

What is the best way to reach the world with the living water of the gospel—one drip at a time, or with a fire hose? Traditionally, Christians have used a fire hose, or saturation model, for spreading the basic gospel, and a one-drip-at-a-time method, or strategic model, for theological training, explains author and theologian Dr. Richard Pratt. "What we've ended up with," contends Richard, "is lots of Christians and very few well-trained leaders." To remedy that situation, Richard formed Third Millennium Ministries to mass produce and spread theology and biblical teaching as widely as the gospel itself. Together with Miami International Seminary (MINTS), Third Millennium is enabling MTW to more rapidly and effectively train national leaders.

A Huge Step

Rich Ramsay, an MTW missionary in Chile for 21 years who now designs seminary courses for MINTS, recalls the methods he used for biblical teaching and training leaders in Chile: "I developed a discipleship



HOW TO LEAD A LEADER

by Susan Fikse



MTW Partners with
Third Millennium Ministries
and MINTS to Train Pastors Worldwide

booklet, printed it out on my own printer, made copies, stapled them together, and mailed them off to pastors." He observes, "MINTS is a huge step from that!"

Originally developed in 1999 to address a unique cultural mix in Miami, Fla., MINTS offered seminary courses taught in Spanish to train the large Hispanic community there.

Greg Hauenstein, president of MINTS, says that other countries wanted access to these courses in Spanish. "Since we didn't want to bring students to a base in the U.S., we decided to help believers establish educational outposts in their own countries with indigenous professors." Today, 3,000 students study MINTS courses through centers developed by Christians in their own countries.

Ralph Winter, founding director of the U.S. Center for World Mission,



estimates that there are at least two million functioning pastors outside of North America who do not have access to biblical and theological education. Rich saw this firsthand in Latin America. "The church had grown so fast it was like a tidal wave of conversions. Now we need a tidal wave of leadership



training," he says. "Many pastors have hardly any formal training—there is a real danger of getting off our scriptural base."

Giving with an Open Hand

MINTS is working on a project to design courses around the complete curriculum of Third Millennium, which also uses the Internet as a primary mode of distribution. Previously, as a seminary professor, Richard Pratt often traveled overseas during the summers, teaching leaders around the world. "I discovered one of the crucial needs of the Church worldwide was sound biblical teaching. Whereas in the U.S. we have an abundance of leaders, in most other areas there aren't enough," explains Richard.

After nine years, Third Millennium boasts some 40 staff members, including 16 translators, who have provided 2.9 million hours of instruction in response to requests from 58 countries.

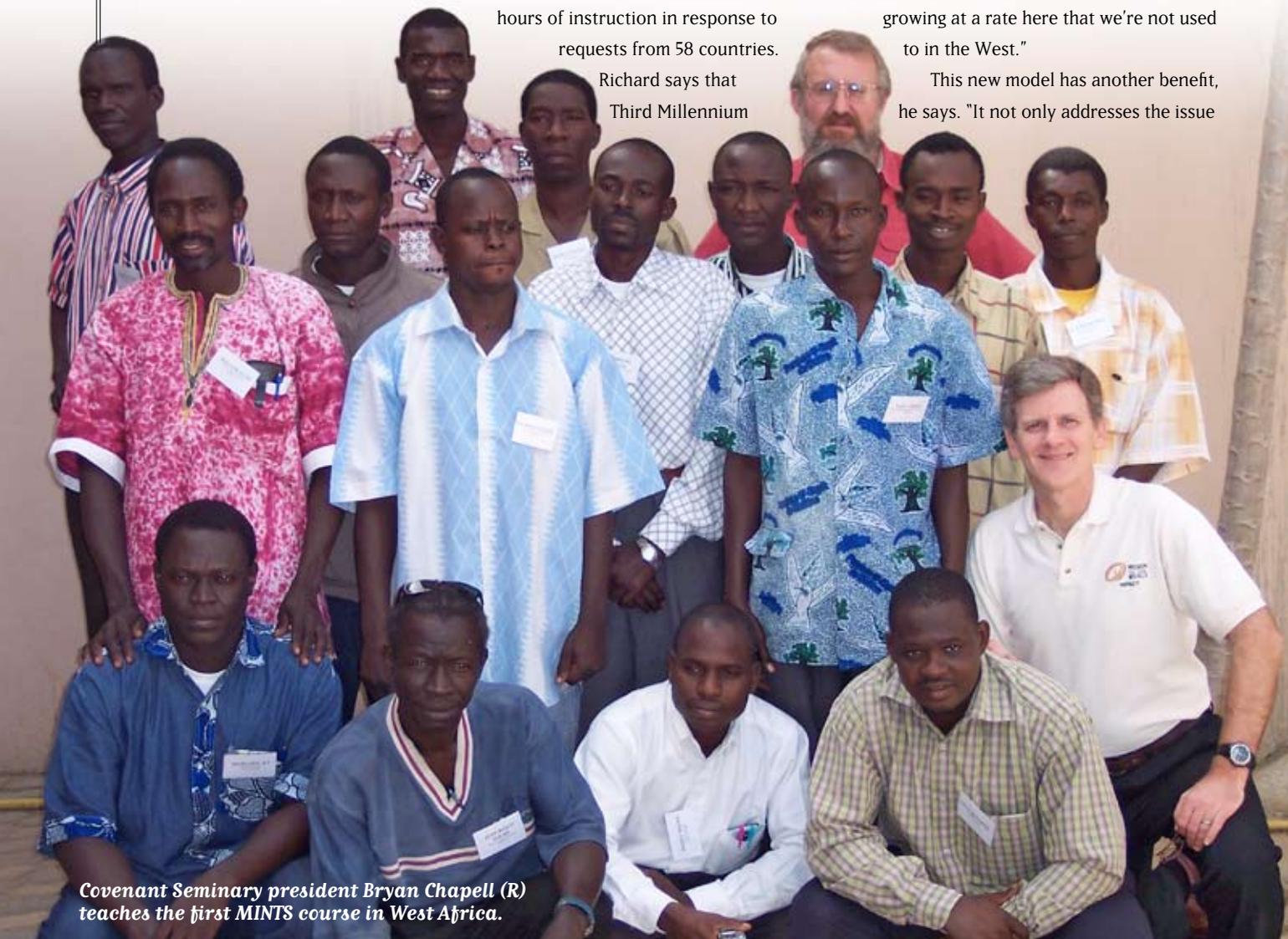
Richard says that
Third Millennium

offers its curriculum to any group that wants to use it, "with an open hand rather than a closed fist." Richard explains the ministry's model for change: "During the Reformation, Europe was flooded with literature—not just tracts, but serious theology. We offer our materials as a gift, and we know the results are out of our control. We want to spread seeds widely."

A New Model

In North and West Africa, Frank, the regional director for MTW's Enterprise for Christian-Muslim Relations, has seen the inadequacy of the one-drip-at-a-time method of training leaders. For instance, he says one country in West Africa wants to plant 250 churches in the next five years. "Models of the past can't keep up with that kind of growth," he says. "Christianity is growing at a rate here that we're not used to in the West."

This new model has another benefit, he says. "It not only addresses the issue



Covenant Seminary president Bryan Chapell (R) teaches the first MINTS course in West Africa.

of growth, but also is the best, and maybe only, way to deliver training to leaders in closed countries."



Places like West Africa are in a transition phase where missionaries are changing roles from primarily doing evangelism to primarily doing leadership training, and determining how to do it most effectively. "The number one request we get

is help with training," explains Frank. "In most places, as churches start to multiply, the need is for leaders."

MINTS and Third Millennium are helping MTW make that transition. The MINTS seminary in West Africa is only two and a half years old, and already MTW is working to establish a satellite study center. The national church-planting group working with MTW there plans to extend MINTS into 11 countries in the region. "The MINTS model enables you to multiply your study centers," says Frank. "We are recording lectures in our West Africa seminary so they are available for satellite study centers."

Frank says that in his region, they are still determining the best way to deliver the needed training. While it's great, he says, "to hand a group of guys an iPod with a whole seminary course to review," sometimes, the individualistic study model common in the U.S. doesn't translate into other cultures.

Frank applauds MINTS for enabling groups of students to study together even if they are watching a videotaped lecture. With Third



Third Millennium students in South Asia.

Millennium materials, one way contextualization happens is when a group of students from a distinct cultural group studies the materials together and the interaction is filmed for a "faculty forum" that helps future groups put the material in context.

As the need for leadership training continues to increase in areas where Christianity is growing exponentially, the cooperation of MTW, MINTS, and Third Millennium is vital. The men and women of these organizations are the many hands needed to hold the fire hose of theological training, saturating the nations with the biblical truths essential for growing leaders. ■

Both Third Millennium Ministries and MINTS are ministry partners with MTW. Dr. Pratt is a plenary speaker at the PCA Global Missions Conference, hosted by MTW, November 16-18 in Atlanta, GA.

To learn more about Third Millennium Ministries, visit www.thirdmill.org. To learn more about MINTS, visit www.miamiinternationalseminary.com. You may request a DVD about MINTS by emailing info@mtw.org, or checking the tick box on page 15.



Q&A
with

Richard Pratt

by Susan Fikse

Q: Could you explain how Third Millennium Ministries started and what needs it serves?

A: As I traveled, I realized how many of the world's pastors and churches didn't have the opportunity for theological training that we have in the U.S. I saw that the Church was doing a good job of reaching large numbers with the basic gospel, but we had ended up with lots of Christians and very few well-trained leaders. Our vision for Third Millennium is to make a seminary education available to everyone, anywhere, at no cost.

Q: Why is theological education so critical to the growth of the Church?

A: The spread of the gospel without the spread of theological training is a recipe for disaster. Although pastors may love the Lord and mean well, they lack the basic doctrinal training to discern the truth of their new faith from the lies of their former paganism. It's precisely where the Church is growing most rapidly that the resources available for training are least sufficient.

Q: What are some of the advantages of using new technologies for theological education?

A: In the past, we have taken some of the best leaders out of their countries to educate them in the U.S. But more than 90 percent never returned to their native countries. Internet technology, along with radio, TV, and video, now enable us to educate pastors in their own lands—in such diverse areas as urban Beijing and rural Sudan. Adults learn more effectively through interactive, varied media, and these media can make difficult material easier to understand. We want to follow the example of the Reformers by utilizing modern technology and teaching devices to bring advanced Christian education to underprivileged nations.

Sharing GRACE

Georgia Church Reaches Out to Hispanic Community

by Carter Davis



According to the U.S. Census Bureau, America's Hispanic population grew by nearly 60 percent from 1990 to 2000, and by many accounts the country's Hispanic population is now increasing at a faster pace.

In response, many churches have opened their doors to the growing communities of Spanish-speaking immigrants right in their own backyards, but it's an outreach still very much in its infancy.

In the blue collar, carpet industry-centered community of Dalton, Ga., one church in particular—Grace Presbyterian—has heeded God's call to "love thy neighbor" and has done so through a partnership with MTW and with the support of several churches in the region.

Tearing Down Barriers

Although Grace Presbyterian knew that it wanted to reach out to its Hispanic neighbors, the congregation and its leaders weren't sure how to begin. In January of 2006, with this specific mission in mind, Grace hired Scott Thompson as its pastor, and shortly thereafter an opportunity arose to hire an assistant pastor—Mexican-born Carlos Ireta.

"Bringing Carlos and his family to Dalton really kicked open the doors for us," Scott said.

Originally, Grace's plan was to focus on planting Hispanic churches, but over time they decided to change course because, as Scott put it, "The gospel is supposed to tear down barriers and not build them."

Realizing that this cross-cultural enterprise could draw upon the many resources offered by MTW, Grace sent an official invitation to MTW to join the outreach. "This is very much Grace's project," said senior project administrator Mark Thompson. "But we have a lot of experience in cross-cultural ministry that we want to make available for the churches that need it. Also, this is a great opportunity—reaching

immigrants with the gospel here means that those who return to their home country may have greater influence and share the gospel there."

This summer, Grace Presbyterian hosted three MTW-sponsored missions teams, and has focused on getting that program up and running. "One team offered a free medical clinic to the community," said Scott, "one did a day camp for Hispanic children, and another did home repair for the elderly."

MTW has also assisted Grace in building a facility to house future missions teams. "One goal for the new facility is to train Hispanic men for ministry," said Scott. "We're working with a seminary to come up with some ideas of how we can use our facilities. We can bring people in for classes and do theological education. The possibilities are endless."

Just Scratching the Surface

Though Grace Presbyterian and its members have made great progress in their outreach to the Hispanic community, there are more ambitious plans around the corner—offering the Mexican equivalent of a G.E.D., providing theological education, and teaching Spanish to the Anglos and English to the Hispanics, to name a few.

"There is far more need than we can ever fulfill," Scott said, wistfully. "We can't even scratch the surface."

Perhaps surprisingly, the transition into cross-cultural ministry for this well-established church made up predominantly of whites was relatively easy.

"There was very little dissent within the church," Scott recalled. "I think that's shocking that there were so few, actually. This was a church that's 25 years old in a small Southern town. That they were so open to change is a real testimony to the working of God's Spirit." ■



VBS at Grace Presbyterian.

THE CHALMERS CENTER:

Helping the Poor Help Themselves

by Katie Weaver

It's another Monday meeting in this church in Nakuru, Kenya, and a bright-eyed, confident woman stands up to speak: "Hello, my name is Margaret. I use my loan money to crochet purses out of plastic bags." Fifty other HIV/AIDS carriers listen to her story. They have all been ostracized by family and community, but have found new hope through their small businesses.

MTW missionary Lois Ooms has been equipping churches like this one to use community health training to minister to the poor and needy in Africa for many years. About two years ago, Lois invited some of these churches to receive additional training on microfinance and microenterprise development from the Chalmers Center for Economic Development, based out



of Covenant College. With this training the church started a savings and credit association where members like Margaret share their resources with one another to provide capital to start small businesses.

"HIV/AIDS carriers in Kenya typically struggle with depression and feelings of worthlessness," said Lois. "But this group has learned that God has greater things in store for them."

Margaret's group meets each week to conduct business, receive training on microenterprise development, and to pray.

Founded in 1999, the Chalmers Center seeks to train the Church worldwide to minister to the poor without creating dependency. The Center delivers training through distance learning courses, self-

Margaret runs a small business making purses (L) in Kenya.

study material, and five-day training institutes held throughout the world at local churches and ministries.

Now, each member of Margaret's Nakuru group has started additional savings and credit groups on their own, meaning that these outcasts from society are now ministering to approximately 1,000 other people. ■

POST-KATRINA CLEANUP CONTINUES

by Melanie Benedict

Miraculously, the home of Clarence and Vonda Mae Ladner stood firm amid the devastation in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which swept through the Ladners' coastal neighborhood in Bay St. Louis, Miss., in August 2005. Yet what remained of their damaged home was far from livable. The house stood in a sea of water and the roof was severely damaged. The house could be salvaged, but it would need a lot of help.

Fortunately a lot of help became available from Lagniappe Presbyterian Church and Mission to the World, who worked together to begin rebuilding the Ladners' home. A number of MTW teams helped gut the home, replace the damaged drywall, and paint and restore the bottom floors. MTW's Minuteman funds covered the cost of the roofing materials, and another team raised funds to replace the Ladners' appliances. Today Clarence and Vonda Mae are back in their home, grateful

for the outpouring of help they've received.

Over the past two years, MTW teams have continued to help rebuild communities in Biloxi, Moss Point, Gulfport, and Bay St. Louis, Miss., as well as serving with Redeemer Presbyterian Church with rebuilding efforts in New Orleans. More than 1,900 MTW volunteers have participated in Katrina relief efforts so far, and \$430,000 has been raised through MTW's Minuteman appeals.

"The damages done by Katrina to the Gulf Coast are enormous, which is why MTW continues to be a part of the overall recovery process," said Doug Mallow, acting director of

MTW's Disaster Response Ministries. "These Katrina victims still have great physical and emotional needs. But the need for God's love expressed through helping hands is greater."

The biggest current need is for skilled laborers—those trained in drywall, carpentry, electrical work, and roof repair. ■



To learn more about MTW's Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, please contact Doug Mallow at doug.mallow@mtw.org.

Spreading Health in Africa

by Carter Davis



To reduce the contributions, trials, and experiences of Lois Ooms, an MTW missionary who has spent nearly 40 years on the mission field in Africa, to a few printed words and a handful of paragraphs seems unjust.

And yet there could probably be no one less worried about it than Lois herself—a steadfast, unselfish servant who has touched countless lives through her commitment to community health, while embodying Christ's love in a land miles from home.

Called to Serve

"While in college," Lois recalled, "I helped in several inner-city programs during the 1960s when there were race riots, and I saw the challenge of helping those who did not have all the advantages that many of us had."

With a background in science, Lois took her first steps into a life of mission work in 1969 when she traveled to Kenya to teach high school biology and chemistry. Along the way she found herself

teaching in various capacities in different locations, but in the mid-1980s she was asked to consider starting a community health program—a move that marked a shift in Lois' approach to missions by turning her focus to mercy ministry.

"If you go to a group in a rural culture, and you know that their latrine is too close to their well, and you hold up a glass and say, 'This is what's making you sick,' that won't get you anywhere," said John Rollo, MTW's former international director for Africa. "They 'know' that it's the spirits that are making them sick; there's really nothing you can say to make them think otherwise."

Knowing this from already having spent many years in Africa, Lois approached her work from a different angle. She provided de-worming medicines, trained local women to work as birthing assistants, taught the locals about the value of mosquito nets, and more. And as their health improved, she earned their trust.

Lois then took her community health programs one step further—having undergone extensive training in microfinance and



Lois Ooms

microenterprise. With a new "transformational community health and development" approach (addressing physical health, economic health, and spiritual health), Lois began to help the poor understand that they could develop small businesses they could run and sustain on their own, without outside income.

"This is an important party of mercy ministry and church planting," said John. "If people can sustain themselves and their families, that gives them self-worth and pride, and it helps sustain their local churches as well."

Coming Home

As Lois nears retirement she is preparing to move back to her roots as a teacher.

She will soon leave Africa and will return to the States, but will continue to impart the ideas and examples that she's picked up firsthand by traveling all over the world.

"She realizes it's time for her to leave Kenya," John said. "If she stays, then the people there will always look to her and not be quite sure they can do it themselves. She's left the country for a few months at a time and they've certainly survived and kept going, and she's available to come back and consult, but she's ready to figure out how to help train others."

Throughout her experiences in education, economics, and community health, perhaps Lois' greatest legacy lies not in the clinics and classrooms that she personally pioneered, but in those that she inspires elsewhere. In her travels, which have led her from Kenya to Senegal, the Middle East, and the Sudan, Lois continues to be sought out for her expertise and effective approach to transformational community health.

"Even though it's difficult to leave colleagues with whom I have worked closely, it's rewarding to see that they are able to carry on and adapt the programs to their own people in a creative way," said Lois.

Her work has proven invaluable, and her new role of teacher and trainer should provide future mission teams with the simple yet crucial tools necessary to reach the people of Kenya and the world beyond.

"As I look back, each job had its own reward, but I also see that the Lord used each type of work as a preparation for what I'm doing now," said Lois. "I find that in my current position, training others in transformational development is very rewarding as I see people discovering and using the gifts that God has given them as His image bearers to reach out to the poor, needy, hopeless, and suffering." ■



Lois' community health students.



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VIEW FROM THE CHURCH

NEEDING ONE ANOTHER



Following is an article that Dr. J. Alan Carter, senior pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Ala., wrote in advance of his church's missions conference.

Our Outreach Conference is fast approaching, and as it does I want you to reflect with me about some of the subtle and subconscious ways that we tend to think of missionaries, and offer one radical revision to that way of thinking.

On the face of it, we invite missionary guests to come and report on their ministries and tell of their needs. It is a great thing to do. We become informed about what God is doing in the world, and they get to tell their story, garner prayer support, and—if we say yes—financial support. It is subtle, but on the face of it, we are the haves, and they are the have nots. On the face of it, they have needs, and God may be moving us to help meet those needs. On the face of it, it seems as if we don't need them, but they need us.

However, let me suggest a way of thinking about this that turns this paradigm upside down. Let me suggest that we need them *as much or more* than they need us.

Think of it this way. God has a calling on us as individuals and as a congregation. His calling on us is that we realize our vision, which is to bring glory to God by helping people in Birmingham and throughout the world find their joy in God as they are gripped by, grow in, and give away the gospel of the kingdom.

How are we going to do that? Well, it will require action, both locally and globally. Locally, we will need to actively reach out to realize our vision, and we will need to find strategic partners to assist us. And, in regard to the aspect of our vision that calls us to help people throughout the world find this joy, we will need to actively reach out and form strategic partnerships to assist us in realizing our vision. You see, it is exactly the same thing in regard to both local and global mission. We need strategic partners to

help us to realize our vision. Stated another way, we need them.

So, who needs whom? Do we need them, or do they need us? I hope you can see the obvious: both are true. They need us, or they will not be able to accomplish their mission of going to the field and staying on the field, whether that field is in Fairfield or in India. And we need them, or we will not be able to accomplish our mission. Needing each other is the way that life in the body of Christ is supposed to be lived. We cannot realize our vision without strategic partners. ■



J. Alan Carter

Bearing FRUIT IN FRANCE

by Susan Fikse

The French wines of the Southern Côte du Rhône are distinctive because of the unique characteristics of the region's soil—dry, stony, and barren where little can grow but olive trees and vines. The vines grow on rocky hills, stony plateaus, and pebbly plains, exposed to the hot summer sun and the cold winter winds—gnarly vines with roots struggling to find the nutrients needed for the grapes to flourish. These wines are like the Church in France. It is born out of rocky soil and persecution, but in finding life lends its distinctive voice to the worldwide Church.

Pete Mitchell, MTW's team leader for the French Marseille team, says, "Evangelism is slow work. Those who come here must be willing to hang in there for a lifetime. Whereas in other fields you can plant a church in two or three years, here it takes 15." Tom Courtney, MTW's regional director for Western Europe, agrees, saying that in France, as in most of Western Europe, "There is a huge chasm from where [the French people] are to crossing over the threshold of a church." That necessitates creative ways of communicating the gospel.

Finding a Hook

In Marseille, Pete's team finds a "cultural hook" to be an important part of reaching out in the French culture. "This society is highly secularized and post-Christian," he explains. "Religion is private and you don't wear it on your sleeve." Instead of traditional methods of evangelism, "We seek to build relationships and pray that God would bring people to the point where they



Rev. François Krieger serves communion at the Reformed Evangelical Church of Aix-en-Provence.

need to hear the gospel," he says. The team's ministry consists of such activities as teaching an English conversation class using articles from *Time* magazine that might spark a discussion of spiritual things, or singing Christian hymns in a nursing home during the holidays. "You can't hide the 'hook' under something that is fake—the French will see right through it," says Pete.

The small but dynamic Reformed Evangelical Church of France, with which MTW works, was born in the southern regions of France where French Huguenots hid in caves to escape torture and execution during the persecutions of the 1600s and 1700s. Today, Protestants still maintain strongholds in this region of traditionally Catholic France. The church MTW planted in Marseilles 11 years ago continues today with a combination of French natives and African immigrants. With six other churches in the Marseille-Aix-en-Provence network, Pete says his goal is "for churches to be connected in loving relationships and in strategic ways. Then, when we leave, they are working together to continue to launch new churches."

Revitalization, Not Institutionalization

In France, as in most of Western Europe, the challenge is not only launching new churches, but revitalizing those that have been around for centuries. "We want to bring new life to churches that have become institutionalized," says Tom. "I believe that if the gospel is communicated in a winsome, believable way, we will see conversions. If we bring the message of who Jesus Christ is in a non-confrontational style, I'm convinced that's what the people want." In order to do that, Tom says churches must develop a sense of community that resonates with the high value the postmodern generation places on community. "Our goal is to establish vital and viable churches that offer a solid yet relevant message that speaks to society and is deeply involved with establishing community."

Just as the vines of the Southern Côtes du Rhône require time and care to penetrate the rocky soil, so the efforts of missionaries in France are not easily rewarded with conversion. Yet, with time and perseverance, the Reformed Church of France is slowly bearing fruit that reflects the depth and richness of the soil in which it was cultivated. ■



On a train through France, Gene Boyer, a future MTW missionary, explained to the man sitting next

to him that he was traveling to preach the gospel. "The gospel? What gospel?" asked the Frenchman. Over a meal in the dining car, Gene shared the gospel of new life in Christ. As they parted ways at the station, the Frenchman told Gene, "If this is the gospel you preach, we need that gospel here."

The year was 1949 and the 22-year-old Gene ended up in the South of France with nothing but a salary of 95 dollars per month in his pocket and his trumpet in hand. Working among Communist miners, with no other English-speaking person within 100 miles, he learned French from the French.

When Gene decided to preach a two-week crusade in France, colleagues thought he was crazy. It just wasn't done. "The other ministers told me that I would run out of things to say after three days!" One atheistic Communist came to Christ and labored for weeks to memorize 1 Corinthians 5:17. But within six months he had memorized 150 verses and went on to be a minister.

Through the words of an unknown Frenchman and launching a crusade in an old church hall, God led Gene Boyer to a lifetime of evangelism and mentoring young men in France. After 58 years working alongside the French, he continues to interact with French church planters and preach regularly in church-planting works around the country. "I'm 80 years old," he says, "And I have heart problems. But I can't say no to the opportunities we have in France today to proclaim His glorious Word."



A choir from Reformed Evangelical Seminary of Aix-en-Provence, the only Reformed evangelical seminary in France.

◀ Real ▶

Reconciliation

New Social Worker Expands Acapulco StreetChild Ministry

by Melanie Benedict

Brothers Giovanni and Ulises, ages 16 and 17, listened attentively as Laura Sanchez led family devotions with their mother, Angelina, and three younger siblings in their small home in Acapulco, Mexico. Just a few months before, Giovanni and Ulises were living on the street. But, thanks to children across the PCA, now they were being reconciled with their estranged family.

MTW's StreetChild ministry was the focus of the 2006 MTW Children's Project, which provided the funds to hire social worker Laura Sanchez to work with street children and their families in Acapulco.

"We wanted to hire a Christian social worker who could not only navigate social

longstanding goal of MTW's ministry, according to Maggie. "You go to the root of the problem, because the root of the problem is not on the street, the root is in the family." Every child's story describing why they are on the street is unique. Giovanni and Ulises were homeless primarily because going home required crossing through dangerous gang territory.

Their mother, Angelina, is thankful for the role MTW has played in bringing her family back together. Ulises recently accepted Jesus during a family devotion. And Angelina's husband, previously uninterested in spiritual things, has begun attending the devotions. ■

The MTW Children's Project is a yearly initiative whose primary purpose is to promote missions education for children. Children across the PCA have been challenged to understand missions in a new way and to give toward each year's project.

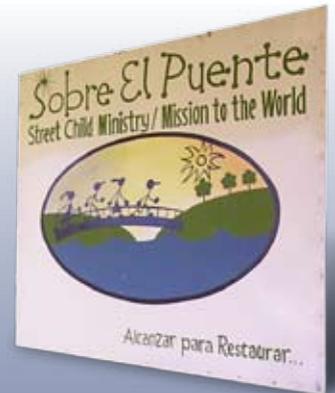


Laura with Giovanni and Ulises.

services, but facilitate reconciliation of street children with their families and share the love of Jesus Christ," said Maggie Gonzalez, director of MTW's Sobre el Puente (Over the Bridge), a home for street children in Acapulco.

Reconciling street children with their families whenever possible has been a

The 2007 Children's Missions Project highlights the need for sleeping nets in Bangladesh, a crucial means of protecting children from mosquitoes carrying malaria. To order a copy of the video, e-mail info@mtw.org, or check the tick box on page 15.



A CHURCH RESPONDS

Nine-year-old Brian Simescu sat with rapt attention as MTW's 2006 Children's Missions Project video showed images of children living on the streets of Acapulco. Brian came home from Pioneer Club so concerned about the children that he insisted on giving his entire allowance to the project.

Many others in his church seemed to have the same reaction. Seacrest Presbyterian Church in Delray Beach, Fla., raised \$2,500 for the 2006 Children's Missions Project, the largest amount submitted by one church.

Jeanette Ingram, Pioneer Club coordinator at Seacrest Presbyterian, understands why the children connected so deeply to the story shown in the video. "When children see things, they get it," she said. Jeanette continued to show the video to the Pioneer Club throughout the year instead of just during the week of vacation Bible school. She also shared the video with the entire congregation, and donations increased rapidly.

"What happened from there was the work of the Holy Spirit," said Jeanette.

One member offered a matching gift, and later a parent came forward to match the entire amount given by both children and church members, bringing total contributions to \$2,500.

MTW's Minuteman Ministry provides funds for urgent needs, like Hurricane Katrina, the 2003 tsunami that devastated South Asia, and the recent earthquake in Peru. Minuteman members simply commit to donate at least \$5 each time an appeal is issued (no more than four times a year).

To learn more, email minuteman@mtw.org.



MTW Missionary to Chair 2010 Lausanne Congress

Doug Birdsall, a longtime missionary to Asia with MTW, has been named chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. He will oversee the upcoming Third International Congress on World Evangelization, to be held in South Africa in 2010.

"There is no doubt we have entered a new era in global Christianity," said Doug. "We need to strategize about how we can advance the spread of the gospel around the world. This is especially important as our world continues to shrink through new technologies, and as the evangelical population has shifted to the Southern Hemisphere."

"Lausanne III: Cape Town 2010" will gather missions and church leaders from around the world to address challenges and opportunities that are before the Church regarding world evangelization.

The first International Congress on World Evangelization drew some 2,700 evangelical leaders from 150 countries to Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974, and was convened under the leadership of the Rev. Billy Graham.

2006 StreetChild WIC Love Gift Sets New Record

MTW's StreetChild Mission International received the PCA's Women in the Church (WIC) Love Gift for 2006. The project marked the largest amount of funds received in WIC Love Gift history.

"The StreetChild ministry was a worthy recipient," said Jane Patete, coordinator of women's ministries for the PCA. "We were pleased to help 'the least of these' in this way."

The funding StreetChild received from WIC will help the ministry open and expand ministries in Mexico and India.

Since MTW began its StreetChild ministry in 2000, hundreds of children have received physical and spiritual aid through its feeding programs, drop-in facilities, schools, and children's homes. StreetChild currently supports projects in four cities—Manila, Philippines; Nairobi, Kenya; Bangalore, India; and Acapulco, Mexico—and is in the process of developing other projects in Latin America.

For more information about MTW's StreetChild ministry, visit www.streetchildinternational.org.

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JAN KOOISTRA



Life WITH CANCER

Following is an excerpt from Jan Kooistra's testimony at MTW's 2007 Summer Conference. Jan's husband, Paul, is the coordinator of MTW.

I've been living with metastatic breast cancer for almost four and a half years now. It's the one word, in any language, that strikes fear in everyone.

When I was diagnosed, my mind was numb and at the same time in a whirl. I wanted to grow old with my husband. I wanted to see my grandchildren grow up to love and serve the Lord. I didn't want my aged mother to have to watch her daughter die.

As the word spread we started hearing from people all over the world. It was obvious they were all praying, for we found peace—peace that could not be conjured on our own, peace in knowing that God was in control.

And so the endless trips to Winship Cancer Center began—this doctor, that doctor, this scan, that scan, this chemo, that chemo. Of course, there have been others around me in the chemo chairs. Some know the Lord, others do not. We meet their loved ones, we share stories, we weep together, we rejoice together, we laugh together.

Sometimes I go in and find that one of those friends has died. Those are really bad days. I've known one who left life with no interest in the Lord whatsoever, another who claimed to once know Him but over time rejected Him, and one who was filled with the love of his Savior and was a testimony of God's love and care until his home-going.

It is fascinating as God weaves the fabric of my life, bringing His people, and some who are not, to minister to me in a variety of ways. And if God has used me in any way in that place, then it is my privilege to be there.

Do I ever have fears, do I have doubts, do I have anxiety? Of course—there are moments, hours, and sometimes days when I wonder if I can keep going. I am human, I am frail, I am imperfect and in constant need of the Savior.

I need to begin every day anew with Jesus. He is my comfort, my strength, my peace. I remember John 14:1-3: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

And I remember Psalm 31:14-15a: "But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hand." Amen. ■

To request a copy of Jan's full testimony, contact info@mtw.org, or check the tick box on page 15.



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MOVING THROUGH DOUBT



Dr. Paul Kooistra

What was your reaction when you heard that Mother Teresa struggled continually with deep doubts about both her faith and about God Himself? "Where is my faith? Even deep down, there is nothing but emptiness and darkness. If there is a God, please forgive me." "I feel just that terrible pain of loss, of God not wanting me, of God not being God, of God not really existing."

Some have used these revelations to label Mother Teresa a heretic and the Christian faith a fraud. Others have argued that doubts are something everyone experiences, and that such darkness of the soul is a common experience of those who claim faith and may even be a sign of a greater faith.

Let me suggest that neither view is correct. We need to consider the reality of this issue as Bunyan did in *Pilgrim's Progress*: he identified doubt as a "monster" that most people of faith have encountered. But we must also say that for doubts to dominate our relationship

with Christ is not what God intends for His people. Faith is a gift of God's grace and should cause us to experience the sweet love of Christ and also cause us to love Him more and more.

To experience a lasting darkness of the soul indicates that there is a serious spiritual problem in one's life. As Spurgeon writes, unbelief has as many lives as a cat—and so we should kill one life at a time until the whole nine are gone.

This is done mainly by keeping the gospel as the primary reality of our lives. Quite possibly a major problem that Mother Teresa had was that her relationship with God was built on the sands of works rather than the rock of grace. Unlike Luther, it's likely that she never came to the place where she realized that a relationship with God can only flourish where it is based on what He has done and is in no way based on what we do. There is nothing to doubt in the perfect righteousness of our Savior.

When you face your own imperfection and sin you must also look to Christ's perfection. Read the gospels! Does not His righteousness more than tip the scales on your behalf? When you consider how weak your love for Christ is, consider also the magnitude of His love for you on the cross. Listen again to Spurgeon, "If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust His fullness, but who can drain a fountain?"

Only God can examine the heart. Yet, I cannot help but suspect that Mother Teresa's doubts grew out of a religious life built on her extraordinary works in the name of Christ. May the Spirit of Christ help us, and may our spiritual life be centered on the far greater work of God in Christ on our behalf.

Paul D. Kooistra



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