within those specific religious categories. Researchers also note that 974 million people are nonreligious. These figures represent the growing number of atheists in China, Russia, and countries around the world.<sup>1a</sup>

These people are *not* our enemies. They are hostages, held

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a See Illustration 1 and 2 in Appendix G

tightly in Satan's grasp. We don't wage war against Muslims, or Hindus, or Buddhists, or tribal religionists, or people who subscribe to any other religion. As the apostle Paul reminds us: *Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms* (Ephesians 6:12). We wage war against Satan and against his minions who aggressively protect their territory and brutalize their prisoners of war. We know we will never win this fight in our own strength. We will win this battle only as we rely on the authority and power we have through Jesus Christ.

But the task to release large numbers of people from the hopelessness of such bondage is great. We must examine our own troops, if we even hope to make a difference. How many soldiers do we have engaged in this battle?

### The Size of the Army

Abraham Lincoln did not subscribe to the "might makes right" philosophy that has infected so much of our world's political history. Instead, he said, "Let us have faith that *right makes might*; and in that faith let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it" (italics added).<sup>2</sup>

Lincoln's words could apply just as easily to our spiritual war as they did to the American Civil War. In our case, right does make might – even if the numbers don't show it.

Statistics indicate there are more than 2.2 billion affiliated church members in the world, and 1.5 billion of those people actually attend church. But only 694 million of them are people that we call "Great Commission Christians." They understand the nature of the Great Commission and are actively involved in trying to finish the task that Christ laid before us almost two thousand years ago. Since the world's population reached over 7 billion in 2012, that means less than 10 percent of all

the people in the world could be actively enlisted in this Great Commission army.<sup>3</sup>

We are in the business of enlisting more people and more churches in that fighting force. We believe the army will grow. But given those odds, it would be easy to assume we can't win this war.

But don't forget – we serve the God who used a shepherd boy to bring down a giant (1 Samuel 17:47-50). We serve the God who used a ragtag bunch of Israeli refugees to bring down the mighty city of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-27). We serve the God who sent an angel to a man named Gideon, self-described as the least member of the weakest family in his tribe. Gideon didn't want to go into battle, but God told him: *Go in the strength you have ... I will be with you* (Judges 6:11-16). So in the strength of the Lord, Gideon and his three hundred men defeated a coalition of armies marching against Israel (Judges 7:16-25).

We serve a God who specializes in using seemingly insignificant people with seemingly insignificant resources. And if they are willing to fight in His power and follow His battle plan, He will use them to bring down empires. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, God promises: *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness*. We've seen it throughout history in the visible, political world. But it has also happened in the invisible, spiritual world. And it will continue to happen, but only as we follow the mandates that make up the Bible's battle plan.

### Our First Mandate: Stewardship

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, a *regent* is defined as “a person who rules a kingdom in the absence of the sovereign.” As God's regents on earth, we are subject to the stewardship mandate, which goes all the way back to the beginning of creation in Genesis 1. Some call this the cultural or creation mandate, but I prefer to call it the stewardship

mandate. The Scripture states: *God **blessed** them and said to them, “**Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground** (Genesis 1:28, emphasis added).*

Note the six ingredients of this particular verse: (1) God’s blessing, (2) fruitfulness, (3) increase, (4) filling, (5) subduing, and (6) ruling. This process may be seen as a “cycle of blessing.” Let’s look at the individual elements so we can better understand this powerful mandate.

### *1. Stewardship begins with God’s blessing*

Before assigning responsibilities to the first couple, the Creator blessed them. In the Hebrew, the word that we have translated as *blessed* is a graphic term used to describe the attaching of one’s name to those who are in a family. It describes the bestowal of prestige or authority, as when a king dispatches a messenger in his own name. In Genesis 1:28 we see a picture of God blessing Adam and Eve. After creating them, God extended His hand to signify their acceptance into His family. He attached His name to them and gave them His authority. Adam and Eve held within them the seed of all mankind, so symbolically, God extended this same blessing to every individual who chooses to become part of His family.

### *2. The productivity of stewardship*

The charge to Adam and Eve to be fruitful naturally refers to the procreation of the human race. But keep in mind that God’s original intention was a kingdom on earth, to be ruled by His regents. In the fallen world, our mandate is to give birth to spiritual children.

### 3. *A result of stewardship*

In that original passage, God indicated that, in His plan, productivity leads to increase. The Hebrew word used here refers to abundance. In the original language, *abundance* is not just a farming term; it is also a hunting term, which refers to shooting an arrow into a target. It would be silly for a deer hunter to shoot arrows randomly into the woods. To achieve abundance, he would have to aim at a specific target. In our current spiritual environment, a church that simply goes to all the world to “be busy for Jesus” will never achieve the abundance that God has in mind. Like the flight of an arrow, church programs, resources, prayers, and finances must be directed in a vital way to complete the mission that God mandates. Churches should strategically shoot arrows to subdue the Enemy and extend God’s grace where the kingdom of darkness has maintained strongholds. The result should be individuals saved, disciples taught, and churches planted and developed. We see that biblical stewardship should guide every believer in a church to generate wealth to finish the Great Commission. Some churches give twenty-five dollars a month to dozens of missionaries. This can be admirable in deed, but the strategic element would dictate giving to all four quadrants of Acts 1:8 – Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Each church and each individual is not able to support all four quadrants, but when we work in unity with others, the task can be accomplished. And, as we consider generating wealth for kingdom advancement, we should give generously so individual missionaries have an adequate personal and project budget.

### 4. *The extent of stewardship*

The fourth ingredient of Genesis 1:28 is *fill the earth*. The Hebrew term refers to overflowing, furnishing, and satisfying. Productivity should not be contained in the environment where

it originates; it should overflow. In the spiritual environment, a local church should never be satisfied with hoarding God's blessings. And the Christian church in general should target the desert regions that are being governed by Hindu, Buddhist, animist, and Muslim ways of relating to the spiritual dimension. We must impact the world's spiritual wastelands where the "waiting world" of the unreached have no way to hear the gospel in a way that they can understand.

#### *5. The victory of stewardship*

The Lord also charged the first man and woman to subdue the earth. In the original language, the word that we have translated as *subdue* is *kabash*. When my twenty-two-year ministry with Teen Challenge brought me to New York, I heard Jewish people say, "I'll put the *kabash* on somebody," which literally meant they intended to whack that person over the head. *Kabash* in the Hebrew means "to tread down, to conquer, to subjugate." It includes the idea of military conquest. The church too is to subdue the earth. True stewardship of the church's blessings, becoming productive with strategic increase, and overflowing with satisfaction to the desert regions is the church's role in subduing the earth.

#### *6. The purpose of stewardship*

This leads us to ruling. The Old Testament term *rule* can mean "to tread down as wine in a winepress, to prevail over, to reign over, and to take possession." The eventual goal of this "cycle of blessing" is the expansion of God's kingdom in this world by prevailing over the forces of darkness.<sup>b</sup>

**Are Local Churches Following the Stewardship Mandate?**  
 God wants every local church to use its blessings to yield

<sup>b</sup> See Illustrations 3 and 4 in Appendix G

productivity, strategic increase, filling, and satisfaction. The eventual goal is to subdue the whole earth, extending the rule of God's kingdom. These all follow the steps outlined in the first mandate of Scripture – the stewardship mandate. So we all have to ask the big question: Are local churches obeying this mandate?

### *1. Finances*

Let's admit right up front that money is not necessarily the best evidence of God's blessing. Many people who are earnest disciples of our Lord are poor. But, in the face of that admission, let's also note that God has blessed Western Christians with tremendous wealth. Missions data has estimated that church members in the United States alone earn around 35 trillion dollars per year. Yet of that amount, less than 626 billion dollars will be given to Christian causes per year, and only 35 billion will go to global foreign missions.<sup>4</sup> Granted, not all church members are truly Christian, but the figures are still abysmal. They indicate that American church members give less than 2 percent of their income to Christian causes, and of the amount invested, only a small percentage is given to the task of world evangelization. One agency that examines Christian giving has noted an overall decline in total contributions over the past forty years. In 1968, the average American gave 3.68 percent of his income to the church. In 2007, that percentage had decreased to 2.56, a decline of 18 percent.<sup>5</sup> These statistics clearly indicate that American Christians have failed to understand the cycle of blessings evident in the stewardship mandate.

*Good Stewardship?  
No – giving to churches  
and missions is declining.*

### *2. Other Christian resources*

Our resources for building God's kingdom aren't limited to

money. In the West, for instance, we have an incredible supply of Bibles. Just think about how many Bibles you have in your home. Most of us who claim to follow Christ and who live in a Western country have several Bibles, even in several different translations. Admittedly, many unreached peoples have no written language. According to the International Orality Network, 5.7 billion people are oral learners and have little or no access to resources about Christ. A great many of the remaining unreached people groups live in these predominately oral societies.<sup>6</sup> The few groups that do have written languages are still waiting for the Scriptures to be translated. But let's face it – even in the face of those kinds of equalizers, the Western church in general is guilty of hoarding its resources.

However, some organizations have strategically used technology to make great strides in overcoming illiteracy. Since 1979, *The JESUS Film*, a video version of the life of Jesus, has been translated into more than 1,200 different languages and has reached billions of people.<sup>7</sup> The Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) now broadcasts the gospel in sixty-five languages across 147 countries.<sup>8</sup> Global Recordings Network (GRN) uses storytelling to reach people around the world. The GRN trains and equips native peoples around the world to utilize technology such as CDs, podcasts, Bluetooth, email, and other audio and video media to share the basic teachings of Christ in their native tongue.<sup>9</sup> As technology advances, opportunities to use mobile devices to share the gospel in unreached tribes and people groups will continue to become more effective.

### *3. Our people*

Our blessings have multiplied in the West, yet we have kept much of them to ourselves. We have been fruitful. We have multiplied. But we have failed to fill the earth and subdue it for our Lord. We have failed to overflow to those regions that

need to hear the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the one area where that is most noticeable is in the distribution of full-time Christian workers. The Joshua Project has counted 165 out of the 238 countries of the world that can be described as “heavily Christianized.”<sup>10</sup> Yet more than two-thirds of the world’s population continues to live in darkness.

As we fail to steward our blessings, obediently moving into increase and overflowing to the realms where God’s kingdom needs to be expanded, we will also fail to subdue the earth and rule it for God’s pleasure.

Many years ago, Isobel Kuhn, a great missionary to China, noted: “I believe that in each generation God has called enough men and women to evangelize all the yet unreached tribes of the earth.... Everywhere I go, I constantly meet with men and women who say to me, ‘When I was young, I wanted to be a missionary, but I got married instead.’ Or, ‘My parents dissuaded me,’ or some such thing. No, it is not God who does not call. It is *man* who will not respond!”<sup>11</sup> (italics original)

The statistics we’ve noted seem to underscore Kuhn’s heartfelt statement. The global church, and therefore every local church, must learn obedience. If we fail to obey the mandate of stewardship, then we fail to fulfill God’s very purpose in creation. How can we say we are His disciples if we don’t follow where He leads?

Our God is awesome. He doesn’t need to work through us to accomplish His purposes. Yet He honors us with an invitation to partner with Him. He gives us the privilege of participating with Him in building His kingdom on this earth. The first step in that direction lies in our obedience to this mandate of stewardship.

## Chapter 4

# The Second Mandate

*There is no biblical mission without biblical ethics.*  
—Christopher J. H. Write

**W**e showed in chapter 2 that God’s intention for the world He created has not changed. He always intended to build His kingdom. He planned for that when He created the world, and His plan did not change when Adam and Eve sinned. We also talked in chapter 1 about Scripture’s first mandate, the stewardship mandate, and we described how it sets the standard for missionary outreach. Also, it is a foundational mandate for kingdom life in daily practice. Now let’s look at the New Testament mandate, which gives direct marching orders to every person and every congregation that claims to follow Christ.

### Preach the Good News

The evangelistic mandate found in Mark 16:15 calls all believers to witness for Jesus Christ. In this passage, Jesus told His disciples: *Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*

In context, this is more than preaching from a church pulpit

or preaching as an evangelist. This mandate begins with Christ setting the example of “incarnation” (that is, living the gospel in our community and the world). *The Message*, a scriptural paraphrase by Eugene Peterson, describes Christ’s coming to earth like this: *The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood* (John 1:14). Christ intends for clergy and laity alike to develop an “incarnational lifestyle” – living out the gospel, taking it into the streets and shops and homes of our neighborhoods, and sharing Jesus Christ through lifestyle and personal testimony. This is the task of all believers, not just the ones who are paid to represent Christ in the pulpit.

The evangelistic mandate in Mark 16:15 also defines the target for evangelism – the whole world. *Go into all the world* could

*Go into all the world could be translated into the original Greek as – Go and enter everyone’s world.*

be translated from the original Greek as *Go and enter everyone’s world*. Five verses later, we see the beginning of the process of obedience: *Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it* (Mark 16:20).

The disciples’ response to the Lord’s command is beautiful and purposeful. They went out witnessing and preaching. And the Lord worked with them, producing signs and wonders to confirm their ministry. Today, signs and wonders still occur, especially overseas, but churches must first obey the evangelistic mandate. They must first *go*, and *then* signs and wonders will follow.

### Make Disciples

An accompanying passage in Matthew 28:18-20 clarifies Jesus’ intentions. These verses record Jesus saying to His disciples: *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name*

*of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

Authority in the Greek refers to delegated power, as in the power of attorney. This passage indicates that Christ's authority is the strong foundation of this Great Commission. Jesus' authority was delegated to Him by His Father, so that He would delegate it to believers. When we obey Christ's mandate, we carry the spiritual equivalent of His power of attorney. And since He is the King of Kings and the Lord of the universe, that's pretty potent authority. This is authority to preach, heal, and see the signs and wonders that Jesus saw in His ministry.

Based on that, Jesus literally said, "Having gone, make disciples." You see, the word we have translated *go* in this passage is not a command. It literally translates "having gone." Christ's command is actually in the second part of this verse – *make disciples* – for it is in the imperative form. But it assumes His followers will be going every day, in a continuous action, to the entire world. Notice Jesus didn't say, "Go into all the world and be active. Have programs. Plan activities..." He said, "Make disciples." As we obey, the natural result will be the gathering of these disciples into local churches. This should be the church's strategic direction in its "going-ness."

Breaking this down then, we see three important points:

1. The *going* is assumed.
2. The *task* is making disciples.
3. The *target* is the nations; that is, people groups.

### Surveying the Battlefields

Jesus called His followers to make disciples in every nation and gather them for the purpose of baptizing and teaching. The

word for *teaching* in Matthew 28:20 literally means “communicating knowledge in a way that shapes and forms the human will.” This powerful form of communication directs people to obey Jesus Christ. I encourage you to stop for a moment and contemplate the impact of this expanded definition.

*Church planting is the result of discipling.*

We see that making disciples is an imperative action following the imperative to witness and evangelize. And where do disciples gather? In local churches. Church planting is not commanded in the New Testament, but it is the natural consequence of discipling and “shaping the human will,” as seen in the book of Acts. Churches can meet in a home, school, business, church building, or under a tree.

In chapter 2, we talked about the Greek word that we’ve translated *nations*. We established that it doesn’t refer to geopolitical countries, but rather to groups of people who share a common language, ethnic identity, and culture. In the United States, we have a group of people who call themselves the Navajo *Nation*. They share a common language, ethnic identity, and culture. They are not just identified by political borders within which they live. This represents the biblical understanding of the word *nation*.

By this people-group view of the world, we see Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Kazakhs as separate, culturally identifiable clans who may or may not be distinctly identified with one individual geopolitical country. Within this framework, if two distinct people groups live in the same country and one people group is Christian, the other might not be. The gospel will not cross language and cultural barriers into a new people group unless someone intentionally plans to make that happen. If we intend to obey Christ’s “marching orders,” we can no longer focus on geopolitical countries. Dr. Donald McGavran, late

missiologist and professor, said, “Look at the world through people-group eyes, not country eyes.”

Each of the more than sixty-five hundred people groups who have little or no access to the gospel need an individual strategy. India, for instance, is a single country with geopolitical borders. But it’s also a mosaic of more than twenty-two hundred individual and separate ethno-linguistic groups. Over 90 percent of those groups are virtually unreached – groups like the Hindu Dhobis (over twelve million), the Kandu (over two million), and the Meitei (over one million) people.<sup>1</sup> We must develop specific strategies for each group that we intend to penetrate with the gospel.

For instance, almost twelve million Najdi Bedouin live in Saudi Arabia and surrounding countries. Natives of the Arabian Desert, those considered true Bedouin, continue to live as nomadic shepherds, raiding caravans that travel through the desert. With no permanent home, these nomads live in portable tents made from goat hair and have migrated primarily to the Negev Desert. Many have settled in Jordan, Iraq, and Syria to start farms or earn money from jobs (a disgrace to their tradition) in order to survive. As Sunni Muslims, most Bedouin follow the teaching of Islam and risk being put to death if they choose to follow Christ. Although portions of the Bible were translated into their language in 2013, the Joshua Project reports that no active church planting has occurred within the past two years. Our best estimates are that few have heard the gospel in any form.<sup>2</sup> (For more information about the Najdi and other people groups, see Appendix E, Joshua Project and Adopt-A-People Clearing House.)

How tragic! Yet the Bedouin represent thousands of people groups who share similar spiritual circumstances. If you placed dots on a map to represent the approximate homes of each of those unreached people groups, you would see most of them

clustered together from the west coast of northern Africa, across the Middle East and southern Asia, as far as the Pacific Ocean. If you drew two east-west lines, one at 10 degrees north latitude and one at 40 degrees north latitude, you would see the corridor where most of the world's unreached people groups live. This stretch of the globe has been dubbed the 10/40 Window.

According to the Joshua Project, 5,492 of the world's estimated 6,573 unreached people groups (83 percent) live in the 10/40 Window. But that's not all. Eighty percent of the world's poorest people also live in this corridor. And the headquarters for every major non-Christian religion lie within this region. So the majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and tribal religionists live within the 10/40 Window too.<sup>3</sup> If we are to reach all the world's people groups, this area must be the growing emphasis of missionary work.

### The Blessings of Obedience

Rosalind Goforth, missionary to China, once remarked: "When He asks for and receives our all, He gives in return that which is above price – His own presence. The price is not great when compared with what He gives in return; it is our blindness and our unwillingness to yield that make it seem great."<sup>4</sup>

Her comment underscores the promise at the end of Matthew 28:18-20: *And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* God's promise of His presence assumes our obedience to the Great Commission. God is not asking every believer to don missionary apparel and become a cross-cultural missionary, but every believer does have a role to play (see chapter 7).

The promise of His presence is the best reward for our obedience, but God also offers other blessings:

*1. He gives the extraordinary promise of blessing in Genesis 12:1-3.* This passage is sometimes called the Great Commission of the

Old Testament. It records Abram's call to initiate the lineage of a missionary nation. In verse 1, God commanded Abram to leave his home for an undisclosed destination. This is comparable to the first element of the New Testament's commission to *Go into all the world*. With this calling, God promised Abram: *I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you* (emphasis added). *Peoples* here refers to communities, families, or people groups. Similar to Matthew 28:19, we see that Abram was blessed with God's grace and ability to raise up a missionary nation to bless all *peoples* on earth.

How does this apply to believers today? The apostle Paul provides the answer: *Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."* So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith (Galatians 3:8-9, emphasis added). By faith, believers are part of Abraham's lineage, so we share his blessing as well as his commission. Abraham's obedience opened the door for God to shower him with blessings that would be passed on to all the earth's cultural groups. Like Abraham, we are to take of the Lord's blessings and pass them on to all the nations and families of the earth. The Great Commission of the Old Testament (Genesis 12:1-3) is part of the gospel message in the New Testament. The gospel is not complete without the Great Commission. When we receive the gospel, we are to be obedient to the Great Commission.

*The Gospel is not complete without the Great Commission.*

2. *The Lord has pledged the power made available at Pentecost.* Jesus told the disciples: *"But you will receive power when the*

*Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).*

The Greek word for this *power* describes “might that exerts ability, influence, and that reproduces itself.” This power is not the same as the authority that Christ referred to when He gave the original discipleship mandate. Remember that the Great Commission is based on Christ’s supreme authority that He delegates to us. But the promise in Acts 1:8 is for a dynamic power from the Holy Spirit. This power works hand in hand with authority. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, along with the authority we have in Christ, we are properly equipped to dismantle principalities. Because of this, we are thoroughly equipped to expand the kingdom to all the world’s people groups.

The whole outline of the book of Acts is found in this one verse. The disciples went into Jerusalem, then into Judea and Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth. We see here that Jerusalem and Judea are within the same culture – this is monocultural evangelism (E-1, see Glossary of Terms). Samaria symbolizes God’s people moving out into another culture, a near-neighbor-type culture – like Americans going to Germany (E-2). The ends of the earth represent those peoples who live within a culture that is radically different from our own – a culture that holds a different worldview and different values (E-3). For example, Western countries view time as linear, while Eastern countries view time as circular. God calls us to work in all three realms simultaneously. The call to cross-cultural missions (E-2 and E-3) is never to detract from local evangelism (E1) and vice versa.

### The Prophecy of Fulfillment

At the close of this book, I’ll explain why this great spiritual battle is a “winnable war.” For now, the goal of reaching every

unevangelized cultural group is no mere missions whim. Jesus encouraged His followers with a prophecy and a promise of success. Matthew 24:14 says, *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations [peoples], and then the end will come.*

The King of Kings is determined to have the Uyghurs of China and the Albanians and Kirghiz of Kyrgyzstan in His kingdom before the end of this age. Our Lord has set His heart on the unreached peoples, and He has decreed that they will hear about their Savior. The final cultural group to receive the news of Calvary will, like the last grain of sand in the hourglass, signal the end of the task. No one knows exactly how close we are, because research data on the extent of evangelization is never precise or current. But as we've noted, our best estimates indicate more than sixty-five hundred unreached people groups still exist.

With so many people groups unreached, it is inconceivable that Christ would be pleased that believers and churches maintain local programs with a blind eye toward His plans for the world. In no way does God want us to limit our church life to local activity in which we keep busy with our own personal needs like a hamster running a big wheel. We have a lot of work to do in the world. The Lord will bring it to pass, and we all have the privilege of discovering our own role in the process.

The prophecy of fulfillment refers to the gospel of the kingdom. This is not just a gospel of salvation. We have a message of kingdom power that restores lives, families, and cultures to the image of the Creator and makes us members of His kingdom. Remember, the gospel of the kingdom is one of signs, wonders, and miracles. This is the power and authority of God in forward advancement.

## Chapter 5

### Real Churches – Hometown Missions Bases

*An introverted church, turned in on itself, preoccupied with its own survival, has virtually forfeited the right to be a church, for it is denying a major part of its own being.*

—John R. W. Stott

I believe local churches hold the tools God wants to use to expand His kingdom to every nook and cranny of our globe. They hold the world's future in their hands. God wants to use them as hometown bases for global operations, recruiting personnel, and developing strategies. They will provide resources and training for God's people to engage Satan's kingdom in battle – and win.

The people groups who remain in Satan's strongholds live in regions that are essentially closed to traditional methods of sharing the gospel. In the missions community, these countries are known as Restricted Access Nations (RANs), where we must deploy creative access strategies. These places are dominated by Islam or Hinduism or Buddhism. The people living here are subject to religious and political systems that are hostile

to the gospel. They live in the few nations that remain as bastions of anti-Christianity, attempting to squash every form of Christian expression. They live in remote regions that must be reached by foot or on horseback. They tremble in fear of retribution from the spirit world. Satan has established plenty of barriers and possibilities of ambush. But despite this, we know from Scripture that His kingdom will expand to take in every people group in His time.

The key to seeing His plan fulfilled in our lifetime lies in the work of the Holy Spirit convincing believers to enlist in this war. Every individual Christian and congregation has a responsibility. We will win this war as every group of believers in the world responds in obedience to the biblical battle plan and in compassion to the drastic situation faced by billions of people worldwide. It will happen as churches develop the desire to be a hometown base for global operations.

### Describing a Hometown Base for Global Operations

When I refer to a *church*, I don't mean the building. From the biblical viewpoint, the traditional building with a steeple is not essential. In fact, some of the world's most powerful churches don't have such a building – they meet in homes.

Secondly, a church's essence is not its departments or programs. Secular businesses and service organizations have departments and programs. A specific organizational structure doesn't differentiate a church either. A church is a local gathering of God's people who are built up by God's Spirit working in and among them. It is not only a visible institution, but also a living organism that grows from divinely networked relationships.

The interactions between God and His people and the divine effect on people's relationships with each other and the world are what create a church. These things have eternal significance; the buildings and the organizational structure do not. Within

this framework, three dynamics set the church apart from all other institutions:

### *1. Christ's redemptive work*

Redemption is a complete work when we receive Christ, but it's also an ongoing work. The apostle Paul noted: *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst* (1 Timothy 1:15). The form of the word for *save*, as written in ancient manuscripts, means that salvation is complete.

However, according to Romans 5:10: *For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!* In the original language, the phrase translated *shall ... be saved* shows a continuous activity. We experience salvation as God uncovers areas of our lives that need spiritual course correction. He redeems those things as we confess them to Him and choose to eliminate them from our lives. This is sanctification.

Scripture also tells us that when Jesus appears, we will become like Him (1 John 3:2). Even our physical bodies will be transformed by the complete work of salvation. This is glorification. So, biblically speaking, redemption is a process that encompasses our past, present, and future. In a nutshell, you could explain it like this:

- We have been saved (past). This is the doctrine of salvation.
- We are being saved (present). This is the doctrine of sanctification.
- We shall be saved (future). This is the doctrine of the glorification of our bodies when Jesus returns.

## 2. *The power of the Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit empowers us to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). That means He specifically intends every individual Christian and every local congregation to have a strategic ministry in their own communities, in cultures that are similar to theirs, and in extending to cultures that are entirely different from theirs. The verse doesn't say to develop ministry in Jerusalem first, and then in Judea, and then in Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth. Admittedly, it happened that way in the book of Acts. But they were just getting started. I believe God intends for local churches to engage in these ministries simultaneously.

The power to support this kind of global perspective will come only as we experience the daily rejuvenation of a continuing, ongoing relationship with the Lord through the Holy Spirit. One filling of the Holy Spirit five years ago will not support this kind of ministry today. Ephesians 5:18 commands us to *be filled with the Spirit*. The Greek tense for the phrase *be filled* is in the imperative. This filling is something the Spirit does to us. We don't fill ourselves. In the original language, the verb form also teaches that we are currently filled, but we are to continue being filled by the Spirit. That type of continual empowerment by and dependence on the Holy Spirit will enable a global vision.

## 3. *The revelation of God's Word*

The apostle Paul wrote to the church of Ephesus: *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation* (Ephesians 1:17). The language implies an ongoing revelation of who God is, who we are in Him, and how we can be used to accomplish His plan in this world.

## Spiritual Aspects of Church Life

These three dimensions, played out in a continuous cycle in a healthy church, rest completely on the interaction between God and His people. When all of those things are operating in the way God intended, you should begin to see at least four results growing in your church.

### *1. Spirit-filled leadership*

As God works among His people, He blesses them with different gifts, which include supernatural abilities to lead a church in fulfilling the mission of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11). Seven motivational gifts move the church forward under God's direction (Romans 12:6-8), and nine manifestation gifts are made available to every member of the body of Christ to release the anointing of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

Within that framework, though, we must acknowledge the importance of God-inspired leadership. When I was a professor at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, my missions classes conducted a survey and found that the senior pastor is the primary factor influencing a church's growth in missions. That fits with the scriptural plan. The original language term for *leadership* in Romans 12:8 means "to stand before." By implication, leadership requires an individual to stand before God and receive His vision. A scriptural leader finds out what God is doing, seeks His wisdom to impart this vision to His people, and then helps the people cooperate with what God is doing in their midst. Without the right kind of leadership, the local church will have little involvement in local evangelism or in world missions.

### *2. Edification of the church*

The Holy Spirit empowers believers in His body to build up

and train others. This is often called discipling, nurturing, teaching, or equipping.

### *3. Participation in worship and intercession*

As God's Spirit works among His people, He draws out worship. That is key in this process, for all people tend to imitate what they worship. It may be conscious or unconscious, but the truth of the matter is, we develop into what we venerate. Scripture clearly emphasizes this when it says, *Those who make them [idols] will be like them, and so will all who trust in them* (Psalm 115:8). So if you venerate the American culture, you'll become like it. If you venerate a certain position in a company, you will become like the person you think should fill that position. And if you worship Jesus, you'll become more and more like Him. When we allow God to work in our lives, He draws worship from us. As we open our lives to Him, seeing more and more of who He is and what He is doing, we become more like Him. We will be drawn into intercession and communion with Him – a daily lifestyle of prayer.

### *4. Desire for fellowship*

The local church is a network of relationships – first with God, then with each other. The doorway to growth in God's kingdom depends on the health of these relationships. The strength of these relationships supports continued individual and corporate growth.

## The Necessary Goal

All of those ingredients are crucial to the inner and outer workings of a healthy church. But even if the three dynamics and the four aspects of God's work are present, essential ingredients may still be missing.

Look again at the passage that describes Christ's commissioning

of the church – Matthew 28:18-20. This passage records Jesus telling His followers: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

From this beginning, Christ proclaimed the mission of the church: to go to *all nations* (people) of the earth, evangelizing, discipling, baptizing, and teaching them. This is not a series of items tacked on to a long list for the appearance of completeness or a form of spiritual extra credit. Along with worship and glorifying God, it’s the reason for the church’s (the body of Christ’s) existence, and therefore, it’s the reason for every local church’s existence. Jesus’ last words become His marching orders for us, the reason for existence for the entire church body, not just for the missions department. Some of these nations are unreached people groups, the “waiting world” that requires cross-cultural missionary sending.

*The local church is the seedbed of missions.*

Certainly, our church people need discipling, equipping, and nurturing, so they can experience greater wholeness. But our blessings, like Abraham’s, are given so we can bless others. As we experience healing and grow in wisdom, we are better equipped to participate in God’s mission of the worldwide network of believers, the body of Christ. We are corporately commissioned to go to all people groups – every tribe, every tongue, every people – with the covenant blessings of Christ.

Of course, many groups that lack a missions spirit are commonly called churches also. They have a church structure with departments, committees, and programs, but without the kingdom mission. When an institutional spirit overrides a group’s missionary spirit, the departments begin to play games that

are common to worldly institutions. They vie for funds, staff, and prominence. The church's preeminent purpose of building God's global kingdom tends to be forgotten.

In contrast to that kind of church, leaders and laity must pursue the factors that will make each local fellowship a Great Commission church. This type of congregation is connected to the world, because it obeys its Lord's command. It has compassion for those whose current misery is miniscule, compared to the eternal state of a Christless eternity that awaits them because they never heard the gospel in a way they could understand and respond. Every department and every program in this church, from singing in the choir to child care, can be done with the spirit of outreach.

A biblical discipleship course or program, such as MasterLife (available from the Southern Baptist Convention) or the 2:7 Series (available from The Navigators), could help every local church to encourage a spirit of outreach. In such a course, each member's spiritual gifts can be discovered, and they can be placed in appropriate ministry within the church. Not everyone who is saved is a growing spiritual disciple. The church needs to equip people to become the kind of disciple that grows and disciples others. Spiritual gifts should be understood as well. A person's ministry is colored by his or her motivational and ministry gifts, so people need to be placed in the body according to their gifts.

### Measuring the Mobilization

Based on what you've read so far, consider your own congregation. Are you connected to the world, going to others with the good news? If so, are you ministering through same-culture evangelism in your Jerusalem and Judea? Even reaching peoples within Westernized societies (such as those in the city-cultures of Latin America or Europe or Africa) in our day is comparable

to the church in Acts going to the neighboring Semitic culture of Samaria. Are you going beyond your Jerusalem? The Lord's mandate for us to go to the ends of the earth means crossing even greater cultural, social, and political barriers.

The apostle Paul reflected this belief when he wrote to the Corinthian believers: *Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you* (2 Corinthians 10:15-16). Paul defined the goal for every local church. But of course, the question is, how do we get from here to there?

The rest of this book will give additional guidelines to help you answer that for your own congregation. First, I'll explain that AIMS has developed a set of measurable attributes by which you can measure your congregation's progress in its initial mobilization (Appendix B).

### Blessing Yields Responsibility

In Christ, the mobilization of a congregation for global missions is more than possible, if you proceed with the guidance of the Holy Spirit one step at a time. Remember, Scripture repeatedly tells us that in God's plan to expand His kingdom, blessing always yields responsibility. Fulfillment of that responsibility always yields greater blessing. And so the cycle continues.

Living where we do in this world, we have been blessed with many resources. In Christ, we are heirs to every spiritual blessing. And residing within every blessing is the seed of a mission and the promise of fulfillment. It's time for the church to challenge the forces of darkness, to claim the promised triumph of the bride of Christ, and to prevail against the gates of hell that resist our progress to fulfill Matthew 24:14.

What are the actual steps to building a hometown missions base? The rest of this book will offer specific suggestions to help

you get from where you are to where you need to be in your continuum of missionary outreach. In His infinite creativity, God has a unique, custom-made plan for your church. I can make suggestions, but He will tell you how to apply them.

## Chapter 6

### Recruiting Officers and Developing a Strategy

*As long as I see anything to be done for God, life is worth having; but O how vain and unworthy it is to live for any lower end!*

—David Brainerd

If God designed local churches to be the missions base, then it stands to reason that local pastors and church leaders are commanders in this spiritual war. Pastors and church leaders are like generals who marshal troops and resources. They enlist soldiers and motivate troops. They recruit officers who will follow their example – mobilizing, strategizing, and tending to the details that will make the battle plan succeed.

History books hold the stories of countless generals who invaded hostile territories to enlarge the empires they represented. But not one of those generals earned the victory alone. All of them had legions of troops as well as a corps of under-officers and aides. Local churches can be successful in ministry, impacting regions around the world, but it begins with the pastor and continues with the process of recruiting officers to serve on a stellar missions team.

## Building a Winning Missions Team

Your missions team/task force is one of the primary bodies that will assume the task of mobilizing your local church. This group forms your corps of under-officers who build and maintain the vision and strategy to propel your church into successful ministry.

Your missions team is not just another church department. Rather, this group carries the responsibility to orient every department and ministry of the local church toward biblical Great Commission goals. Whether this group is called the foreign missions board, the missions council, or the cross-cultural missions team is not important, but its success is crucial to

*The missions team reproduces vision, creativity and wisdom for greater results.*

building a new missions emphasis or maintaining or improving an existing one.

If your church lacks an established missions task force, begin by establishing a missions prayer fellowship. Even two or three people who have expressed interest in global ministry or in missions can begin praying together. This core group would meet primarily for interceding for the world, for missionaries, and for the local church's involvement in missions. Once a prayer fellowship is established, then "closet" prayer warriors who have been distracted by other matters will be encouraged to get involved. Even if the group only meets for one hour each month, that prayer will increase the learning and sharpen the vision for greater kingdom work. As this group grows, natural leaders will arise as candidates for your missions task force.

To have the maximum impact on the church, the missions task force should be set within the existing church government. The task force should work in unity and cooperation with other church leaders, never working apart from or in opposition to the overall vision and structure of the church.

Remember, the missions task force fulfills a leadership role in the church, guiding the fellowship towards accomplishing its Great Commission goals. The missions task force is not just a group of people who control the purse strings for the missions budget. If that's the primary motivation, this group will not accomplish anything truly significant. Rather, the missions task force is tasked to lead, guide, and inspire in the area of missions with the goal of seeing the church strategically carrying out a missions vision.

### The Qualifications

As you build a new missions task force or reinforce an existing one, people with a variety of spiritual gifts are necessary. This concept is important when filling any role in the church body. We've all seen situations where ministries succeeded because of the supernatural abilities of the people involved. Likewise, ministries have failed because people worked within their natural abilities (or the lack thereof) rather than working in the empowerment and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The process of developing a missions task force requires at least the same amount of care given to building any other ministry in the church. A task force needs a variety of gifts to enable the members to be missions mobilizers. This includes people who are adept in teaching, people who are willing to serve and help in behind-the-scenes tasks, and people who are capable of handling administrative details.

As you recruit people with a variety of gifts, you will build a solid core that is uniquely prepared to meet the challenges inherent in this kind of endeavor. When we do God's work, we must do it His way. That requires the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in every facet of preparation, in every event, in every task. Missionary outreach is at the center of God's heart, but as churches move into regions that are central to Satan's

control, spiritual opposition will grow increasingly grievous. When that time comes, people must operate and function in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the gifts that He provides.

Of course, other factors will guide your choices of people to serve in this strategic position. For instance, the candidate who has a proven ministry in the church and has demonstrated attitudes of service and commitment to your local fellowship is likely led by the Spirit. Only after much prayer, consider those who have a proven attitude of commitment and service over an extended time.

### Training is Essential

The missions task force should have some missions training. *Accelerating International Mission Strategies* offers basic missions seminars that are useful for this type of situation. Our introductory level curriculum, *Missions Foundations*, is a wonderful thirteen-week resource not only for missions training, but also for Sunday school classes or small group Bible studies. The full Harvest Connection seminar is available on a DVD set that includes twenty-minute teaching segments that can be used in small groups and prayer meetings. These resources, along with several others, are listed in Appendix C.

Practical training is also of great importance. I believe every task force member should have some type of cross-cultural experience. It may be a short-term trip to another part of the world or some type of work in a local cross-cultural setting. For instance, local cross-cultural experiences may include outreach to international students or refugees living in the community. This will give members a greater understanding of and stronger vision for missions. With global immigration, the mission field, even unreached peoples, have come to the Western doorstep.

Some type of training for trip participants before embarking on a short-term trip is always helpful. At every juncture

in this process, training is essential. In a physical war, officers who lead their battalions into battle have specialized training to prepare them for their tasks. Yet at the spiritual level, we often throw people into a spiritual battlefield with eternal consequences against an incredibly powerful Enemy, without giving them adequate training. Then we wonder why things fail or continue in the status quo.

### Responsibilities

Missions task force members should be trained and gifted for certain responsibilities. But the most important task applies to all participants, regardless of gifting and training: prayer. Without prayer, even the most gifted, committed, and trained group will not succeed. Praying and mobilizing others for prayer should be a primary concern of the missions task force.

Beyond that, the task force should meet regularly, and as different members are assigned tasks, a regular system of accountability should be established. Details for different kinds of mission endeavors will be laid out in future chapters. Note that the missions task force works in a variety of areas, such as education, prayer, conferences, missions budget, and long-term planning of strategy, research, and personnel.

Subtask forces may need to be established for some of these areas with each one reporting back to the entire group. For example, hosting an annual missions conference requires year-round planning and preparation. This should not take the time and energy of the entire task force. An effective subtask force can handle the details and report regularly back to the whole task force as needed.

Finally, an important job of the missions task force is developing a policy that will chart the course for all cross-cultural outreach endeavors considered by your congregation.

## Charting a Course

Missionary outreach is not very effective when using the “shotgun” approach. In the shotgun approach, soldiers shoot a stream of pellets to cover the widest area possible. This approach rarely hits any intended target, unless it is close. By contrast, a rifle shoots a single cartridge – a bullet that requires sole concentration on a specific target even at long range. To be truly effective in leading a congregation into cross-cultural outreach, missions task forces are more effective when they have a particular target (or vision) in mind. That requires a master strategy and a description of mutually held beliefs that will undergird specific procedures. That is essentially a Missions Policy and Strategy Statement (See *On the Cutting Edge*, Appendix C, #3).

Church leaders should provide guidelines for all aspects of the congregation’s missions program in a single strategy policy. This is not a legalistic list that inhibits the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is a flexible document, developed with the guidance of the Spirit to provide policies and goals related to how the church “does” missions. Proper development of a good missions policy includes at least five key components:

### *1. Prayer and teamwork*

When developing a missions policy, task force members must stay in prayer and be willing to work as a team with one another and with other church leadership. The process is as important as the final outcome, as task force members interact with one another and with God.

### *2. Philosophy*

The missions policy represents the unique philosophy of the individual church. Every church should strive to be a mobilized, Great Commission church. It’s important to remember that God has an overall plan for the completion of the Great

Commission, and He has a strategic plan that is unique for each local fellowship, giving specific tasks that fit miraculously into the big picture. That means each church may approach missions from a different angle because of the unique callings and gifts in that body.

### *3. Strategy*

The missions policy should reflect the strategy that will guide the church's present and future missions decisions. Having a one-, three-, and five-year plan and even a ten-year "forecast" shows a commitment to growth and allows for the accomplishment of goals that require an ongoing commitment.

### *4. Mobilization*

Out of the policy and strategy should flow a plan to take specific steps toward investing in the expansion of the church's missions vision. In other words, it should not only describe specific goals, but it should explain how the task force intends to mobilize the congregation and enlist volunteers to accomplish them. Specifically, it should address ways to involve the congregation in prayer, in learning more about the world and its needs, in giving, in sending missionaries from within the congregation, and finally in getting hands-on experience by going.

### *5. Flexibility*

Experts tell us that one of the major reasons military ventures fail is that the leadership fails to adapt to new situations or changes in environment. Alexander the Great, for instance, was a tremendous warrior. Yet his army eventually failed because the soldiers advanced ahead of their supply line, and they never adjusted to living off the land. Their strategy didn't flex with the circumstances.

Henry V, on the other hand, successfully defeated the French

in 1415, simply because he was able to lead his forces in an adaptation of his basic strategy. In August of 1415, King Henry V of England took fifteen hundred ships full of soldiers and supplies and transported this huge invasion force to France. By the middle of September, the troops had endured a lengthy but successful siege of a strategic French city. But sickness, coupled with desertions, had left Henry with only about nine hundred men-at-arms and five thousand archers. By October 25, the English situation seemed doomed. That's when the battle of Agincourt turned the tide for Henry V and his forces.

October 25 dawned gray and damp because of torrential rains the night before. Henry used his troops strategically to draw the French to attack. Hampered by heavy mud in the plowed field between the two armies, the French charge faltered, and horses and riders became easy targets for the English. Archers began shooting the horses, who pitched their riders to the ground. Those riders were unable to rise because of the weight of their armor, which at sixty to seventy pounds provided great protection while allowing a certain measure of agility in battle. However, if the wearer fell over, he was in great danger, for it took two men to help him stand up again.

When the second line of French soldiers advanced on foot, they also became mired in the mud. Under the weight of their armor and under a heavy rain of arrows, they fell forward on top of the men who were already on the ground. Many actually suffocated inside their visored helmets. The casualties sum up the entire story. Within an hour, when the battle was finished, about eleven thousand Frenchmen had lost their lives, while the English had lost only about a hundred. The tattered English soldiers, worn by battle, fatigued from disease, lacking in numbers, and half starved, won the battle. Why? Because they were able to adapt to the situation.<sup>1</sup>

If that kind of flexibility is crucial in physical warfare, we

must expect that it will be crucial in spiritual warfare as well. I encourage churches to review their missions policy and strategy statement each year. Keep it current. This document should never become a dusty, stale instrument which rules the missions program from the past. As the church grows and changes, and as the Spirit teaches and guides in new ways, the policy must also change. Thank God for word processors!

### Other Components

In addition to the above characteristics, a missions policy may include the following components:

#### *1. Statement of Purpose*

This statement summarizes the overall purpose of the missions program and how it impacts the whole of the church body.

#### *2. Structure of the Missions Task Force*

This section would specify the requirements for task force candidates, the responsibilities of the task force, the subtask force structure, and the length of service for task force members. Remember to let the structures serve the long-term vision, not inhibit the work that needs to be done.

#### *3. Financial Policies*

The policy will set guidelines for financial goals and priorities. We recommend that every church dedicate a minimum of 10 percent of the total church budget for missions (cross-cultural only) with at least a quarter of that being dedicated to work among unreached people groups. Then, do a Faith Promise program that will help the missions budget grow even faster. I like to refer to Faith Promise giving as “Grace Motivated and Spirit Empowered” giving.

#### 4. *Policies on Missionary Care and Support*

This section will answer questions like these: Is there a limit on the amount the church will provide for a missionary? How will the church care for missionaries on furlough? What kind of accountability is expected from the missionaries supported by the church?

#### 5. *Missions Education Planner*

This portion would lay out a long-term plan for implementing missions education into all facets of education, children through adults. It could also spell out guidelines for the annual missions conference.

#### 6. *Long-Term Missions Strategy*

This section would set long-term goals and the steps needed to reach those goals. The strategy should fit the philosophy of missions of the church. In the manual and/or seminar *On the Cutting Edge* (Appendix C, #3), you will find resources for developing your missions policy and strategy.

### What Does This Look Like in the Real World?

Accelerating International Mission Strategies has published an interactive manual called *On the Cutting Edge*. In addition to covering other specific missions ventures, this manual offers a step-by-step guide for developing a missions task force and writing a policy. This is crucial for a church that intends to rewrite the eternal destiny of people in other cultures (Appendix C, #3).

Lance Stoddart, missions pastor at Bethel Temple in Hampton, Virginia, told us how this works in his church. “The policy becomes the map or guide to help you reach your final goals,” he said. “Without a clear missions policy that everyone believes in and supports, you’re susceptible to whatever sounds good or whatever tugs the hardest at your heartstrings.”

Stoddart added: “Prior to establishing our missions policy, Bethel’s monthly support roster gave a good indication of the lack of clarity and strategy in its approach to missions. It was impossible to tell what priorities our church had for missions, if indeed we had any. In developing the policy, we had to ask ourselves what our priorities in missions were.”

Pastor Stoddart and his task force took that question to the Lord, and they came back with this list:

- Church planting
- Leadership training
- Focusing on unreached peoples
- Equipping the congregation for the work of ministry in an international setting

Then they set their priorities. Pastor Stoddart explained: “Our highest priority for Bethel Temple is identifying, equipping, placing, and supporting church-planting teams among the unreached people groups we believe God has called us to target. A lower priority is funding leadership training, which emphasizes reaching the unreached. A still-lower priority is funding a medical missionary working in an area that is already evangelized. Our lowest priority would be funding workers who assist an established national church in advancing their own home missions strategy.”

He added: “Of course there are exceptions. God’s will always supersedes our written document, so we wrote the document to reflect that.” (For more information about how Bethel Temple applied this concept of building a missions task force and writing a missions policy, I invite you to turn to *On the Cutting Edge*, Appendix C, #3 at the back of this book.)

Bethel Temple has recognized an important point – strategy

makes a great servant, but it's a lousy master. It should provide a framework for your cross-cultural outreach without controlling it. As the great missionary John R. Mott once remarked, "If these great things are to be achieved we must pay what it costs. What will be the price? Undoubtedly it involves giving ourselves to the study of missionary problems and strategy with all the thoroughness and tirelessness which have characterized the intellectual work of those men who have brought the most benefit to mankind."<sup>2</sup> When we are willing to pay that price, we will sow the seeds of victory.

## Chapter 7

### Necessity of Supply Lines

*To know the will of God we need an open Bible and  
an open map.  
—William Carey*

**O**n the morning of June 5, 1967, Israel declared war by bombing air bases housing Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, and even Iraqi military air units, rendering them almost useless. Within a few days, Israel had also taken over air bases in Sinai, Jerusalem, and the West Bank. By the sixth and final day of the war, they had pushed Egyptian and Syrian forces beyond the reach of Galilee.

The Six-Day War, as it has become known in history, was won before a single shot was ever fired. For years, Israel had invested heavily in intelligence operations that would bring them intimately close to their enemy. With the help of spies from Israel, Egypt, Europe, and America, Israel was able to infiltrate the Egyptian and Assyrian militaries and political infrastructures on the highest level, gaining priceless information that would become very useful in battle.

That information allowed Israeli intelligence to break the Egyptian code and relay a false message diverting a pilot who

was preparing to bomb Israeli lines. When the pilot questioned his orders, the intelligence officer was able to provide detailed information about his wife and family as proof. The pilot dropped the bomb into the sea and aborted the mission.

In another incidence, an Israeli intelligence officer gained enough information to impersonate an Egyptian officer and divert a lost battalion in Sinai away from the Israeli line. The officer led the battalion back to the POW camp where Israeli troops took control of Egyptian tanks and soldiers.

Even King Hussein of Jordan admitted that Israeli preparation won the war. “Their pilots knew exactly what to expect ... their pilots had a complete catalogue of the most minute details of each of the thirty-two Arab air bases, what objectives to strike, where, when, and how. We had nothing like that.”<sup>1</sup>

In the end, Israel won the war because they laid the groundwork ahead of time. Years of preparation paid off, and a war was won in only six days. Both sides recognized that wars can be won or lost because of the availability of resources and research.

### Supply Lines are Crucial

Supply lines are not only important in physical wars; they are crucial in spiritual wars as well. In looking back at the account of Living Stones Fellowship in chapter 1, individuals as well as churches must prepare in a variety of ways. After hearing the initial Harvest Connection seminar, they invited me back to teach Final Focus, another seminar that trained specifically in adopting an unreached people group. While the church as a whole took steps in adopting the Somalis of Tanzania, teams began to pray specifically for the people group. Over the course of many visits, various short-term teams spent years working alongside refugees, constructing homes, wells, medical clinics, and building relationships. All these activities developed a wonderful supply line, so when God moved in the hearts

of the refugees, they were ready to respond. Today, churches exist within that Somali refugee camp because Living Stones Fellowship and AIMS established appropriate logistical supply lines that paved the way.

Your church can do the same thing, but it must begin with your leaders. When leaders personally invest in cross-cultural ministry, their personal regard for the great global battle for the eternal future of individuals and entire people groups begins to grow. Remember that no two churches are alike. As you seek God's creativity in this process, you will find incredible resources within your church body. He has a specific plan to help you mobilize those resources, develop a supply line, and keep it open. I can't give you the exact details. God has a unique plan for your church. But I can give you some general suggestions that can apply to every local church.

*Goal – Have every believer personalize the six elements of personalizing the Great Commission.*

The process of mobilizing resources and enlisting individuals for global battlefields generally follows a specific six-point course. The first three items speak to the mobilization of resources. The last three speak to the enlisting of participants. These six items don't necessarily happen in order, but they are all crucial. Here are the six points personalizing the Great Commission. The rest of this book covers each of these points.

1. Praying
2. Learning
3. Giving
4. Sending
5. Welcoming (new immigrants)
6. Going<sup>c</sup>

<sup>c</sup> See Illustration 5 in Appendix G

These six steps of personalizing the Great Commission will help any believer to actualize the promises of both the Old and New Testament in being part of God’s Great Commission community. Note the promise to Israel, and now the church, in Isaiah 49:8-9:

This is what the LORD says:

*“In the time of my favor I will answer you,  
and in the day of salvation I will help you;  
I will keep you and will make you to be a  
covenant for the people,  
to restore the land  
and to reassign its desolate inheritances,  
to say to the captives, ‘Come out,’  
and to those in darkness, ‘Be free!’  
They will feed beside the roads and find pasture  
on every barren hill.*

The Lord promised five things: (1) In the time of His favor, He will answer us; (2) In the day of salvation, He will help us; (3) He will keep us (*keep* is a military term referring to guarding a city); (4) He will make us to be a covenant for the people to restore the land; (5) The result of these promises is that we become His “covenant connector” to those who still abide in darkness. Those in darkness will then be reassigned from their desolation and brought out of darkness into the light of God’s kingdom. God announces – BE FREE! This is a result of our personalizing the Great Commission. Wouldn’t it be simply fantastic if every believer did this?

When most churches venture into the arena of cross-cultural outreach within that framework, the Holy Spirit begins to grow their leader’s personal missions vision larger and larger. Adequately expressed, this growing concern, interest, and

vision speaks volumes to lay leaders or missions activists, who can also invest themselves in those six elements that fuel the missions growth spiral.

As you read the rest of this book, consider how local churches can establish healthy supply lines for those fighting on the world's spiritual frontlines. These supply lines are laid and strengthened by every believer obeying the six steps in "personalizing the Great Commission" (see page 65).

### Impacting the World through Prayer

At AIMS, we always say that prayer is the first work of missions and the ongoing work of missions. Prayer is the most important work we can do for missions. Without intercession, all the programs and methods in the world won't accomplish anything. Patrick Johnstone, original author of *Operation World*, says, "When we work and don't pray, we work. When we work and pray, God works!"<sup>2</sup>

R. A. Torrey once noted that we live in an age that depends on man's planning and machinery and determination. In fact, he said, the church has never been better organized or physically ready to accomplish everything God has commanded.

He said, "Our machinery is wonderful; it is just perfect, but, alas, it is machinery without power; and when things do not go right, instead of going to the real source of our failure, our neglect to depend upon God and to look to God for power, we look around to see if there is not some new organization we can set up, some new wheel that can be added to our machinery."

Torrey concluded: "We have altogether too many wheels already. What we need is not so much some new organization, some new wheel." According to this wise Christian leader, we need God's power. And we lack that power because we fail to

*"When we work and don't pray, we work. When we work and pray, God works!"*  
– *Operation World*

pray. “Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God’s infinite grace and power... but we must use the key.”<sup>3</sup>

Strategic prayer may birth burdens for specific countries or people groups. We saw that in Pastor Johnson’s story, but I’ve heard it from people all over the world. In 2005, during an international training of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), the seventy top denominational leaders from across Asia began experiencing a paradigm shift. “We don’t have enough prayer,” they said. As the conference came to a halt, participants from India, Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and other Asian countries began to seek God and intercede for the world’s unreached people groups. During that hour, things changed. Earlier in the year, these leaders had decided to focus on ten unreached people groups in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. After their intercession, they felt the Holy Spirit guiding them to focus their efforts on even more.

### *Individual prayer*

Every Christian should be committed to individual daily prayer for the world. As you’ve probably discovered, however, this type of commitment is not easy to fulfill. Whenever you make a commitment to pray, everything possible seems to distract you. Even good things get in the way. Prayer is hard work, but it is an essential part of reaching the world. And, as a side benefit, God uses it to generate in you a greater vision and heart for the work.

You also may have discovered how difficult it is to spend extended time in prayer for missions without knowing any specific needs. Without pertinent information, prayer becomes a quick “God-bless-all-the-missionaries-Amen!”

I recommend that every Bible-believing Christian get and use a copy of *Operation World* by Jason Mandryk. This informative guidebook provides a framework for systematic prayer for

every nation in the world. Within a year of using this resource on a daily basis, you will pray strategically and specifically for every country. This book has good and broad information covering topics such as the geography, social, cultural, political, and group-specific needs. Many parents of homeschoolers use this book as a teaching aid. By using it with a world map, you will see the world with new eyes. For years, Christianity has struggled to form in Somalia. Believers have been persecuted or martyred for their faith. But God chose a camp of refugees in Tanzania to begin to grow a church. Why? Because individuals in a church in Indiana began to pray.

#### *Family prayer*

I also encourage family prayer times. A world map is an especially great learning tool for children. As a family prays for a specific country, the children can locate it. Train your family to view every source of world information as a potential prayer guide. One family watches the evening news, and then takes time to pray for the various issues covered that evening. Another family learns fascinating things about other cultures through *National Geographic* articles and prays for those people groups to receive God's Word.

#### *Corporate prayer*

To be successful, prayer at the small group or congregational level requires not only commitment, but also leadership. The pastoral staff must model this prayer, so the congregation sees prayer as the priority. The staff must also emphasize prayer in teaching and in the establishment of programs.

Plans for group prayer may take many different forms. A missions prayer fellowship, meeting at least monthly, can spend concentrated time in corporate prayer. Group prayer requires at least as much information as individual prayer does. This kind of

vital information and specific needs are available in newsletters from missionaries supported by your church. Information from newsletters and other sources can be included in customized bulletin inserts, bulletin board notices, or minutes for missions prayer times during worship services. Your church may want to host an entire evening of prayer. Organizing these things is highly valued, because prayer is the key to world evangelization.

### Learning about the World

We cannot discuss prayer without mentioning the learning element. We need something to pray about, of course, but head knowledge gained through reading and research is just a starting point. Ideally, the goal is to move your congregation to learning by experience. Invite veteran missionaries to describe their personal experiences. People need these opportunities to relate to missionaries as real, fallible, growing people. This also provides a great atmosphere to ask questions about their work, their motivations, and their discoveries.

Planning a missions conference can give your local church a more concentrated dose of missions vision. Expect the conference to both educate and inspire the congregation, but be ready for some other exciting benefits too. For example, a missions conference gives interested visitors an appropriate context for considering the universal claims of Christ. The conference challenges believers to examine their commitment to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. Plus, churches that have an annual missions conference tend to give two to three times more to world missions than other churches, and have greater income per capita in general.

Be creative when planning a missions conference. Having guest speakers or missionaries whom your church supports would be great; remember, however, that a capable missionary might not necessarily be an accomplished public speaker.

Choose guest speakers carefully so the conference does not include mixed messages or contradicting elements. Choosing a theme on which each speaker can contribute specific information or insights helps keep the conference focused.

Creating a colorful, festive, and exciting atmosphere will greatly enhance your conference. Flags, maps, authentic costumes, and displays create an interactive environment. Consider inviting various missions agencies to host booths. There is no limit to the things you can do: missions-related films and slide shows, special meals and banquets, youth activities, and lots of missions music. One church transformed Sunday school rooms into four countries, one for each of the missionaries speaking at the conference. People visited each “country” and learned about that area of the world, talked to the missionary, and sampled ethnic food. Similarly, another church had a Buddhist room, a tribal room, a Muslim room, a Chinese room, and a Hindu room. They also had a mobilization room where the visitors learned about mobilizing the local church for missions. (For more ideas about how to host a missions conference and resources that will help you plan one, order *Missions Conference.Org* from AIMS.)

*The missions conference is the “lynch-pin” of missions education.*

Scheduling a missions conference can be done in many ways. Some churches devote an entire month to missions emphasis with special activities each Sunday and on various days throughout the month. Others may have a weeklong conference with meetings every evening, concluding with a big banquet or rally on Saturday or Sunday evening. Some simply have a weekend conference, beginning on Friday evening and continuing through Sunday. A church can work out almost any schedule, depending on the needs of the specific congregation. Scheduling the events in such a manner that a majority of the congregation can and will attend is important.

A missions conference takes work, planning, and a lot of prayer, but it is a great way to get your congregation involved in missions. Whether you have a one-day conference or a one-month conference, have a conference!

### Giving and the Faith Promise

In chapter 3, we discussed the abysmal statistics that indicate the lack of global investment on the part of American Christians. Although resources are not limited to money, the bottom line is that financial investment is crucial to cross-cultural ministry. Faith-filled generosity is an indispensable component for growth in a missions vision, be it through moral, financial, prayer, or logistical support. Prayer groups provide a tremendous opportunity for individuals to make personal investments of time and personal involvement. A ministry of encouragement through letters or gifts to missionaries is vitally significant too. But as Malla Moe, veteran missionary to South Africa, once said, “The gospel of Jesus Christ is free, but it takes money to keep the Gospel Wagon in Tongaland.”<sup>4</sup>

While I believe in and even challenge churches to apportion a percentage of their church offerings for missions, the budgetary apportionment method alone can severely limit the congregation’s vision for giving. Faith Promise giving is one of the most effective and meaningful ways to increase missions giving. In fact, thousands of churches have doubled their missions giving through Faith Promises. The renowned pastor and missionary statesman of the People’s Church in Toronto, Dr. Oswald J. Smith, testified that it was through the Faith Promise method that God taught him to give to missions. For more than sixty years, his leadership and that of his son have made the People’s Church one of the world’s premiere missions-active churches. They give millions of dollars to missions yearly, and

the giving of the People's Church rolls on – up to 60 percent of their total revenue on some occasions.

For a scriptural understanding of what I mean by Faith Promise, let's first examine two important passages.

#### *Old Testament*

Remember the story of God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? In the process of going to the specified place for the sacrifice, Isaac said to his father, "*The fire and wood are here, ... but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?*" Abraham answered, "*God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son*" (Genesis 22:7-8). Notice that Abraham trusted God concerning the sacrifice that he was commanded to offer. The New International Version phrases verse 8 as: *God himself will provide the lamb*. In the New King James Version, it's phrased: *God will provide for Himself the lamb*. The Hebrew language has strange and wonderful twists that allow God Himself to be used in either order. So we see that God Himself provides for Himself and for His mission through us.

#### *New Testament*

Now consider the apostle Paul's testimony: *For I testify that they [the Macedonian churches] gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us* (2 Corinthians 8:3-5). The Macedonians gave *as they were able, and even beyond their ability*.

Based on those Scriptures, first ask God to reveal the amount you should trust Him to provide for you to give in your Promise. Commit to that amount and trust Him to provide that money through you. Faith Promise giving is contributing what God

provides above your tithe, an amount that you trust God to do something supernatural and miraculous with.

This step is based on your faith in God's provision. It will help you identify with the faith walk of missionaries who continually trust God – not employers – to supply their financial needs. The Faith Promise is a commitment between you and God, not you and the church or you and any organization. It is part of the privilege of joining in God's work.

### Describing the Faith Promise

The preceding paragraphs define Faith Promise giving, but it's equally important to explain what the Faith Promise is not.

It is not the tithe. The Faith Promise is always above and beyond your regular tithes, and it is for missions, not for ourselves or for other church projects, such as repairing the church bus.

It is not a pledge that is owed the church. It is a Faith Promise to God – not to an individual or a church. No one should pressure a person to “pay up.”

It is not to be a foolish, impulsive commitment. Instead, it is based on prayer. Church leaders who promote Faith Promise giving must give everyone ample time to pray and hear from God.

It is not designed to glorify the individuals who participate. Faith Promises focus on what God does to provide the pledged amount. No glory goes to the individual.

### Strategic Details

Although the Faith Promise is not the same as a church pledge,

I still recommend that the church ask people to fill out a form for three reasons:

1. If all Faith Promises are to be channeled through the church missions budget, having the completed forms gives the missions task force a guideline for budget planning.
2. The act of signing a piece of paper makes people take a commitment more seriously, so they can be more consistent in prayer and more aware of how God is bringing in the money.
3. If the form is signed by a regular church member, the committee knows it is valid. This eliminates the possibility of someone making an anonymous, insincere promise of a large amount.

God will use an amazing variety of ways to provide for a Faith Promise. A person might save a little extra by reordering priorities. For example, a person might give up something such as a daily cup of coffee and use those extra funds for the Faith Promise. Or, someone could try something creative to bring in extra funds like the housewife who trusts God to bring in orders to her home-based business. Finally, God might bring in the money in unexpected ways – a check in the mail for the exact amount of the Promise, a surprise inheritance, or a bonus at work. That is what makes Faith Promise giving so exciting – seeing how God honors your commitment and uses you to funnel money into kingdom work. Faith Promise giving stretches the believer’s faith in the whole enterprise of the church.

*Faith Promise Giving encourages everyone to exercise faith accelerated giving.*

If Faith Promise giving is a new concept to the congregation,

I recommend that the leadership spend adequate time teaching biblical stewardship and stress the importance of Faith Promises. Then, as part of a missions conference or a special Sunday service, the church can have a Faith Promise service where people fill out cards and spend time in prayer over them. Then watch for God to work financial miracles. I know from my own experience and that of people all over the world, that Faith Promise giving builds a supply line for missions and also builds the faith of the giver. Remember, this is why I also call Faith Promise giving “Grace Motivated and Spirit Empowered” giving.

### One Testimony

Five years ago, Without Walls Church in Fort Worth, Texas, began hosting an annual missions conference. Located on the east loop of Interstate 820 South in the city of Fort Worth, Without Walls Church focuses on reaching the poor around them. Their congregation of 150 is far from rich.

“Our church is located in the poorest part of the city by choice,” said Carolyn Hedgpeth, AIMS trainer and missions director of Without Walls Church. “We have been doing Faith

*Faith Promise teaching and giving increased our missions giving over 70 percent.*

Promise giving since the beginning and are seeing more of our people respond and with greater faith.”

Last year, the church gave more than thirty-four thousand dollars to missions. This year, the church expanded their conference to four weeks with seven different speakers. Within four months, the church had given almost twenty-four thousand dollars – over 70 percent more than what they had given at this time last year.

That’s why each year Without Walls Church gives people an opportunity to make Faith Promises. The people fill out a

form that says: “As God enables me, I will express my faith and help to evangelize the world by giving to the missions program of Without Walls Church. I understand this Faith Promise is a commitment between God and me for the next twelve months. I understand I will not be asked for payment at any time.”

“It deeply impacted the life of the church so much that our pastor has asked that we do the same next year,” said Carolyn. “We are rejoicing and moving on in faith to see what God wants to do with us in the future.”

Carolyn Hedgpeth’s testimony represents the experience of countless people and countless congregations worldwide. Any individual or group who will invest personal time, talent, and resources in cross-cultural outreach will contribute to the surge of a missions wave through their congregation. The church worldwide is, in a sense, an all-volunteer army. As our vision grows, our commitment can grow as well. The Holy Spirit in you will direct your vision to comprehend and use the resources available to you. Conviction, commitment, and courage will equip local churches everywhere to mobilize for victory.

Carolyn’s church goes far beyond personalizing the Great Commission through praying, learning, and giving. They welcome the poor, the downtrodden, and those with life-controlling and addictive problems. And new immigrants are welcomed, regardless of nationality and regardless of if they are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or Communist. The “mission field” is coming to our doorstep and the Without Walls Church sees it as a divinely appointed opportunity. What if every church had this same vision?

## Chapter 8

### Building a Squadron

*The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.*

—J. Hudson Taylor

**O**n June 5, 1944, the evening before the Normandy Invasion, General George S. Patton addressed the men under his command in the Third Army. He reminded them of all the things they had learned in training and drilling – to stay alert, because their lives and their friends’ lives depended on it. He offered examples to drive home his point. He bluntly told them, “You are not all going to die. Only two percent of you right here today would die in a major battle. Death must not be feared... Yes, every man is scared in his first battle. If he says he’s not, he’s a liar... The real hero is the man who fights even though he is scared.”

But what stood out most was that Patton had confidence in the men under his command: “We have the finest food, the finest equipment, the best spirit, and the best men in the world. Why ... I actually pity those poor [Germans] we’re going up against.”<sup>1</sup>

## The Spiritual Application

The stories that have surfaced from that D-Day invasion echo with the courage that Patton saw in his men. They trained and prepared. They fought hard. Many sacrificed their lives. Some who survived were scarred for life. But their courage saw them through to victory.

If local churches want to hasten a similar victory for our Lord's kingdom, we must raise up men and women who have the kind of courage and fortitude to see the battle through to victory. Not everyone will serve on the frontlines. After all, World War II was won in part by those who stayed home, sacrificed, and worked to provide the resources necessary to fight. Even among those who served in the military, some were medics, truck drivers, or cooks. Think of the famous Rosie the Riveter, representing the women who helped produce military equipment.

Patton himself noted:

All of the real heroes are not storybook combat fighters. Every single man in this Army plays a vital role. Don't ever let up. Don't ever think that your job is unimportant.... Every man is a vital link in the great chain.... Every department, every unit, is important to the vast scheme of this war. The ordnance men are needed to supply the guns and machinery of war to keep us rolling. The Quartermaster is needed to bring up food and clothes because where we are going there isn't ... a lot to steal. Every last man on K.P. has a job to do, even the one who heats our water ....<sup>2</sup>

The same is true in the local church. Everyone has a job to do in this "Great War." To win, we must raise up people who will courageously persevere in the battle. Some will labor at

home. Many of the tasks of the home-laborers have been discussed in preceding chapters. But other people are called to the frontlines. The first step may be a short-term missions trip.

### Short-Term Missions

In the previous chapter, we discussed the importance of learning about the world in order to focus our prayers more effectively. Some people will learn by experience through short-term outreaches. These temporary cross-cultural ministry experiences do not require a career commitment. Whether lasting one week or two years, if conducted with the proper preparation, attitudes, and follow-up, short-term missions trips can bring blessings in the following five ways:

#### *1. For the participant*

A missions trip provides experience in sharing the gospel in a cross-cultural context. You'll learn to live with people from other countries and backgrounds, and you'll see God answer prayer. It'll be tough, but you'll build character. Your vision will grow as God uses you. Maybe you'll change your college major or career. At the very least, you'll be better equipped for prayer and service in your church.

#### *2. For family and friends*

For Christian friends and family, a missions trip offers an opportunity to participate through prayer and financial support. Even non-Christian family and friends are blessed in this way. Your participation may open the door to discuss your motivations and beliefs.

#### *3. For the church*

In the local church, people who participate in missions trips

return with increased experience, understanding, and maturity, preparing them for more leadership in the body of Christ.

#### *4. For mission agencies*

Short-term trips inspire new missions candidates. Over 80 percent of those currently recruited for career missions felt some type of calling through a short-term trip. God uses short-term experiences to call people to career missions. Also, your support and service can be a blessing to the career missionary on the field.

#### *5. For the lost people in other nations*

God uses short-term outreaches to lay a foundation that others can build upon. Short-term missions is a strategic part of world evangelization, but make sure your trips are, in fact, strategic and helpful to the kingdom of God.

### Options in Short-Term Ministry

The length of missions trips varies from one time to the next. These can be “encounter” trips lasting just a few weeks, or commitments of one or two years. AIMS can provide information on brief encounter trips with agencies seeking people with specific skills for longer periods of time.

Short-term ministry comes in many shapes and sizes: street evangelism, drama, construction, child evangelism, crusades, church planting, relief work, or support work (clerical, etc.) for a missionary or agency. Some trips are organized simply to “spy out the land” and intercede on-site. On these trips, often in countries where open evangelism is prohibited, teams spend the majority of their time praying for the country or a people group. Whatever the type of trip, be sure it is truly ministry focused. A “missions trip” to Hong Kong to go shopping is not a short-term missions trip! (This actually happened.)

For first-time missionary apprentices, a “harvest” location is best – an area where people will be open to the gospel. Latin America would be a better place for the inexperienced to begin than a closed, Muslim country, but be careful about locking yourself in to places that don’t need your long-term investment. In some cases, those evangelized Christianized areas know better how to develop missionary-sending strategies for themselves. Don’t get “sucked in” to only helping national churches do their home mission work.

Pastor Terry Roberts of Faith Christian Family Church in Warrenton, Missouri, already had a heart for missions when he attended a Harvest Connection seminar, but he soon learned that he was missing much more. While his congregation succeeded at reaching out locally, targeting similar cultures, they had no idea how to engage with the unreached around the world. Short-term missions opened the door to a world that completely changed the way Pastor Roberts and his church approached missions. He explained: “I already had a missions perspective ... I was just ignorant with the ends-of-the-earth perspective. Going with AIMS to an unreached area opened my eyes to a vision for those who had never heard the gospel.”

### Training is Crucial

Now, a word of caution. Without the proper training and preparation, a short-term trip can do more harm than good. Participants may not handle the culture shock. They can become a hindrance to the field missionary. Or, even if things go well on the field, the short-term missionary might come back and experience disillusionment and anger toward the home culture and church. Appropriate training should include topics such as evangelism, culture entry, culture shock, serving the field missionary and the indigenous church, team dynamics, and

reverse culture shock. Appendix D includes training materials for short-term missions candidates.

Attitude is another contributor to the success or failure of a short-term missions experience. In one word, the correct attitude is servanthood. A team member who has a know-it-all attitude, wanting to plunge in and save the world single-handedly, will not be a blessing on the field. A successful missionary will do anything possible to serve the local people and the field missionary. Whether the need is cleaning toilets in an orphanage or filing documents in an agency's office, he or she will do it. The team member must not have critical attitudes toward the career missionary or toward the culture. If such problems arise, they should be discussed privately with the group leadership. A humble and cheerful attitude will not only help the career missionary and the rest of the short-term team, but it can also be the strongest evangelistic witness you can have.

Most funding for short-term ministry trips should come through the initiatives of the participants themselves rather than from the church's missions budget. Otherwise, church expenditures for missions will be out of balance, failing to give proper aid to the long-term commitments of skilled missionaries using long-term strategies. Team members can raise funds by drawing on savings, doing extra work, and asking friends and family to get involved. Leaders must watch out for "black holes" that just absorb resources without any measurable and observable fruit.

I have been in more than ninety countries of the world and have worked with multiple national, indigenous groups. One of the great black holes of missions is Westerners and others giving money to the indigenous church without accountability or strategic direction. A black hole occurs when money is given, projects are executed, and training is done, but no lasting fruit develops that advances God's kingdom. An excellent book related

to this issue is *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, published by Moody Publishers. Corbett and Fikkert explore supporting indigenous groups and alleviating poverty without hurting the poor and ourselves. Dependency needs to be avoided, while we are generating greater resources to help national indigenous churches send out their missionaries to unreached people groups.

### Make the Most of the Experience

Before you go on a short-term missions trip, learn all you can about the culture. Share your excitement with friends, family, and congregation. Receive proper training and spend time in prayer. While on the trip, keep that servant's attitude and get to know the people around you. Even with language and culture barriers, people from all parts of the world appreciate genuine interest and concern for them. Take time to communicate, however you have to do it, with people from the other culture. Learn all you can about them as individuals and their culture. And of course, keep praying.

A short-term trip is not a success if it does not make you more effective in ministry once you get home. Bring back attitudes and skills learned on the mission field to your home church. Share your experiences with others; communicate enthusiasm for missions, but be careful. Guard yourself against the common human temptation to return with a judgmental attitude.

During Pastor Roberts' first trip to Romania and Moldova, he met a Romanian leader who was reaching the unreached around him. Inspired upon his return, Pastor Roberts and Faith Christian Family Church began a partnership with an organization in St. Louis that was providing humanitarian aid to the city's large immigrant community. Pastor Roberts continued his training in Manchester, England, and began regularly mentoring and teaching pastors throughout Europe to reach the

unreached around them. He hopes to develop multiple church plants in migrant communities, including one in St. Louis. The prospects excite him: “I see the potential for incredible revival and church planting among the unreached all over Europe.”<sup>3</sup>

As for Faith Christian Family Church, the congregation has experienced tremendous church growth. In an area with a population of about eight thousand, church membership has reached more than one thousand. Several individuals and couples have answered the call to become cross-cultural mobilizers in China, Moldova, Thailand, and other parts of the world. “God has blessed us because we have adjusted and biblically straightened out our priorities,” said Pastor Roberts. “In some churches, we have a ‘get home fixed first’ mentality... I think we’ve all become healthier by realizing that it’s not wasting money or time to reach out.”

The number of short-term missions trips has grown exponentially in the past few decades. In the United States, Americans spent more than 1.6 billion dollars on short-term missions trips in 2006.<sup>4</sup> With this amount of money being spent, we must focus our missions trips with the right intent. We need to assist the nationals and the long-term missionaries working with them in the best way possible, not hurt them or leave a mess for them to clean up. While the intent of most teams is to help, without proper preparation, they can collide with the different cultural patterns in the region. Investment in effective missions training is never wasted; it will bring greater effectiveness on the field.

### Mentoring Local Recruits

In addition to raising up short-termers, every local church should be in the business of recruiting, enlisting, training, and commissioning career missionaries for this worldwide harvest. The local church should partner with schools that train missionaries and agencies that equip and manage missionary enterprises.

By doing this, it will be an active and assertive home base for mission preparation and deployment.

The financial support of Faith Christian Family Church to mission ministries was just the beginning. They mobilized members of their congregation to work with the community in practical ways: teaching English as a second language, donating clothing and furniture, helping immigrants learn how to drive, or working on a local farm to teach people how to grow their own food. This is missions preparation in action.

But too often missionary preparation takes a different path. “Joe” expresses his interest in becoming a missionary to his pastor, who recommends that Joe attend his alma mater located two hundred miles away. So Joe goes off to a Bible school, which has no missions major. He takes Bible classes and one class on the history of missions. He gets summer and weekend jobs wherever he can, working and borrowing his way through school.

Four years later, Joe searches for a “sending agency” that does not require him to have majored in missions. He finds a small “faith ministry” that tells him they need all the help they can get. He returns to the church to ask for support, but his pastor is long gone, having moved to a different congregation two states away. Because he has lived out of state for four years, Joe has few ties with the remaining congregation members who knew him as a child. But one deacon knows Joe’s aunt who sings in the choir, so the church agrees to support Joe – at a mere twenty-five dollars a month.

Disheartened by the lack of support from his home base, Joe contacts the church he faithfully attended while in college. While the pastor is sympathetic and acknowledges that Joe demonstrated some teaching ability with their fifth grade Sunday school class, he explains that seventeen other members are also recent graduates and are already on the missions budget. Inundated with requests for financial support, the

congregation is unable to squeeze Joe into their budget for at least another year.

Joe approaches another minister, the father of one of his college friends, but the pastor wavers when he learns that Joe has no established track record of cross-cultural ministry. “I’ve been too busy working to pay for schooling,” Joe explains. “Even with all that work, I still owe for some college loans,” he adds.

With that, the pastor gives Joe a firm “no,” stating that his congregation never gives to missionaries who might apply the money to school debts. “We fund overseas ministry, not college degrees.”

### Sending Could Be Done Differently

Nowadays, as in the first century, God wants to use the local church to reach the world. Everyone’s ministry begins in his or her personal Jerusalem, extending outward throughout the world.

When “Mike” approaches his pastor, we see a different model than Joe’s, for he is directed toward the first step of a systematic, home-based preparation process. The pastor refers him to the church’s missions counselor (the missions director, missions elder, experienced missions task force member, or even the pastor himself), who will lead Mike through the following stages in exploring his interest:

#### *The Missionary Interest Stage*

In this stage, which usually lasts three to six months, missionary candidates learn whether they have a general burden for missions or possess the specific call to minister in cross-cultural missions. They can prove their call by doing the following:

- Make a commitment to the home church and establish a proven, active ministry in the church.
- Read and pray through *Operation World* daily; pray regularly for a missionary supported by the church.
- Interview a missionary to gain understanding of what is involved.
- Check in with the missions counselor monthly for a review of progress.
- Do local cross-cultural research, such as visiting an ethnic church; make friends among the group.
- Complete specific reading and listening assignments. Contact AIMS for a copy of *Missionary Preparation for the Local Church* to help with this step.
- Have a final evaluation with the missions counselor; if candidate and counselor mutually agree, advance to the next stage.

#### *Missionary Discipleship Stage*

- After Mike has established that he is called to missions, he proceeds to the missionary discipleship stage, which lasts ten to twelve months. In this stage, he will:
- Establish a more in-depth relationship of counseling/discipleship with the missions counselor.
- Continue to pray through *Operation World* and for missionaries.
- Complete a personal discipleship course in the church.

- Identify his spiritual gifts and ministries. (This should be part of the discipleship course.)
- Complete AIMS *Missions Foundations* course or a similar entry-level missions curriculum.
- Work in a regular, local cross-cultural ministry (such as helping in a poor community or tutoring an international student).
- Complete AIMS short-term missions training manual or similar course and participate in a two- to three-week missions trip.
- Write a statement of life purpose and a five-year plan for developing a missionary career.
- Complete reading and listening assignments.
- Develop a plan for formal Bible and missions training.
- Meet with the missions task force for evaluation and strategy for future training and ministry.
- Have a final evaluation with the missions counselor; if candidate and counselor are in agreement, advance to the next stage.

*Missionary Training Stage:* The missionary training stage may take two to four years. Although prospective missionaries may go off to school at this point, they are still vitally tied to the coaching and support team of the home church. They will not be merely “handed over” to a Bible school. Now their goals are to:

- Complete the equivalent of a four-year college degree with a foundation in general education, Bible knowledge, theology, missiology, and practical theology.

Some churches prefer to train future missionaries themselves rather than sending them to a Bible college or missionary training institution. This can be done successfully if the church follows a solid educational program. For churches that do not have their own program in place, contact AIMS for a copy of its curriculum called Missionary Preparation for the Local Church.

*Every church should pray and plan to raise up missionaries.*

- Continue praying for the world, using Operation World, and for missionaries supported by the church.
- Continue local cross-cultural ministry.
- If attending Bible college, send a report to the missions counselor bi-annually and schedule an annual personal interview.
- Refine the five-year plan and annual goals.
- Complete reading and listening assignments for this stage. Bible students might be reading missions materials at school, but if not, a missions counselor should suggest appropriate books for this stage.
- Write to missions agencies for information on field deployment and determining a church-based sending strategy.
- Complete a two- to three-month missionary internship. Work with the church, Bible college, a missions agency, or AIMS in partnership with indigenous networks to devise an internship.
- Meet with the church's missions task force for final evaluation and advancement to the next stage.

### *Missionary Apprentice Stage*

During this two- to four-year phase, a missions agency will supervise the candidate without severing ties with the church. This stage contains the following advanced training experiences:

- Select an agency or develop a church-based sending plan for a two- to four-year apprenticeship with a missionary on the field.
- Prepare a strategy statement and a job description for the apprenticeship period.
- Complete the reading and listening assignments for this stage.
- Raise personal support.
- Have a commissioning in the home church.
- Depart to the field; work under a senior missionary mentor.
- Do language study on the field.
- Report to the church's missions task force bi-annually.

### *Missionary Mentor Stage*

In this final stage, a missionary mentor performs his ministry both on the field and at home while on furlough. This stage may consist of the following:

- Seek graduate education.
- Perform some mobilization and training ministry in the local church.
- Lead a short-term trip from the church if possible.

- Select a team to train and mentor (if relevant to field goals).
- Raise personal support.
- Be commissioned with the team for a three- to four-year term.
- Depart for the field.
- Do further language study as needed.
- Mentor apprentice missionaries.

By receiving clear coaching from his home church and partnering with a training institution and sending agency, the field missionary candidate develops thorough training and experience while maintaining strong ties with his local congregation. The candidate has experienced commitment and accountability in a local fellowship. He is apt to pass on such biblical values in the field ministry. In addition, since that home church has invested time and energy into the candidate, it will more likely continue to undergird his ministry success.

### Back to Basics

I've given lots of strategic information, but I want to close with a reminder. At the beginning of this chapter, I quoted a speech given by General Patton on the eve of the Invasion of Normandy. It was intended to rouse his soldiers' courage. But that same General Patton – the one who believed in planning and preparation – also believed in prayer. On December 8, 1944, he told his chaplain: "Any great military operation takes careful planning, or thinking. Then you must have well-trained troops to carry it out ... But between the plan and the operation there is always an unknown. That unknown spells defeat

or victory, success or failure. It is the reaction of the actors to the ordeal when it actually comes. Some people call that getting the breaks; I call it God.”

Patton continued: “Up to now, in the Third Army, God has been very good to us. We have never retreated; we have suffered no defeats, no famine, no epidemics. This is because a lot of people back home are praying for us. We were lucky in Africa, in Sicily, and in Italy, simply because good people prayed.” He then asked his chaplain to “put out a training letter on this subject of prayer” to each of the 486 chaplains in the Third Army. “We’ve got to get not only the chaplains, but every man in the Third Army to pray,” he said. He referred to Dr. Alexis Carrel, one of the foremost scientists of that day, who described prayer as “one of the most powerful forms of energy man can generate.” Patton added: “It will be like plugging in on a current whose source is heaven. I believe that prayer completes that circuit. It is power.”

The chaplain wrote the letter, and Patton signed it. That letter, in part, said this:

Those who pray do more for the world than those who fight ... Gideon of Bible fame was least in his father’s house. He came from Israel’s smallest tribe. But he was a mighty man of valor. His strength lay not in his military might, but in his recognition of God’s proper claims upon his life. He reduced his Army from thirty-two thousand to three hundred men lest the people of Israel would think that their valor had saved them. We have no intention to reduce our striking force. But we must urge, instruct, and indoctrinate every fighting man to pray as well as fight. In Gideon’s day, and in our own, spiritually alert minorities carry the burdens and bring the victories.<sup>5</sup>

Patton recognized the necessity of prayer in the physical war in which he fought. But surely, if prayer is necessary in that kind of war, it is even more important in the spiritual war

in which we fight. As he noted, prayer “completes that circuit. It is power.” In the spiritual war, spiritual power is the only resource that will propel us to victory. So, let me close with this reminder: **Bathe every step in this process with prayer.**

## Chapter 9

### Targeting – Let’s Get Specific

*In the vast plain to the north I have sometimes seen,  
in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages  
where no missionary has ever been.*

—Robert Moffat

Operation Desert Storm in Kuwait was the first war that Americans saw live via satellite, as they sat in their living rooms clustered around television sets. We watched strategic targets disappearing from the face of the Middle Eastern desert. The aerial bombardment was incredible. A captured Iraqi soldier noted that the air war did not result in many injuries or casualties among his troops – just one soldier killed and two wounded. The one who was killed did not die from a direct hit. Rather, the vibrations of the bombing caused his bunker to cave in on top of him.

That may seem like the air war was ineffective, but that Iraqi soldier would disagree: “It was extremely effective,” he said. “The planes hit only vehicles and equipment. Even my own personal vehicle . . . was hit. They hit everything. I explained to my soldiers that they should not fear the American soldiers. If the

Americans wanted to kill us, I said, we would already be dead. The Americans just wanted to take away our ability to fight.”<sup>1</sup>

American weaponry has grown in sophistication and power through the development of smart bombs. In the 1980s, the F-117 Nighthawk became the U.S. Air Force’s first stealth fighter. An air force lieutenant colonel called the Nighthawk “a strategic weapon that really shaped how the Air Force looked at strategic warfare.”<sup>2</sup> It soon became a vital part in various air campaigns in Panama, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia.

Military personnel have always known the importance of taking out strategic targets – airfields, weapons storage units, tanks, etc. Our goal in developing weaponry has been to increase our probability of success. And yet, even in Desert Storm, where civilians witnessed the incredible accuracy of these weapons, we must note that no single pilot or missile launcher was tasked with the responsibility of wiping out all of the strategic sites and weapons in Iraq’s arsenal. Each pilot and each missile launcher was given a specific target. The resulting victory came as every individual pilot and missile launcher assumed that responsibility and achieved the mission. The combined effort resulted in victory for the United States and our allies.

Today, newer technology with drones has given us greater capabilities. Usually covert, these unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) allow the military to access situations too dangerous for human pilots. Drone campaigns have been used in operations to strike terrorist targets in Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan, and have become a “central component of [the U.S.] counterterrorism strategy.”<sup>3</sup>

And with the rapid advance of technology, we wonder, after drones, what is next?

### The Spiritual Application

This situation is not much different in a spiritual war. No

single individual, and no single congregation or denomination, is tasked with the overwhelming responsibility to reach the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Rather, each individual and each congregation is tasked with the responsibility to seek God's will, to determine the region He has assigned to them, and to mobilize effectively to reach that specific area. As hundreds and thousands of churches seek to know and to do God's will, the combined effort will result in overall victory. Remember, there are about one thousand churches for each unreached people group.

*Adopting a UPG is a strategically important "best practice" of local church missions.*

In mission circles, this process is called adoption. Churches *adopt* unreached or unevangelized people groups. This adoption could include unevangelized cities and urban areas. At AIMS, we have made it part of our mission statement. We have built a resource called *Final Focus* that is available in both manual and seminar formats. It mobilizes churches for adoption.

Earlier we defined unreached or unevangelized people groups as groups of people who share a common ethnicity, language, and culture. They have never effectively heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, or they do not have a local church-planting movement that is strong enough to reach their own people. In short, without someone stepping across traditional and cultural lines to share God's good news of salvation with these people, they will never turn to Christ.

Adoption is defined as "making someone part of your family through legal means." It implies that a family decides to increase the size of its household, choosing the exact child to claim as their own and promising to raise and nurture that child to adulthood.

That same adoption principle works in world evangelization. God wants every local church to expand its family. He has

given specific instructions to accomplish this by spreading His good news at home as well as in other cultures.

For the purposes of our ministry, *adoption* means that a church decides to help evangelize a specific unreached people group or area. This church commits to allocate spiritual and material resources, networking with others who share the same vision to plant a strong indigenous church in that people group and nurture it to maturity as a self-sustaining church-planting movement.

### Adopt an Unreached People Group

Keep in mind that I am not against work in “reached” nations, countries where an evangelizing indigenous church already exists. But the bride of Christ must wake up to the need of the forgotten peoples, as we allocate new resources in missions. I support any kind of missions work that your church is called to do. Christ calls us to reach *all nations*, but we must challenge the church to include harder-to-reach people, the unreached people groups. Along with several missions leaders, I have chosen to emphasize these groups.

Just as a husband and wife would commit themselves to providing for a child they adopt, more and more congregations are accepting responsibility for an unreached people group like the Tibetans of China or the Kurds of Iraq. God has some surprises in store for churches that adopt an unreached people group. Consider the experience of one church of about twelve hundred members that had a good missions program, including several of their own homegrown career missionaries. They had developed a missions committee, a regular prayer program, short-term teams, and they were probably giving 30 to 40 percent of their total revenue through Faith Promises and other fundraising methods for cross-cultural missions. And yet, a

few years ago, God did something new when He laid on their hearts a burden to adopt a specific unreached people group.

When they began a prayer team of eight to fifteen people who met weekly to pray for the ethno-linguistic clan they had adopted (a group in a Muslim country, which, for security reasons, will be referred to here as “Afrasia”), only five or six Christians lived among this population of six million people. Because the country was completely closed to missionaries, this prayer group researched and networked with several other churches to see if they could send a team to Afrasia as “tent-makers” – skilled people who go as professionals or tradesmen and share the gospel as they practice their trade or profession.

Because a prospective member of the tent-making team had an undergraduate degree in health, she was able to secure an entrance visa for herself, her husband, and six other workers. They shared their faith in lifestyle evangelism to reach Muslims for Jesus Christ. That local church caught the vision for our collective worldwide task. They prayed for it; they stimulated other churches to catch the vision; and now God has established a work there. Today, several hundred converts in Afrasia meet in house churches.

You and your church can make a difference, even in some of the most difficult and challenging areas of the world. A worldwide network of mobilized churches can surmount the barriers to the gospel to attain “closure,” the completion of the Great Commission.

### Phases of Adoption

The mobilization of your congregation to reach an unreached people group would generally develop in three general phases. In actual practice, the phases overlap and some facets of phase 1 will continue through phase 3, but let us examine them separately. Accelerating International Mission Strategies offers a

series of adoption resources as well as one-on-one consultation to help churches through this process. Let's look at the phases of adoption.

### *Preparation phase*

As your local church hears about the world's needs, purposely pray and give towards work in several countries and people groups. Your leadership can prayerfully assess the varied resources of the congregation. Through this process, the Lord will define your group's calling. Plan a general audit of your congregation to discover resources your church can contribute toward reaching a particular group. Ask these kinds of questions:

- What spiritual gifts and talents are resident within my group?
- What are my congregation's areas of expertise?
- What resources have been hidden within my congregation? Ask God to reveal people, materials, and wealth that can be used to further the cause of evangelizing an adopted people group, according to the stewardship mandate and the sense of missions discussed earlier.

### *The mobilization phase*

After the Lord reveals what group to adopt, the mobilization phase begins. Focus your research on that special people group to formulate a strategy for reaching them. Find the answers to questions like these:

- What are these people like?
- Who else, if anyone, is currently trying to reach them?

- How can we partner with them?

Partner with other churches or agencies whenever possible. Gradually, you will be able to form a strategy and plan.

### *The implementation phase*

During this phase, put into practice what you have theorized. Begin with prayer, the first business of missions. Then, prioritize strategy elements and develop appropriate time lines to complete the tasks.

### Details of Adoption

Adoption is not an easy venture. It may require years of effort. Churches that do this effectively are not impulsive churches, influenced by the latest fads in church ministry, running a few sprints but never the long distances.

Mobilized churches start with a group of trained leaders: the missions task force, the missions mobilizers. Organize an annual missions conference that will bring people together to ask God for creative ways to generate financial, spiritual, and material resources for missions and to pray about making Faith Promises or finding other methods to create a new financial base. Express your vision to raise up and prepare missionaries in the local church. Send out short-term teams and engage your congregation in local cross-cultural missions. The kind of church that will adopt an unreached people group should be moving towards all of these components of mobilization. It cannot be a spontaneous whim. You need to count the cost, because there will be a price to pay.

Adopting an unreached people group is a journey that impacts both the local church and the people group. When Jill Weigand accepted the position of missions director at Trinity

Church in Marble Hill, Georgia, in 2005, the church had little understanding of missions. After experiencing their first Harvest Connection seminar, the church developed a missions policy to target their various areas of influence, beginning with the needs closest to home, reaching into surrounding areas, and taking the steps to impact people overseas.

Their first missions conference focused on local ministries supported by the church, including drug and alcohol recovery programs, pregnancy centers, and local Young Life and YMCA representatives. “We had prayed with people for the nations for several years before the church even began, but they had no knowledge of the unreached within the 10/40 Window,” said Jill. “We sent them home with an assignment to pray and listen for God’s answer about who we needed to target.”<sup>4</sup>

After compiling what people heard from the Lord, the missions task force used a software program to find common denominators among the nations listed, where they learned about an unreached people group in northwest China. A name meaning “unity” or “alliance,” the Mukin (pseudonym) people originated from Turkic groups who used to inhabit modern-day Mongolia. Primarily Muslim, the Mukin follow a mixture of folk Islam and superstition. Among the more than ten million Mukin living in China today, there are only fifty known Mukin believers who worship in two small churches in the region (that’s less than 0.01 percent).<sup>5</sup>

In 2010, the church decided to focus their annual missions conference on educating their church members about the Mukin people and developing strategic ways to reach them worldwide. They invited another ministry from Virginia Beach, Virginia, who had contact among the Mukin, to join their conference. The church began supporting Bible translation efforts targeting the people group.

“During the following year, the translation process took

a different turn,” said Jill. “The Chinese government began relocating the Mukin who were declaring their own autonomy ... So we began praying about where God would have us put the money.”

God answered that prayer. The pastor of Trinity Church met an indigenous lady through a mutual friend. A student at Columbia Bible College in Columbia, South Carolina, the indigenous lady, was studying Mandarin in hopes of working among the Huang Chinese people. After she spoke to the congregation, Trinity Church began supporting her efforts. She left for China in 2012 to work with the Mukin directly. By the beginning of 2013, the church organized care packages to send to her so she could reach out to her Mukin neighbors.

Isn't this a tremendous testimony of how one person can impact an entire congregation and see them become involved in reaching Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth? What would happen if every evangelical church became fully mobilized as Jill mobilized hers?

### The Missions Focus Doesn't Hurt Ministry at Home

The focus on unreached peoples has only enhanced other ministry opportunities at Trinity Church. Locally, the congregation has participated in distributing food and clothing to people in need in downtown Atlanta. “We went from zero involvement in missions to involvement in the Dominican Republic, South Africa, Honduras, Kenya, England, and Nicaragua,” said Jill. “People in our church initiated missions on their own or through an agency.”

By the time of the February 2013 missions conference, individuals in the church were ready to do even more. Several young people volunteered to work with local churches in Kenya to operate a food program for children and to minister to prisoners. Most had never participated in a missions trip.

Some expressed an interest in leading revivals and retreats in England. Others wanted to go to Honduras to work with a youth discipleship program among a local unreached people group there. As a church, Trinity is partnering with Agape Flights to provide mail service, emergency transportation, and equipment repair for missionaries in the Dominican Republic.

“We are currently regrouping our efforts in the U.S. to see how we can more effectively work among the poor in our country,” said Jill. “Our youth pastor is discipling local youth. Although the church had only one trip planned for this year, many trips are being planned throughout 2013 by individuals. The self-starters are self-generating and self-multiplying. It’s a continuing work.”

Jill’s passion to see a “missions culture” in her church built the foundation for a church-wide vision that would be sustained from generation to generation.

## Chapter 10

### Building an Alliance

*Real partnership is costly. We need to be willing to empower others to godly leadership and make their dreams possible, even at the expense of putting aside our own desires.*

—David Ruiz

Many people regard Winston Churchill as the architect who put together the alliance of nations that defeated Germany, Italy, and Japan in World War II. Britain, like other Western powers, tried to stay out of this great conflict. Yet finally, on September 3, 1939, Britain declared war on Germany. Britain was engaged in the battle against fascist powers longer than any other nation.

Churchill, who served as Britain's prime minister, knew that no single nation could win this war alone. Despite the fact that the British Commonwealth colonized nations like Canada, India, and Australia, Churchill knew he would have to build an alliance of nations who were willing to lay everything on the line to defeat the evil that was threatening to engulf Europe and Asia. That alliance included the United States, France, and Russia, as well as twenty-three other nations who invested

resources and people in the effort to turn back the forces of fascist dictators who were bent on destroying everything that stood in the way of conquest.

In a 1943 speech at Harvard University, Churchill referred to World Wars I and II, saying, “Twice in my lifetime the long arm of destiny has reached across the oceans and involved the entire life and manhood of the United States in a deadly struggle.” He added: “We do not war primarily with races as such. Tyranny is our foe, whatever trappings or disguise it wears, whatever language it speaks, be it external or internal, we must forever be on our guard, ever mobilized, always ready to spring at its throat. *In all this, we march together.* Not only do we march and strive shoulder to shoulder at this moment under the fire of the enemy on the fields of war or in the air, but also in those realms of thought which are consecrated to the rights and dignity of man” (italics added).<sup>1</sup>

Just as Churchill knew that, despite its collective power, the British Commonwealth could not defeat the Axis Powers alone, today’s local churches need to understand that Satan’s minions will fall much more readily to a unified force that recognizes and understands this important principal.

### The Power Inherent in Unity

God built many laws into His universe that rule all of life. We’re all familiar with the law of gravity; it affects every individual and everything that exists on earth. But perhaps less familiar is the law of unity – at least that’s what I call it. God built a principle into this universe. It declares that anytime two or more individuals (or two or more animals, or two or more churches, etc.) unify their purpose and agree to work together toward a common goal, the result will be greater than what would have been accomplished if all participants had worked toward the same goal on their own.

Let me give you an example. Once, when I was flying to a speaking engagement, I sat beside a professor from a large university on the west coast of the United States. He told me of a study performed at his school wherein researchers tested individual horses and found they could pull loads of up to nine thousand pounds. Out of curiosity, they decided to harness two horses together and increase the size of the load they were pulling, just to see what happened. Naturally, they hypothesized that, since one plus one equals two, or in this case, since nine thousand plus nine thousand equals eighteen thousand, two horses would be able to pull eighteen thousand pounds. Then they put the horses to the task to test their hypothesis. They kept adding weight and adding weight and when all was said and done, they found that two horses, each of which could pull nine thousand pounds individually, could pull twenty-seven thousand pounds when harnessed together.

Unity is more than a nice principle for Christian behavior. Unity breeds exponential power. God has written that premise into all of nature, and Scripture reveals it. For instance, Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, explained: *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken* (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12). God was prophetically speaking an important truth through Solomon. And in the midst of a passage describing rewards for obedience, Moses promised his people: *Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you* (Leviticus 26:8). We see a strong spiritual synergism at work here. In the natural world, when we put one and one together, we simply get two. But in God's kingdom, one and one can actually equal the power of five.

Because this law of unity is inherent through all of creation,

it can be used for evil as well as for good. Scripture describes a time near the beginning of our earth's history when all mankind spoke a single language. Because they wanted to build an empire to glorify themselves, these people decided to build a city *with a tower that reaches to the heavens*. They worked together to accomplish this goal, and they were well on their way. But God was not happy with this misuse of the law of unity. So He confused their languages. When they couldn't understand each other, their sense of unity disappeared, and they abandoned the effort.

God's action should never be interpreted as discipline against the spirit of unity that characterized these people. Rather, it was discipline against the misuse of the power that accompanies unity. God had built that law into His universe to enable His people to accomplish His purposes; we know that, because Jesus prayed for it. As He looked ahead to the agony of the cross, Jesus was focused on those who followed Him, both in that day and for the rest of time. Jesus prayed: *Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name **so that they will be united just as we are*** (John 17:11 NLT, emphasis added). Later, He added: *"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you"* (John 17:20-21 NLT).

But the unity which Jesus sought for every disciple had a purpose. Jesus prayed: *"May they experience such perfect unity **that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me*** (John 17:23 NLT, emphasis added). God intends His people to be unified and to use the power inherent in that relationship to build His kingdom.

### What Does This Mean to the Local Church?

Local churches often preach unity among the believers of their congregation, sometimes, I suspect, as much for their own peace of mind as for a greater truth. Pastors refer to verses like Paul's exhortation to two women named Euodia and Syntyche to *be of the same mind in the Lord*, and they preach a unity that means everyone should get along (Philippians 4:2). Certainly there is a place for that. The fighting and bickering that characterize many fellowships is an embarrassment to our Lord, but I don't believe God intended for the principle of unity to stop at the individual level. God wants unity in local church bodies, but He also wants unity in the universal church.

That is the foundational understanding that guides much of what we do at AIMS. When my wife Pat and I founded this ministry with a team, it was based on the understanding that unity breeds power for the completion of the Great Commission. That has been our guiding principle throughout our history. We have grown; our mission statement evolved and is now two-fold:

1. We mobilize churches to adopt unreached people groups, as I explained in the previous chapter.
2. We build alliances of individuals, churches, and mission organizations that are willing to lay aside nonessential differences and work together to target specific regions or unreached people groups.

We believe that if God said it would work, it will. Since AIMS began in 1985, we have used this strategy; now we see great results. Accelerating International Mission Strategies strives to unify believers and build alliances for the nations, because it works. Ministries that choose to work together find that the result is greater than the sum of what they all could have accomplished individually. In other words, cooperation multiplies results rather than simply adding to them.

Earlier I spoke of six principles of personalizing the Great Commission, one of which was “welcoming.” Let me give you a hypothetical example. Suppose a small university in Minneapolis, Minnesota, notices that a group of international students has just arrived from India. “First Church,” located down the street from the university, hosts a potluck dinner and posts invitations on the bulletin board of the university library. Ten Indian students show up, and that initiates a relationship that causes the congregation of First Church to become curious about life in India. So they plan an event, allowing each of those international students to describe the place where they live.

Three of those Indian students come from the northern part of their country, which is ravaged by poverty and is often the target of warfare between Hindu and Muslim extremists. One student talks about the need for fresh water in the region where he lives. So First Church decides they want to do something about that. They opt to raise money to dig a well in that village.

Digging a well is a worthwhile goal. But what if First Church partnered with an agency specializing in digging wells and another agency that provides *The JESUS Film*? What if they also partnered with an agency providing Bibles and sponsored an indigenous missionary for follow-up? The missionary could use those materials to plant a church in that village among the converts who respond to the evangelistic message of *The JESUS Film*. The well would provide a gathering place for people in this village. The missionary can use the local place to show *The JESUS Film* and provide discipleship resources to the people who respond. With all these partnerships in place, he can continue to follow through and plant a church among them.

First Church can simply dig wells, or they can do more by providing a powerful flow of *living water* that will change the lives of individuals for all eternity. This is accomplished through

partnerships with other churches and agencies to maximize the results of a simple well-digging project.

The task of building partnerships and alliances is not just a strategy drawn out on paper. It's a strategy we've put into operation many times and we have seen how it works. Therefore, we continue to invest in the effort to establish the unity in the body of Christ that will yield these results.

### A Real-Life Example

I've seen this strategy work repeatedly. In chapter 1, my colleague Jerry Smith told you the story of Gezahegn in Ethiopia. Our work in Ethiopia began in 1989 when my home church, Calvary Temple in Denver, Colorado (where I was saved, baptized, discipled, and married), opened its doors to house an Ethiopian church. The believers who made up this fellowship had come to the United States to escape persecution in their native country. Ethiopia's Christians suffered under the Marxist regime, which overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. Marxist ideology, coupled with regional uprisings, drought, and famine, ruined the already weak economy, so the United Nations had labeled Ethiopia as one of the poorest nations on earth. At the time, Ethiopia's per capita income was just ten to fifteen dollars per month.

These beloved brothers and sisters in Christ had come here to escape that type of environment. When the communist regime collapsed in 1991, Pastor Charles Blair, senior pastor at Calvary Temple at the time, was asked to chair an international, interdenominational board. Its goal was to help church leaders in Ethiopia as they made the transition from underground cell groups to thriving, visible congregations that would impact post-communist Ethiopia.

During early fact-finding trips, Pastor Blair received an invitation from the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia

(ECFE), which represented 97 percent of Ethiopia's evangelical believers. They asked him to help train 675 key Ethiopian workers, but the vision that grew from that initial training was too great for any single congregation to handle alone.

So AIMS partnered with Calvary Temple and the ECFE in an alliance that we named The Ethiopia Call. Along with many individuals and churches that sent money and people to help, this alliance trained and deployed 313 national Ethiopian missionaries who penetrated the unreached people within the borders of their country.

At the birth of this alliance, Ethiopian research indicated that this country was host to seventy people groups who had never heard the gospel. As of this writing, an Ethiopian missionary team of over two thousand has been equipped through The Ethiopia Call alliance, and they have penetrated forty-six of those people groups and set their sights on the last twenty-four. After twenty years of partnership, this alliance of multiple denominations and agencies under new leaders like Pastor Ray Noah of Portland Christian Center and his missions network called Petros, has seen over fifteen thousand churches planted with more than nine hundred thousand people professing salvation. It continues to be effective in Ethiopia today.

Just across the Red Sea from the Horn of Africa (home to the nation of Ethiopia) lies the Middle East. Considered the "final frontier of our global harvest," this region lies at the very core of the 10/40 Window and is one of the most difficult regions of the world to penetrate with the gospel. Due to strict Islamic laws, wars, political and economic instability, and a very difficult terrain, the Christian missionary movement has simply not been very successful in the Middle East.

This region has also been called "Satan's Finest Masterpiece" and the "Last of the Great Giants." The political events that have surrounded the Middle East in recent history have radically

changed our lives and our world. The years to come may bring even more radical change. Islamic fundamentalist government is rapidly becoming a major political force. It is forcing the Islamization of national structures and lifestyles, extending the Muslim missionary workforce worldwide. The largest oil-producing countries in the world are heavily funding this movement. This has caused Islam to spread around our globe.

Accelerating International Mission Strategies and the ECFE are dedicated to seeing the spread of the gospel throughout this region. Central Asian missionaries have already been sent to this region, as well as to India, Pakistan, and Sudan. Yet the results that we've already seen and the results that are still to come would probably not have happened if God had not led AIMS, Calvary Temple, and ECFE to unite and confront the forces of darkness in this part of the world. This is the power of synergism.

### A Partnership in Asia

In 2006, the president of a mission organization in a “creative-access country” in Asia invited me to lead the Harvest Connection seminar in a nearby country. Together with the mission organization and a local missionary, AIMS worked on translating seminar materials and raised money to produce over twelve thousand complete training kits, including DVDs and books, to be used throughout Asia.

A local evangelist joined our missionary partner in 2010 to extend the training to include churches throughout Singapore, Southeast Asia, and other creative-access countries. Ten churches trained in the original country multiplied efforts even further.

“I think that the best results happen when the Westerners get out of the way, and the [nationals] initiate the work without us,” our local missionary wrote in a 2012 report to AIMS. “They are being effective without any Western missionary involvement.”

In addition to local training opportunities, our partners in Asia are at work developing more mission mobilization strategies. These programs will continue to achieve the same goal as our seminars, but will provide additional resources for those who are unable to attend a seminar. This will enable local evangelists and an estimated one hundred million-plus Christians in the region to advance the gospel aggressively throughout the unevangelized world.

### The Last Word

Winston Churchill was one of the most eloquent men of the twentieth century. He knew the power that grows from unity, and he expressed it better than I can. In the speech that I men-

*If we are together with God-inspired leadership, partnerships, and alliances, nothing is impossible.*

tioned earlier, Churchill described the war that was ravaging Europe as “entering ... its most severe and costly phase.” He described the need for a lasting world peace, but he noted that “Nothing will work soundly or for long without the united effort of the British and American peoples. If we are

together, nothing is impossible. If we are divided, all will fail.”<sup>2</sup> If we are together with God-inspired leadership, partnerships, and alliances, nothing is impossible.

Churchill’s words echo those of Christ Himself. Though He was in very different circumstances, being accused of driving out demons by the power of Beelzebub, Jesus’ response rings with the veracity that has been proven repeatedly in the natural realm and the supernatural realm. *“Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand”* (Matthew 12:25).

It’s time for us as the church to realize that if we continue being divided, we will be ruined. If we seek to be unified, we will have the opportunity to harness the power of partnership

and put it to use in expanding God's global kingdom. We can help you in this process, and conversely, you can help us reach this common goal.

Now, admittedly, I don't necessarily agree with those who believe theology is inconsequential. I believe there are basic tenets that have been described in Scripture. These form the basis of sound theology. At AIMS, we use the globally recognized Lausanne Covenant. But outside the fundamentals, in those areas that are open to interpretation, we must be willing to extend a hand to brothers and sisters in Christ. We must be willing to lay aside cultural, racial, and denominational differences for the sake of taking the gospel to the world. We should access the power that God inscribed into His universe, the power of unity, and we must give it purpose. We must return to the understanding that undergirded Jesus' prayer to His Father: "*that they may be brought to complete unity. Then **the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me***" (John 17:23, emphasis added). That is why God builds His church – so we can fulfill His mission through unity in a single purpose and goal.

## Chapter 11

### His Triumph, Our Victory

*The trumpet still plays the notes of war. You cannot sit down and put the victory wreath on your head. You do not have a crown. You still must wear the helmet and carry the sword. You must watch, pray, and fight. Expect your last battle to be the most difficult, for the enemy's fiercest charge is reserved for the end of the day.*

—Charles Spurgeon

#### This is a Winnable War

**O**f course, missions endeavors have their share of risk and sacrifice. But our joy overcomes those risks when we understand that we have brought God pleasure through helping expand the boundaries of His kingdom. We must always remember that this battle is to expand God's kingdom, not our own. National prestige and history will not give us power to change eternal destiny. Personal strength, education, and financial resources are not enough. We bring nothing to this battle against Satan except our crucifixion with Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the filling of His Spirit.

Our victories over Satan come only as we appropriate the victory already achieved at the cross. In Colossians 2:15, Paul described Christ's victory like this: *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing** over them by the cross* (emphasis added) (compare 2 Corinthians 2:14). The Greek word translated *triumph* means "to lead in a triumphal procession, to conquer."

### A Picture from National History

Most of us have seen a triumphal procession. We might not remember the festivities that accompanied the return of World War II veterans to their homeland in the 1940s, but we probably remember the celebration that welcomed soldiers home from Operation Desert Storm at the beginning of the final decade of the previous century.

Operation Desert Storm was the first military engagement played out live on national television in the United States. By January of 1991, our evening news reports noted that Saddam Hussein's mighty military had brazenly invaded Kuwait, brutalized its citizenry, and seized both personal and national wealth. As the American armed forces, along with those of our allies, gathered to confront the growing menace, disturbing questions arose. How devastating would chemical warfare be? What was the truth of Iraq's rumored nuclear capability? As the cloud of Vietnam-era humiliations troubled the American psyche, we found ourselves asking, do we dare face such a foe on his own turf?

Under General Norman Schwarzkopf's field leadership, a combined military coalition from eighteen countries soundly defeated the ominous threat of Iraq's military. Dangerous operations, executed with a great degree of precision, courage, discipline, and skill, inspired the admiration of Americans back home. In just 100 days, American soldiers and their international

partners performed to the maximum, defeating the third most powerful army in the world and an evil dictatorship.

The tremendous relief and the sense of national accomplishment expressed itself in a vast array of victory parades across the United States. But the most festive of all celebrations was held in New York City in June of 1991. General Schwarzkopf himself led the parade, followed by column after column of his victorious troops. The streets were crowded with cheering people waving victory banners and throwing confetti. What a triumph!

Let's look at another example. More recently in 2013, a Pennsylvania soldier who lost both legs in an explosion while serving in Afghanistan received a hero's welcome during an American Independence Day parade with fourteen other local wounded servicemen. The doctors had cleared him for the Parade of Heroes after sixteen surgeries for injuries he sustained from a bomb blast, while trying to rescue other soldiers who were injured during an earlier explosion. The crowd greeted him with loud cheers, celebrating and waving American flags. Not only had this soldier triumphed on the battlefield, but he had also won victory after victory over his many extensive injuries.<sup>1</sup>

### Glad Expressions of Victory

Through the lens of these experiences, let's look at Colossians 2:15, which describes a similar situation in the spirit realm – a spiritual battle at the cross: *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.* Jesus won, and He invites us to participate in the triumphal procession that He started almost two thousand years ago. Close examination of this passage reveals three truths:

*1. God has reversed Satan's diabolical plan.*

Satan tried to use the cross, a cruel implement of death, to destroy Jesus. But that very cross became the weapon Jesus used to conquer Satan and bring his forces into captivity. When Jesus breathed His last breath on Calvary and uttered, *It is finished*, He disarmed the Devil and all of his mercenaries. Now He commands His followers to go into all the world and administer that same victory through His authority and power.

*2. God uses the cross to make a spectacle of the hostile opposition.*

The thorough rout of Saddam Hussein's notorious fighting forces made a spectacle of that leader's proud boasting. Similarly, God has brought down kingdoms and governments throughout history that stood against Him, and in the end, He used their downfalls for His glory. The church should never be fearful of evil powers, but should exercise spiritual authority over them through prayer and power encounters. We'll discuss this more later, but for now let's note that the public spectacle Paul speaks of here refers to the humiliation of captives taken in battle and led in chains behind the victors in the celebration of triumph. This is the ultimate result when we enforce His victory, which was won on the cross, and engage in the battle to release captives from their bondage. Those souls who were formerly held captive are now free, and the demonic powers that previously bound them are now subject to ridicule.

*3. The shameful cross becomes the victor's chariot.*

Every victory in the spread of the gospel is initiated by Christ's triumphant work on Calvary. Human and secular arrogance can have no place in the triumphant participation in missions. The victory is God's alone. But He wants us to engage in the effort to appropriate this victory, even through personal sacrifice. As

we succeed, we will see the cross lead the triumphant procession to complete His mission on earth and then bring Him back as King of Kings.

### Celebrating God's Triumph

With all this talk of victory, don't think that missions is an easy task. It's not. Sometimes it means spending a lot of time in the trenches. Those who serve on the front lines of this spiritual battle know that Satan is a formidable foe. But he is also a defeated foe. When the weariness of war sets in, we will have compelling reasons to persevere – *faith* and *joy* are the main sources of fuel that propel us to true victory. This faith and joy perpetuates in every step of God's triumph. We find this in the vivid metaphor set forth in 2 Corinthians 2:14: *But thanks be to God, who **always** leads us in **triumphal** procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him* (emphasis added).

To appreciate Paul's exclamation, we must understand first-century imagery. When a Roman general returned home from a great military victory – one where at least five thousand of the enemy had fallen and the conquered country was effectively occupied – he was greeted with a great procession. The general, his troops, and the captured armies would draw up to the Porta Capena, Rome's great ancient entrance supporting a main aqueduct. A host of state officials would welcome the vanquishing general. The streets would be lined with cheering throngs. Then the general, flanked by state officials, would lead his victorious armies through the streets of the imperial city and finally toward the Capitoline Hill and the Roman Forum.

The procession began with legions of trumpeters piercing the air with clarion blasts to announce a long train of carriages bearing the spoils of war. These were laden with gold, silver, costly jewels, and other items taken from the defeated armies

and the treasuries of their plundered cities. Throughout the long march, incense-bearers would wave censers to spread the aroma of victory. The whole extravagant celebration was associated with this special fragrance. In missions, this would be the incense and fragrance of prayer.

Next, a white bull would be offered for sacrifice to Jupiter or to another god that the general felt had granted him victory. Then the vanquished king, queen, or general passed in chains, followed by the defeated troops, also in chains. Everyone knew these prisoners were destined to become slaves of the Roman general and senators, or be imprisoned or executed.

The loudest cheers would be reserved for the triumphant general himself as he rode by in a decorated chariot drawn by four white horses, followed by his family and then his conquering soldiers. He would hold a royal scepter and wear a laurel crown. The soldiers would march in victory, holding aloft their spears, each one wreathed in a laurel bough. Every Roman knew the greatness of this conqueror and the magnificence of his victory. It was a heady experience of celebration for the conqueror and an awesome spectacle to the public.

Paul uses the imagery of the Roman triumphal procession to describe Christ's victory as making a spectacle of His enemies, but also refers to the special fragrance issuing from the procession. He explains that this scent of victory, like the incense, emanates from those who follow Christ in this incredible procession to mark His victory, *the fragrance of the knowledge* of our Lord. This appealing scent of victory attracts an ever-growing number of people to accept and live within Christ's kingdom.

So what kind of fragrance emanates from your life and your church? If it's not the fragrance of His glory, then possibly it's a much less desirable odor. Some believers, even churches, are marked by the aroma of their own self-ascribed agendas, rather

than the fragrance of a jubilant commitment to completing the Great Commission.

### Word Pictures of Triumph in Missions

The biblical words for triumph paint many other pictures that personify the Lord's victory, the church's victory, and our victory in missions. Let's look at the meanings of these important biblical ideas and see how they apply to the Great Commission of the church.

#### *Jumping up and down*

First, to triumph can mean to jump for joy. *When the righteous triumph, there is great elation* (Proverbs 28:12, emphasis added). The Hebrew word for *triumph* here means "to exult or to jump for joy." When you've experienced God's wonderful saving grace, nothing can make you feel glad like seeing somebody else hear and receive it too. And when it happens repeatedly, or when entire cities and nations open up, some for the very first time, to the eternal message of salvation, an overwhelming joy results. The triumph of God's people in missions releases the joy of the Lord everywhere in the same way the fragrance of incense was released in the triumphal procession.

#### *The battle cry*

To triumph can also refer to letting out a war cry. King David said to the Lord, *I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me* (Psalm 41:11, emphasis added). In this verse, the original word for triumph means to yell out a battle cry. We see it again in Joshua 6:10 where it is translated *shout*: *But Joshua had commanded the army, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!"* (emphasis added).

The same word is used when the Lord tells Israel how they

will know when to advance into the Promised Land. At the appropriate time, Aaron's sons were commanded to blow two special trumpets made of hammered silver. The trumpets split the air with a sound of victory that called Israel to advance: *The blast will be the signal for setting out* (Numbers 10:6). When they went into battle, God promised: *Sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the LORD your God and rescued from your enemies* (Numbers 10:9). The trumpet call and war cry for the church was issued when Jesus gave us the Great Commission. *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation* (Mark 16:15).

#### *The forward thrust of dominion*

Triumph also portrays the forward thrust of God's dominion against the opposing powers of darkness. *God reigns [triumphs] over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne* (Psalm 47:8). The biblical word here means "to reign or to ascend to the throne." The Holy Spirit is being poured out today to equip and empower the church for the final sweep in advancing God's kingdom against Satan's dominion over the world's unreached peoples. As we exercise the authority of Jesus' name and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can liberate people whom Satan has held in his clutches and bring them into full deliverance. And one day in the foreseeable future, when all the unreached people groups have been reached, our Lord and King will return visibly to earth *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations [ethne], and then the end will come* (Matthew 24:14, emphasis added). Our missions triumph will prepare the world for our King's return.

#### *The shout for joy*

A derivative of the word we just discussed is a Hebrew equivalent for "shout for joy." We find this word used in Zechariah

2:10-11: *“Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the LORD. “Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you”* (emphasis added). This describes the joyous shout that comes from God’s people when they are used to win nations to the Lord.

### Triumph is a Missions Word

So it’s true that *triumph* is a missions word. I’m not talking about a cultural triumphalism that says, “My culture is better than yours.” Nor am I talking about a theological triumphalism that says, “My theology is better than yours.” I’m talking about building God’s kingdom.

You and your church can be triumphant in missions. It will cause you to “jump for joy.” Yes, missions is fun, and any believer or church not involved in missions is missing a major part of the joy of knowing and following the Lord. Missions is also the triumphant “war cry” of the victorious believer and the church that advances God’s kingdom by winning new souls to His service. Finally, our triumph is founded on His victory on the cross, and our part in the triumphal procession and in releasing the fragrance of His knowledge is wholly by His grace.

Right now, take a moment to see yourself in God’s final parade of triumph. All the faithful saints of God from the beginning of humanity are following our Commander-in-Chief. Our risen Lord is leading in a great victor’s chariot. The early saints and patriarchs are in the parade, like Abraham, who obediently stepped out in missions to bless all the peoples of the earth. David and the prophets are there. Everyone is shouting and singing praises to God. Then come the twelve apostles and the other early saints. Many were martyrs, but they were always victorious and they spread the fragrance of the knowledge of

the Lord, even in death. Missionaries from all the ages are in the parade and so are the reformers.

The stream of triumphant soldiers gets wider and wider, and the reverberation of singing and shouts of joy escalate higher and higher. All the faithful contemporary saints are there. You and your congregation should be there. All of us should be in

*My hope is to see every believer become an Acts 1:8 Christian and every church an Acts 1:8 church.*

this final triumphant processional, following Christ with believers from Antioch, Philippi, and Macedonia. And with us should be the members of the unreached people groups that, with our churches, we were instrumental in winning to Christ: the Uyghurs of China, the Fulanis of

Africa, the Tzeltals of Mexico, and the Ifugaos of the northern Philippines. I'm sure you want to be there with your church.

The parade leads through the gates of glory. We all stand before our King worshipping and waving palm branches of victory. The incense of ultimate conquest over Satan fills the air. We are part of that joyful throng that helped to complete the Great Commission. In that moment, the *It is finished* of Calvary will become the *It is finished* of the church's mission to partner with God in His plan to redeem the world.

Throughout this book, we have investigated the necessity of a proper biblical worldview, the unfinished task, the details of a Great Commission church, and the best practices of missions of the local church. My hope is to see every believer become an Acts 1:8 Christian and every church an Acts 1:8 church. When this happens, we can certainly make the Great Commission the Great Completion.

**Please note:**

The following section encompasses seven appendices.

Appendices A and B are exercises from chapter 5.

# Appendix A

## Who in the World Are You?

Have you ever felt like you don't have much to offer the Lord? Are you intimidated by all those "Dr. Livingston, I presume" types of missionaries who are so charged and on fire that they have to be sent to the deep jungles of Tu-Hot-For-Me Africa to work off some of their super spiritual fervor? After all, you've never wanted to acquire a taste for fish heads and other exotic missionary staples. Well, perhaps God has a special task for you that doesn't require super-human strength or a cast-iron stomach.

The following mini gift inventory is a test to see who in the world you are. God considers each of His children and each local church to be a critical component of His global plan. The results of the following inventory may give you some indication of how you have been uniquely crafted to respond to God, His church, and the global harvest.

**Directions:** Read each statement and circle the appropriate number which best represents your response (5 = always to 0 = never). Try to have a range of responses, both low and high.

**Hint: Don't think too hard – go with your first reaction.**

## **I Have a Tendency to ...**

1. Remember people's likes and dislikes.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
2. Say, "I'll be praying for you," and then do it.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
3. Be content to work without recognition.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
4. Learn about other languages for fun.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
5. Give things and money to the Lord's work.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
6. Trust God for the impossible.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
7. Be flexible in fluctuating circumstances.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
8. Enjoy meeting and being with people from other countries.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
9. Enjoy ministering to others' needs.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
10. Think God works through my prayers.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
11. Enjoy writing letters to those far away.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
12. Prefer an adventurous rather than a quiet life.  
5 4 3 2 1 0

13. Share the Lord with those from different backgrounds.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
14. Believe wholeheartedly in God's power.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
15. Use all the resources I have to accomplish goals.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
16. Believe people in ministry need more of the power of God.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
17. Discern Satan's work and vanquish it.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
18. Imagine living in another country.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
19. Freely volunteer my time.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
20. Enjoy work that involves much prayer.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
21. Believe all of my money belongs to God.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
22. Adapt easily to new situations.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
23. Envision God supplying other's needs.  
5 4 3 2 1 0
24. Feel unconcerned about the risks in sharing the gospel.  
5 4 3 2 1 0

## Key to Scoring “Who in the World Are You?”

The following pages apply to these categories:

Intercessor	Missionary	Sender
2 _____	4 _____	1 _____
6 _____	7 _____	3 _____
10 _____	8 _____	5 _____
14 _____	12 _____	9 _____
16 _____	13 _____	11 _____
17 _____	18 _____	15 _____
20 _____	22 _____	19 _____
23 _____	24 _____	21 _____

**Totals** \_\_\_\_\_

To score the instrument, simply add up the number scores for each of these categories and put the total at the bottom.

### Understanding “Who in the World Are You?”

The mini gift inventory “**Who in the World Are You?**” is meant to give an idea of how God may deploy you right now in the task of extending His kingdom into all the world. You may fall into any of three categories: Intercessor, Missionary, or Sender.

At the bottom of your inventory, you will see your cumulative score for each of these categories: I = Intercessor, M = Missionary, and S = Sender. These scores were compiled by simply adding the numbers from questions asked in each category. Please remember to compare yourself only with yourself. Your highest score will indicate how God might desire to use you right now. Perhaps in the future He will use you in a different way, but for now, look to see how you might develop and use the gift you have for His glory.

For our purposes, these gifts may be defined as follows:

*Intercessor*

A person who is gifted to be involved in prayer and spiritual warfare for the cause of missions. An intercessor will look for opportunities to use this gift to do the work in the Spirit that is required to precede and accompany the actual doing of missions.

*Missionary*

A person who enters another culture to do missions. This person will look for opportunities to prepare himself or herself to take the gospel to other cultures.

*Sender*

A person who stands behind and assists others who are taking the gospel to other cultures and helps the missions program of the church. A sender will be looking for ways to help those who are doing the work of missions and the program of missions in the church.

You must remember that this is only one tool, not a final word from God on how you will be used in missions. The results should be confirmed by your pastor and others who know you well. Use it for encouragement to get busy in furthering the cause of missions.

**INTERCESSOR - What in the World are You Going to Do?**

If you scored highest as an *intercessor* on the test “Who in the World Are You?,” you may feel the Lord prompting you to make some specific commitments in line with your gifts.

Take that step now. Set some specific goals to develop and use your gifts in the next year. Choose two or three (or several) from the following list, or you may have some other specific goal in mind.

- Read at least two books for encouragement and help in developing my ministry of intercession (for example, *Touch the World Through Prayer* by Wesley Duewel or *The Hour That Changes the World* by Dick Eastman).
- Read at least two books about missionaries to encourage my prayer commitment (for example, *Through Gates of Splendor* by Elizabeth Elliot or *Peace Child* by Don Richardson).
- Adopt an unreached people group to pray for and do research about them. (Use the AIMS training manual *Final Focus*.)
- Go on a short-term missions trip with the goal of getting a clearer vision and focus for my intercession.
- Give a specified amount of time on a regular basis to intercession for missions. (*Operation World* by Jason Mandryk is a good daily prayer guide for the world.)
- Help to mobilize a movement of prayer for missions in my church. (David Bryant's *A Concert of Prayer* will help you.)
- Find another person who will be my missions prayer partner.
- Learn more about spiritual warfare and praise and worship, and utilize them in my times of intercession.

#### MISSIONARY - What in the World Are You Going to Do?

If you scored highest as a *missionary* on the test "Who in the World Are You?," you may feel the Lord prompting you to make some specific commitments in line with your gifts.

Take that step now. Set some specific goals to develop and use your gifts in the next year. Choose two or three (or several) from the following list or determine some other specific goals of your own.

- Read at least two missions books to inspire and give direction (for example, *Eternity in Their Hearts* by Don Richardson; *A Mind for Missions* by Paul Borthwick; and *Triumph: Missions Renewal for the Local Church and Healthy Churches in a Sick World* by Dr. Howard Foltz).
- Set further goals as suggested in *Practical Steps to the Mission Field* (an AIMS publication).
- Go on a short-term missions trip.
- Share my commitment with my pastor or other church leader and ask for counsel in preparing for God's direction.
- Correspond or talk with a missionary about what they do and how to prepare.
- Pray regularly for missions (for example, use *Operation World* by Jason Mandryk as a daily prayer guide).
- Give in a regular, systematic way to missions (or increase your giving).
- Seek further training to prepare for missions.
- Offer to teach a missions course at my church or help organize the church's missions conference. (Use the AIMS training manual *Missions Foundations*.)

## SENDER - What in the World Are You Going to Do?

If you scored highest as a *sender* on the test “Who in the World Are You?,” you may feel the Lord prompting you to make some specific commitments in line with your gifts.

Take that step now. Set some specific goals to develop and use your gifts in the next year. Choose two or three (or several) from the following list, or you may have some other specific goal in mind.

- Read at least two books, which will increase my knowledge of missions in general (like *Bruchko* by Bruce Olson), and read others to increase my knowledge of how to be a good sender (like *Serving as Senders* by Neal Pirolo).
- Find a missionary to correspond with and write letters or cards of encouragement at least once a month.
- Go on a short-term missions trip to learn more about missions and how to be a better sender. (Use the AIMS training manual *Short-Term Missions Training*.)
- Pray regularly for missions. (*Operation World* by Jason Mandryk is a good daily prayer guide.)
- Begin (or increase) my financial commitment to missions.
- Share with my pastor or church leader my interest in being a sender for missions.
- Find local missionaries and invite them to my home for a time of fellowship and encouragement.
- Work with a group at my church to organize a church missions conference.

# Appendix B

## Attributes of a Missions-Mobilized Church

### *Directions for Using the Attributes Checklist*

The attached “Attributes of a Missions-Mobilized Church” has been designed from our AIMS experience of mobilizing local churches for world missions over the past thirty years. If you will take this quick “mission checkup” quiz, it will help you evaluate the current missions status (activity) of your church.

The following are some guidelines for taking the checkup:

1. Read each statement and respond by filling in the most appropriate number for your church. Don't think too long; the first number that comes to your mind is probably the best one.
2. Add up your total and put the score in the space at the bottom of the page.
3. There is not a “pass” or “fail” score for this checkup. The only way that any church can fail is to not obey God when He speaks about mobilizing further.
4. Later, you can have your elders, deacons, or missions committee also do this checkup together.

Then they can compare their scores and use this as a means for discussion.

5. The twenty attributes are not arranged in any particular order of priority. In your thoughtful meditation and discussion, prioritize them yourself according to the needs of your particular church. What are the most important things for your church to improve on first, second, etc.?

May God richly bless you as you prayerfully consider the application of this checkup to your church's missions outreach.

#### Attributes of a Missions-Mobilized Church

The criteria for a "Great Commission church" are listed below. The mobilization process will vary depending on the size, financial base, leadership style, etc. of each church. The AIMS publication titled *On the Cutting Edge* is an effective tool for a church to use in evaluating and planning its own program.

Quick Mission Checkup: Mark a number (0-5) for each attribute below:

**0** – no activity, **5** – full involvement

Total the score.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Teaching on missions in Sunday school, sermons, missions newsletters, home cell groups, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Regular intercessory prayer for the lost world, focusing on the unreached.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Missions advocacy team or fellowship group, which meets at least monthly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Annual missions conference.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Systematic financial involvement of congregation for missions (preferably Faith Promise).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. A focus on praise and worship that expresses the missionary heart of God and inspires the congregation to missions involvement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Pastoral care for missionaries with letters, phone calls, gifts, visits, email, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Missions secretary or pastor/director.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Goals, objectives, and policies defined for missions program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Local cross-cultural outreach.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Missions projects, such as church building or equipment purchasing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Mission-minded pastor who travels to a mission field at least biennially.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Short-term outreaches for congregation's members and staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Identification and training of missionary candidates within congregation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Career or "tentmaker" missionaries sent out and supported by the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Program to reproduce and share your missions vision with other churches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Adoption of (or preparing to adopt) an unreached people group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Regular missionary guests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Missionaries known by entire church, not just pastors and church staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Vision of local church as a "missions base."
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Total**

# Appendix C

## AIMS Resources for Missions Mobilization

### *1. AIMS Training and Seminars*

**AIMS** training and seminars equip churches to do missions strategically.

**AIMS Premier Seminar – Harvest Connection** (for use domestically or overseas). This seminar is based on the revision of the book *Triumph: Missions Renewal for the Local Church*, now renamed *Harvest Connection*.

The Harvest Connection seminar and book grew from a quote from Jesus Christ: *I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest* (John 4:35). He referred to a world of individuals waiting to hear of His love for them, regardless of ethnic background, culture, lifestyle, or creed.

Harvest Connection highlights the spiritual state of our world. It outlines the biblical basis for missions and provides a detailed teaching of the steps necessary to mobilize a church for missions to the Unreached People Groups (UPGs) of the world. It demonstrates how local congregations can link their resources with those of other laborers to maximize efficiency.

Using a variety of techniques from video presentations to small-group discussions, this seminar reveals God’s heart for the world.

Harvest Connection, created and sponsored by AIMS, can help your church become a Great Commission church, expanding God’s kingdom all over the earth. Join the twenty thousand-plus pastors and church leaders all over the world who have already benefited from this seminar.

This seminar has been translated into the following languages, with still more languages to follow:

<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Armenian</b>	<b>Amharic (Ethiopian)</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Oromo (Ethiopian)</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
<b>French</b>	<b>German</b>	<b>Hindi</b>
<b>Indonesian</b>	<b>Portuguese</b>	<b>Romanian</b>
<b>Russian</b>	<b>Swahili</b>	<b>Telagu</b>

Harvest Connection is also available on DVD in English and Mandarin Chinese. For those who are interested in utilizing the English DVDs, you can purchase our Harvest Connection packet containing the DVDs, a facilitator’s manual, five student manuals, and three one-hour consultations. For further information, call 719-226-3737, or to place an order, email us at [aims@aims.org](mailto:aims@aims.org). (7 hours in length)

## Final Focus

### **Theme – Focus on a People through Adoption**

The Final Focus seminar grew from an understanding that, for many churches, the task of taking the gospel to the entire world is too vast to grasp and personalize. Final Focus teaches churches how to break the Great Commission task into manageable portions by focusing on specific ethnic groups. Accelerating International Mission Strategies uses this seminar to encourage

local churches worldwide to adopt people groups that live in regions where people have never heard the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. The eventual goal of such adoptions is to establish new churches in those regions and help those churches reproduce themselves in their own culture and beyond. How can we possibly take the gospel to every tribe and language in the entire world? We can do it as we focus on one people group at a time. (6-7 hours in length)

### Missions SMART'er

#### **Theme – Anything We Do in Missions Is Smart, But Maybe We Can Do It SMART'er**

The Missions SMART'er seminar grew from an understanding that anything a church does for missions is smart, but anything it does in a purposeful way is even smarter. The information included emphasizes the power of **Strategy, Mobilization, Advancement, Resources, and Training** in the battle to expand God's kingdom all over the world.

The AIMS Missions SMART'er seminar includes an animated computer presentation, video support, group interaction, and plenty of opportunities for questions and answers. But more than that, it has the information you need to launch your church into a more fruitful global ministry. (6-7 hours)

### Understanding Islam – Loving Muslims

#### **Theme – Revolutionary Ideas on How to Share Jesus' Love with Muslims**

For all Christians, a biblical understanding of Islam and the Muslim culture is essential in today's world. The Understanding Islam, Loving Muslims seminar will help you understand Islam, love Muslim people, and find effective methods for communicating Christ's love to them as individuals. (5-6 hours in length)

## Healthy Churches in a Sick World

### **Theme – The World is Sick – How Can the Church be Healthier?**

The Healthy Churches seminar is built on the concept that local churches have a scriptural mandate to minister in four areas: (1) To those who are part of the congregation, (2) To those who are part of the culture in which the congregation lives, (3) To those who live in similar cultures, (4) To those who live in entirely different cultures.

The Healthy Churches seminar offers a guided, interactive opportunity for pastors and other church leaders to become healthier in global evangelism. This seminar utilizes a dynamic diagnostic instrument to help the church evaluate its current health as a Great Commission church. The animated computer presentation, illustrations, and penetrating group discussion help the church apply a specific “prescription” for greater health in ten different areas of applied ministry. (6-7 hours in length)

## On the Cutting Edge

### **Theme – Guidelines and Insight on Missions Mobilization for the Missions Task Force and Other Church Leadership**

This seminar presents a step-by-step process that guides church leadership in developing the eight best practices of local church missions. (3-4 hours in length)

## Business as Mission

### **Theme – A Fresh Approach to Tent-Making Missions**

The Business as Mission seminar explores the biblical model for business and describes how business provides a platform for effective ministry, particularly in hard-to-access regions.

Students learn how to financially and strategically analyze the business potential of opportunities in their midst. Instructors are individuals with practical, hands-on business experience. (6-8 hours in length)

### Strategic Missions Power Shifts

#### **Guidance for Missionaries, Pastors, and Church Leaders to “Power Shift” to Increased Harvest**

This seminar outlines five important power shifts that will launch local churches into completing the Great Commission. These power shifts are Attitude, Actions, Alignment, Abundance, and Anointing, based on Dr. Foltz’s book, *For Such a Time as This - Strategic Missions Power Shifts for the 21st Century*. (5-6 hours in length)

Other AIMS materials and presentations are listed on [www.aims.org](http://www.aims.org).

#### *2. AIMS Books by Dr. Howard Foltz*

***Healthy Churches in a Sick World:*** Analyzes three arenas of local church ministry – within the body, within the community, and within the whole world – and offers an evaluation for the reader to gauge the health of his/her own church.

***Paradigm Lost – Rediscovering God’s Plan for Spiritual Harvest:*** This book is a call to the church to restore the harvest mentality of Jesus’ words, and it gives systematic examples of how to implement this farming paradigm for more effective evangelism in our neighborhoods, country, and the world.

***For Such a Time as This – Strategic Missions Power Shifts for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:*** These seven thought-provoking chapters challenge us to reflect biblically, prophetically, and practically on our cherished missions worldview.

### 3. AIMS Training Manuals

***On the Cutting Edge:*** A step-by-step guide to the development and implementation of a successful missions program in the local church.

***Final Focus Manual:*** Designed to help local churches change the world one people group at a time by adopting an unreached people group.

***Missions Conference.Org:*** A guide for setting up a missions conference in the local church.

***Harvest Connection for Kids:*** A program designed to raise our children with a missions mindset.

***Missions Foundations:*** A beginning-level missions curriculum designed to fit most formats, from Sunday school or small group Bible study to cell groups or entire church participation.

***Short-Term Missions Training – The Ticket to Successful Ministry:*** A comprehensive training tool for outreach teams preparing to go on short-term missions trips. Evaluation forms are included.

### 4. AIMS Booklets

***Mission Fundraising:*** Completed in cooperation with our partnering churches, this booklet gives ten fundraising ideas that have been tested and found to be successful.

***Practical Steps to the Mission Field:*** A concise handbook to assist individuals in forming plans to go to the mission field.

***Strategic Prayer:*** A prayer guide for the world, organized by religious blocks.

***Strategic Missions Giving:*** A guide on how to maximize your investments in God's kingdom.

5. *AIMS Premier Overseas Training*

***Equipping for the Harvest (EFTH)***

This AIMS training is to help mobilize indigenous movements overseas. This training includes teaching via PowerPoint in the local language, utilizing the AIMS foundational seminar, Harvest Connection, followed by Faith Promise Giving and Networking Methodology. At the end of EFTH, the national churches are formed into partnerships targeting unreached people groups. Their goal is to raise up a grass-roots missions movement that generates prayer, finances, and national missionaries and send them to the unreached people groups to generate church-planting movements.

# Appendix D

## Training Materials for Short-Term Missions Candidates

*Before You Pack Your Bag, Prepare Your Heart* by Cindy Judge, 2000 (rev. 2005), Minneapolis MN: STEMPress, ISBN-13: 978-0-9712320-4-4.

Theme – Pre-Field Personal Devotional

Preparation: By far the #1 selling STEMPress book, it is used as a devotional pre-field training tool by each individual on a short-term missions team.

*Bringing It Home: A Post-Trip Devotional Guide for International and Domestic Short-Term Mission Teams* by Jim Mersereau, 2010, Foresight Publishing, ISBN-13: 978-0-9844423-4-8.

Theme – Re-Entry: Designed to help prevent short-termers from crashing and burning upon return from the field. Should be required reading and journaling for every short-termer beginning on the first day back home from the field.

*Building Strategic Relationships: A Practical Guide to Partnering with Non-Western Missions* (3rd Edition) by Daniel Rickett, 2008, Minneapolis MN: STEMPress, ISBN-13: 978-0-9711258-5-8.

Theme – Establishing Partnerships with the Field that Work: Excellent, indispensable tools for assessing intercultural partnerships utilizing tactical strategies to build long-term, collaborative relationships.

*Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot- and Cold-Climate Cultures* by Sarah A. Lanier, 2000, Hagerstown MD: McDougal Publishing, ISBN-10: 1-58158-022-3.

Theme – Pre-Field Cultural (Cross-Cultural) Training: A very popular easy-to-read introduction to basic cultural differences by an experienced missionary.

*Maximum Impact Short-Term Mission: The God-Commanded Repetitive Deployment of Swift, Temporary Non-Professional Missionaries* by Roger P. Peterson, Gordon Aeschliman, and R. Wayne Sneed, 2003/2008, Minneapolis MN: STEM Press, ISBN-13: 978-0-97112-581-0.

Theme – Leadership Training for All Short-Term Missions Leaders: Solid short-term missions theory for implementing virtually any type of short-term missions endeavor. Ralph Winter called this book “the Bible” of the short-term missions movement.

*Short-Term Missions Workbook: From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens* by Tim Dearborn, 2003, InterVarsity Press, ISBN-13: 978-0830832330.

Theme – Pre-Field Team-Based Training: Eight-week course for teams to do together. Prepare spiritually through individual and group Bible study, gain cross-cultural understanding, and get ready for reentry.

# Appendix E

## Other Facilitating Organizations

### *Joshua Project*

[www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)

Joshua Project is the principle website AIMS uses for research. This organization seeks to highlight the ethnic people groups of the world with the least number of followers of evangelical Christianity. Focusing on ethnicity, they maintain an extensive database of unreached peoples listed by country and language. The Joshua Project maintains this data to support Christian missions and is based in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA. It began in 1995 from within the former AD2000 & Beyond Movement and is now part of the U.S. Center for World Mission.

### *Adopt-A-People Clearing House*

[www.adoptapeople.com](http://www.adoptapeople.com)

This website exists to help the Great Commission community establish an “end-vision” passion and equip local churches and mission organizations worldwide to adopt all remaining unreached people groups through prayer, partnership, provision, and personnel for the purpose of church planting.

# Appendix F

## End Notes

### *Chapter 2*

- <sup>1</sup> Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York, NY: Random House, 1998), xix.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.
- <sup>3</sup> R. R. Palmer and Joel Cotton, *A History of the Modern World Since 1815* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950, Fifth Edition 1978), 803.
- <sup>4</sup> Justin Long, Network for Strategic Missions, Personal correspondence, June 4, 2010.
- <sup>5</sup> The Joshua Project, [http://joshuaproject.net/global\\_statistics](http://joshuaproject.net/global_statistics) (January 25, 2015).
- <sup>6</sup> Interview with a national Indian leader, 2004.
- <sup>7</sup> R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World Since 1815* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950, Fifth Edition 1978), 791.

### *Chapter 3*

- <sup>1</sup> The Joshua Project, [http://joshuaproject.net/global\\_list?listtype=religions](http://joshuaproject.net/global_list?listtype=religions) (January 25, 2015).
- <sup>2</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (New York: Oxford University Press, Third Edition, 1979, 1989), 314-17.
- <sup>3</sup> Status of Global Mission, Updated for 2014. Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/resources/documents/StatusOfGlobalMission.pdf> (July 16, 2014).
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> "Giving Research," The Empty Tomb, Inc., <http://www.emptytomb.org/research.html> (October 17, 2011).
- <sup>6</sup> "Statistics and Facts," International Orality Network, [http://www.oralty.net/statistics\\_and\\_facts](http://www.oralty.net/statistics_and_facts) (July 16, 2014).
- <sup>7</sup> "Official Ministry Statistics – April 1, 2014." *The JESUS Film*, [http://www.jesusfilm.org/assets/files/JFP\\_Statistics\\_Apr2014.pdf](http://www.jesusfilm.org/assets/files/JFP_Statistics_Apr2014.pdf) (July 16, 2014).
- <sup>8</sup> "CBN Partners Make a Difference," CBN International Ministries, <http://www.cbn.com/partners/about/index.aspx> (July 16, 2014).
- <sup>9</sup> "Recording Strategy," Global Recordings Network, <http://www.gospelrecordings.net> (February 20, 2012).

- <sup>10</sup> “Great Commission Statistics,” Joshua Project Legacy Website, <http://legacy.joshua-project.net/great-commission-statistics.php> (January 25, 2015).
- <sup>11</sup> Vinita Hampton and Carol Plueddemann (compilers), *World Shapers: A Treasury of Quotes from Great Missionaries* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1991), 3.

### Chapter 4

- <sup>1</sup> “India People Groups,” Joshua Project Legacy Website, <http://legacy.joshua-project.net/countries.php> (January 25, 2015).
- <sup>2</sup> “Najdi Bedouin of Saudi Arabia,” Joshua Project Legacy Website, 2015, <http://legacy.joshua-project.net/people-profile.php> (January 25, 2015).
- <sup>3</sup> “What is the 10/40 Window?” Joshua Project Legacy Website, <http://legacy.joshua-project.net/10-40-window.php> (January 25, 2015).
- <sup>4</sup> Vinita Hampton and Carol Plueddemann (compilers), *World Shapers: A Treasury of Quotes from Great Missionaries* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1991), 115.

### Chapter 6

- <sup>1</sup> Anthony Livesey, *Great Commanders and Their Battles* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 36-43.
- <sup>2</sup> Vinita Hampton and Carol Plueddemann (compilers), *World Shapers: A Treasury of Quotes from Great Missionaries* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1991), 16-17.

### Chapter 7

- <sup>1</sup> Doron Geller, “Israeli Military Intelligence During the Six-Day War (1967), Jewish Virtual Library <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/intel67.html> (August 25, 2012).
- <sup>2</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition* (Chicago, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 24-25.
- <sup>3</sup> R. A. Torrey, *The Power of Prayer and the Prayer of Power* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1976), 16.
- <sup>4</sup> Vinita Hampton and Carol Plueddemann (compilers), *World Shapers: A Treasury of Quotes from Great Missionaries* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1991), 74.
- <sup>5</sup> Testimony of Carolyn Hedgpeth.

### Chapter 8

- <sup>1</sup> Charles M. Province, “The Famous Patton Speech,” excerpted from a book titled *The Unknown Patton*, <http://members.aol.com/Patton2GHQ/speech.html> (December 22, 1999).
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Interview with Pastor Terry Roberts, March 3, 2010.
- <sup>4</sup> Roger Peterson, plenary address at Short-Term Missions Long-Term Impact? A conference co-sponsored by Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association and the Evangelical Missiological Society, 28 September 2007, Minneapolis.
- <sup>5</sup> Msgr. James H. O’Neill, “True Story of the Patton Prayer,” <http://www.apostolic.edu/patton/text.htm> (December 22, 1999).

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- <sup>1</sup> Vern Liebl (USMC intelligence specialist), “The View from the Other Side: An

Interview with an Iraqi Soldier” (excerpted from a conversation with a captured Iraqi officer on March 2, 1991), <http://www.desert-storm.com/soldiers/into.html> (December 23, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Bates (Air Force Staff Sergeant), “F-17: A long, storied history that is about to end.” *Air Force Print News*, Posted: October 28, 2006, <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123030185> (May 8, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Julian E. Barnes, “U.S. Shift to Drone Command,” *Wall Street Journal: Middle East News*. Published March 20, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324103504578372703357207828.html> (May 8, 2013).

## Chapter 10

<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, “The Price of Greatness,” <http://www.totalpolitics.com/speeches/war/world-war-ii/33828/speech-at-harvard-the-price-of-greatness-is-responsibility.shtml> (May 24, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

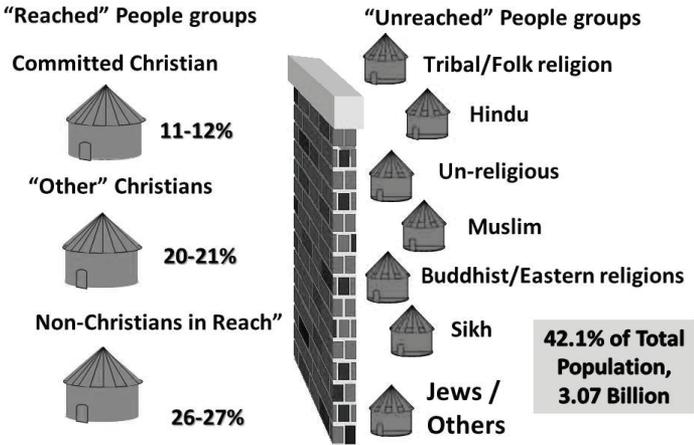
## Chapter 11

<sup>1</sup> Chip Minemeyer, “Wounded Soldier Cleared to Join 4<sup>th</sup> Fest Parade of Heroes in State College, Pa.” *Centre Daily Times*, July 3, 2013, Reprinted *Stars and Stripes*, <http://www.stripes.com/news/us/wounded-soldier-cleared-to-join-4th-fest-parade-of-heroes-in-state-college-pa-1.228746> (August 17, 2013).

# Appendix G

## Illustrations

### *The Global Village – 7.28 B Population*



The Global Village – Illustration 1

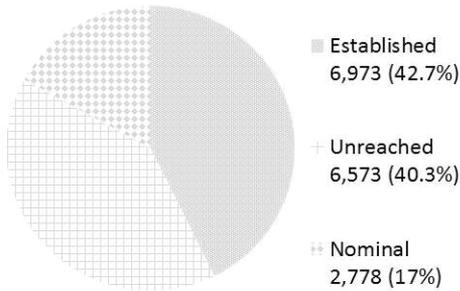
The world is increasingly becoming a global village. Note in this graphic the wall in the middle. This is a cross-cultural wall of political hostilities, sociological difference, language, culture etc. On the left side of the wall are three villages – 1) The committed Christian village, 2) “other” Christians by name only 3) non-Christians within reach of the committed Christian village. Thankfully all evangelical Christians live within the committed evangelical village.

On the right side of the wall are the villages of unreached peoples. The total number of unreached people groups is 6,571, which is 40.3% of all people groups on planet earth. The population within these people groups is 3.07 billion, which is 42.1% of the global population. These statistics come from Joshua Project, 12-7-15.

## Global Peoples Summary

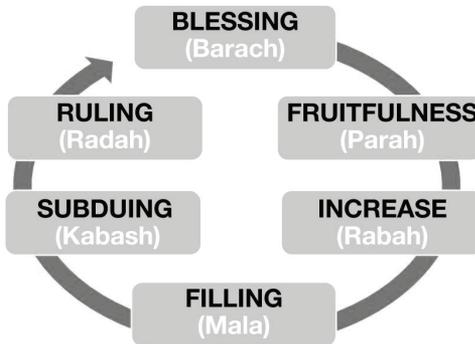
Total People Groups: 6,324  
 Unreached People Groups: 6,573  
 People Groups Unreached: 40.3%

World Population: 7.28 Billion  
 Pop. In Unreached Groups: 3.07 Billion  
 % Population in Unreached: 42.1%



The Global Report<sup>d</sup> – Illustration 2

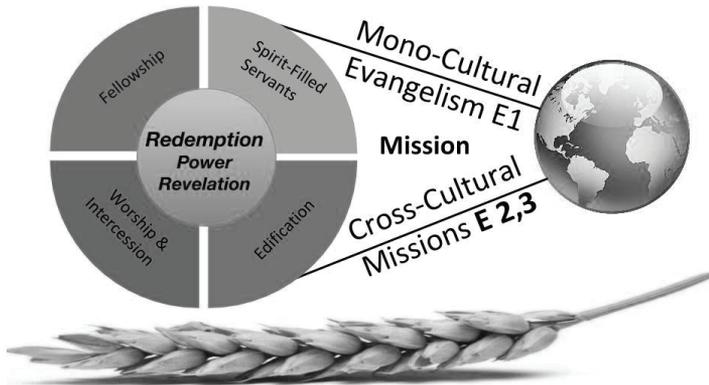
## MAN'S MISSION of STEWARDSHIP The Cycle of Blessings



Man's Mission of Stewardship – Illustration 3

<sup>d</sup> Credit - The Joshua Project, 12-22-2015

## Biblical Model of a Great Commission Church



The Biblical Model of a Great Commission Church – Illustration 4

A church’s essence is not its departments or programs. Secular businesses and service organizations have departments and programs. A specific organizational structure doesn’t differentiate a church either. A church is a local gathering of God’s people who are “built up” by God’s spirit working in and among them. It is not only a visible institution, but rather, a living organism that grows from divinely networked relationships.

The inner blue circle of redemption, power and revelation are the dynamics of God that produce the four components of the outer circle. Each church will develop Spirit-filled servants, edification, discipling and teaching, worship and intercession, and fellowship with God and one another. However, this is not yet a complete church. It is not complete until it is connected through monocultural evangelism in the world representing Jerusalem and Judea and cross-cultural missions to the world representing Samaria and the ends of the earth.

# Essential Components of Personalizing the Great Commission

Everything is based on love and obedience



Essential Components of Personalizing the Great Commission

The process of mobilizing resources and enlisting individuals for global battlefields generally follows a specific, six-point course. The first three items speak to the mobilization of resources. The last three speak to the enlisting of participants. These six items don't necessarily happen in order, but they are all crucial. Here are the six points:

- Praying
- Learning
- Giving
- Sending
- Welcoming (new immigrants)
- Going

## Glossary of Terms

**Closure** – The concept that the missions mandate of the church (to make disciples of all nations) can be completed in a way that is measured by establishing a viable, indigenous church movement in every people group (Completion of the Great Commission).

**Evangelism (E-0)** – Bringing conversion and renewal to people in our own congregations.

**Evangelism (E-1)** – Ministry within one's own culture or geographic region. (Jerusalem)

**Evangelism (E-2)** – Cross-cultural ministry to a culture that is like our own; their world-view is similar to ours (Samaria).

**Evangelism (E-3)** – Evangelism that crosses significant cultural differences, people who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ (ends of the earth).

**Mission** – God's redemptive work in building or extending His kingdom in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and into the rest of the world.

**Missions** – Application of God's redemptive work cross culturally.

**Missionary** – Minister of the gospel who works cross culturally.

**People Group** – Group of individuals that share ethnic, linguistic, and cultural traits.

**Unreached People Group** – People group within which there is no viable, indigenous church that can disciple and reach its own people.

## About the Author



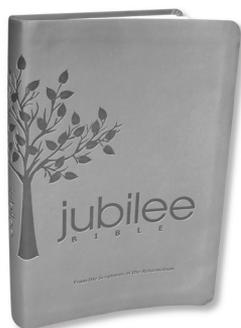
This book is born from education and experience. Dr. Foltz's theological degrees are: a BS in missions, Southwestern University; an MA in cross-cultural communication, Assemblies of God Graduate School; and a DMin, Missiology, Denver Seminary. This education provided a foundation that facilitated the beginning of Teen Challenge in Texas and then globally. Dr. Foltz's ministry expanded throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Southern Asia. He and his team pioneered and developed Teen Challenge missionary ministries in twenty-seven countries. In 1985, Dr. Foltz started AIMS and also took this extensive background to Regent University where he became Professor of Global Evangelization for twenty-three years. His passion is to mobilize local churches for missions and help them network with other local churches, mission agencies, and schools. In this capacity, he has trained countless missionaries in scores of countries. Through all of this, he testifies that missions is

not relegated to the level of a “boring duty.” It’s an expression of the jubilant victory of Christ.

Dr. Howard Foltz and a team of colleagues speak regularly in churches around the United States and abroad. Currently, this team oversees twelve strategic alliances throughout the world.

To schedule Dr. Foltz to speak in your church for a Sunday service or seminar, call (719) 266-3737. Dr. Foltz has had exceptional success motivating congregations in the area of Faith Promise giving or, as he likes to call it, “Grace Motivated and Spirit Empowered” giving.

# The Jubilee Bible



## **About the Version**

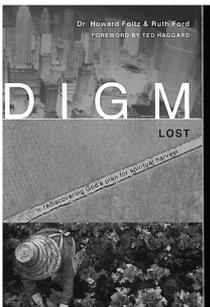
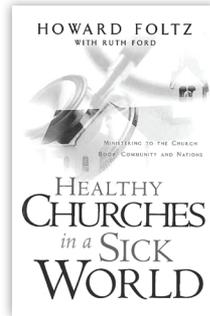
In the Jubilee Bible 2000 (JUB), the usage and context tends to define each key word so you don't need to depend on theological dictionaries or reference materials. Careful attention has been made to properly translate the first usage of each key word and through to the last occurrence. Then, as the word makes its way across the Old Testament and you make the correct match with the corresponding Greek word in the New Testament, an amazing pattern emerges. The Jubilee Bible is the only translation we know of that has each unique Hebrew word matched and mated with a unique English word so that the usage (number of occurrences and number of verses where the word occurs) sets forth a meaningful number pattern and a complete definition of what God means by each word.

## **Availability**

Available free of charge via all popular ereaders, via most popular Bible websites, and can be obtained for as little as \$1.99 from [www.anekopress.com](http://www.anekopress.com).

## Other Books by Dr. Howard Foltz

*Healthy Churches in a Sick World* is based on a simple, biblical premise – to be truly healthy, a church must minister within its own body, in its own community, and throughout the world. Building on patterns established by New Testament churches, this book features evaluation mechanisms to help you gauge your church’s “vital statistics.” The personal examination is designed to help you diagnose specific problems and write specific prescriptions. It offers suggestions to improve areas found to be weak, and it also highlights examples of churches that are effectively putting into practice the principles outlined in this book.



*Paradigm Lost.* In our urban society dominated by technology, have we lost the ability to understand fully what Jesus meant when he used the words sowing, reaping, and harvesting in relation to evangelism?

Jesus used these words not only because they came from the culture of the time, but because they were vital to illustrate the organic nature of growing God’s kingdom. It is therefore essential that we understand the agrarian mindset that is all but lost in our fast-paced, technocratic world – a paradigm lost.

In *For Such a Time As This*, Dr. Howard Foltz succeeds in providing a concise exposition of God’s purpose and plan in missions. Dr. Foltz not only informs; he presents an inescapable challenge, which will transform the missionary involvement of any church that accepts it.

