

BREAKING DOWN WALLS

Using art and culture to reach
an ever-changing demographic



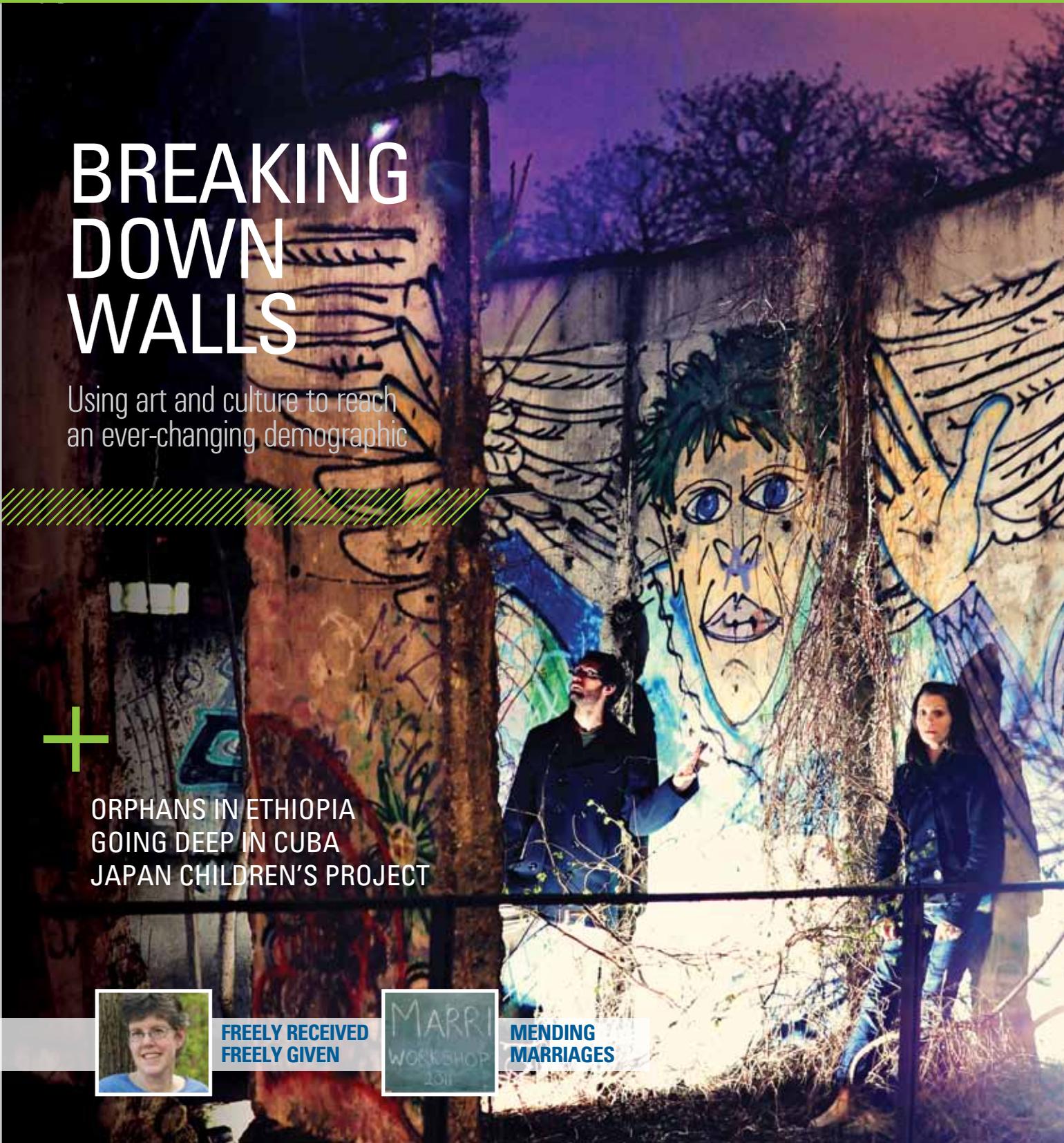
ORPHANS IN ETHIOPIA
GOING DEEP IN CUBA
JAPAN CHILDREN'S PROJECT



FREELY RECEIVED
FREELY GIVEN



MENDING
MARRIAGES



Freely Received – Freely Given

BY: ASHLEY RUIZ



Missionaries go to the field with the expectation of serving others. But what happens when the one who serves becomes the one being served?

This story actually begins many years ago with Linda Swallow's participation in more than a dozen short-term mission trips. And over the experiences of those years, God gradually birthed in Linda the beginning of a call to missions. Today, as an MTW missionary, she serves in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where she offers her time, energy, and medical expertise to the poorest of the poor. In particular, Linda's ministry is in the MTW HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment Project ministering to the 700 orphaned and HIV-positive children in the neighborhoods of Addis Ababa. This project requires filling prescriptions, providing rent and food support for families while also supplying a gospel-centered community to "the least of these".

In the midst of a busy and demanding ministry, Linda recently slipped on wet concrete and broke her wrist. At once, the tables were turned. Instead of being the one who does all the serving, she found herself in need of the same compassion and grace she had been showing to others.

Now she had to rely on others for help with basic activities such as doing laundry, chopping vegetables, running errands, even tying her shoes. And every day, a concerned ministry beneficiary (HIV+ participant in the ACT Project) would stop and ask her, "What happened?"

Over and over, Linda explained the circumstances of her fall and its consequences. And over and over, her Ethiopian friends beat their chests with their fists saying, "Eneng, eneng," which in Amharic means, "let it be as if it happened to me—you don't deserve it." Furthermore, they would repeat the gesture each time they saw her. These are people who have been physically and emotionally shunned within their own community, yet they showed great favor to one who was a stranger in their culture.

Team leader, Andy Warren explains. "A sentiment often expressed by our beneficiaries is that we have become their family. I used to take this as just a way of saying 'thank you,' but I now know that it means much more. In spite of limited resources and usually being the ones receiving, they often surprise us with generosity and genuine love saying, 'you are



my family,' and it is so much more than just a 'thank you.'" The experience was powerful. In a culture far from their own, Linda and her team experienced a deep and unexpected expression of caring from the very people they were sent to care for. "It's been very refreshing to see some mutuality in caring coming across, rather than one-sided (me to them)," Linda said.

What happens when the tables of ministry are turned? Perhaps it is friendship, community, and increasingly meaningful relationships. Perhaps it is even the growth of the Kingdom of God. [n](#)

BY: MICHAEL TREADWELL

What an answer to prayer! These children who have been shown kindness and love through the ministry of the Ethiopia ACT Project are now able to show kindness to other desperately needy children. And what a picture of the gospel and grace of Christ

Nowhere Else To Go

We were apprehensive as we headed our van toward the north part of Addis Ababa where the government orphanage for girls in our area is located. With me were some of the teenagers who attend our after school programs. We had discovered that the orphanage had no programs for their children during the long rainy season, and the teens had agreed to help run a tutoring program for them. We had no idea what to expect once we got inside the orphanage, even though the teenagers lived only a few miles away. As a foreigner, I was no better informed than they were.

As we pulled in the compound, I was struck by the canopy of trees which covered the grounds. Through the trees, old stone buildings left over from the imperial era in Ethiopia had children running around them and playing soccer in the driveway. I am not sure whose eyes were bigger, the visitors gawking at the surroundings or the children gawking at the visitors.



We parked our van and started toward the office for our meeting with the orphanage director. As we waited, others went in and out presenting various problems to the director. So, we talked and waited some more. Children greeted us as they trickled past.



At last, the director was free. She greeted us warmly in English and in Amharic and began to tell us about this place. Her first comment was, "Institutions are terrible places; they are a last resort, and any other option is a better option for children. But these children have no where else to go, and so they are brought here."

She explained that many of the girls are from rural areas of Ethiopia who are brought to Addis Ababa with the promise of work, only to have that promise evaporate after they arrive.

So, if they are under 18, and the police find them, they bring them to the home. Younger children come to the orphanage when their parents die (usually of AIDS) and there is no one to take care of them. Like the older girls, they are often brought by the police. Very sad stories indeed.

What the director did not know, was that the teenagers she was talking to were from neighborhoods where there is a razor thin line keeping them out of an institution such as this one. These teenagers have parents who are HIV+ and little or no income, often living in government provided housing. They owe their lives and the lives of their parents—or parent—to the anti-retroviral therapy and counseling they have received through the work of Mission to the World in Ethiopia over the last 10 years. Now these teenagers sitting there



with me were being offered the opportunity to serve children in situations worse than even their own families.

What an answer to prayer! These children who have been shown kindness and love through the ministry of the Ethiopia ACT Project are now able to show kindness to other desperately needy children. And what a picture of the gospel and grace of Christ. [📍](#)



Michael and Emily Treadwell are MTW missionaries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, serving on the team led by Andy and Bev Warren who pioneered the MTW ministry in Ethiopia.



Going Deep

Growing a Strong Church in Cuba

Cigars. Guantanamo Bay. Fidel Castro. Beyond these three icons, most Americans' knowledge of Cuba doesn't go very deep. But deep is exactly what Cuban pastors want to become—in their relationship and knowledge of God. American missionaries are helping them achieve that goal, while growing deeper in their own understanding of Cuban culture.



The Los Pinos Nuevos (LPN) denomination of Cuba asked MTW to help facilitate workshops to train its leaders. Coming alongside the growing leaders of a vibrant Cuban church-planting movement, MTW hopes to equip leaders with theological depth and ministry skills, so they will in turn share their training with other leaders within the denomination. If national leaders in Cuba achieve their goals, Americans may be associating Cuba not with cigars, but with passion for the gospel and its spread around the world.

Growth through Suffering

In 2008, LPN celebrated 80 years of ministry. Allen Thompson, son of LPN founder Elmer Thompson, recounts the scene: “As people filled the auditorium, hundreds more surrounded the building listening through the amplification system. Joyful singing accompanied by a modern band saturated the air. This was far different than the stories of a church huddled down, fearful, and without vision. Through personal interactions we did hear of the restrictions, suffering, and limitations—but these were stories of all citizens going through difficult economic times. Christians, in spite of deprivations, were hopeful, happy, and loving.”

It may surprise most Americans to know that there is a vibrant Church in Cuba. According to Ken Thompson, Elmer Thompson's grandson, this is especially evident in the blossoming movement of

house churches, which were legalized in the 1990s. “And,” adds Ken, “young leadership is coming up in the church, and young people throughout Cuba are starting to say, ‘There's got to be something else,’ besides the philosophy offered by their culture.”

Rich Wolfe, MTW's regional director for Central America and the Caribbean, observes that opposition often leads to more openness to the gospel—he sees the same dynamic playing out in Cuba and Haiti. “It is easier to break ground in places where things are difficult,” he says. “There is a real thirst to learn and grow, and to be used by the Lord. It is exciting to see.”

A Collaborative Approach

Early on, LPN leaders and missionaries determined that the work in Cuba was much larger than one organization, and would require broad collaboration by local and missions groups. Allen Thompson says, “We have been drawn together by God for the purpose of joining minds, hearts, and hands together in seeking a movement of the gospel in Cuba. This unity of purpose and working relationship is wonderful to experience.” A servant attitude on the part of missionaries and building trust among all members of the collaboration are key to its success, says Thompson.

With these goals in mind, another collaborative project launched this summer, as Gracepoint Church—located outside of Philadelphia—sent the first short-term PCA missions team to Cuba. Robert Kim led the group from Gracepoint, and says that God raised up his team “for such a time as this,” quoting the book of Esther. “A good majority of our team this year were bi-cultural, so their approach to ministry was one of sensitivity and respect,” reflects Kim. “Being able to be cautious when necessary and bold in areas where we were given that freedom, provided for a good rapport with the Cuban nationals, and helped them see our respect for what God was doing, and a trust to allow for us to make suggestions.” Kim hopes to build on these relationships, returning to Cuba to help train national leaders on youth and family ministry.

Raising “New Pines”

As a new generation of Cuban Christians grow into leadership of LPN, the name of the denomination is perhaps more poignant than ever. Los Pinos Nuevos derives from a poem by Cuban activist for independence, Jose Marti, in which he expresses his hope for the future, likening Cuba to “new pines”

rising up out of ashes. Far from wallowing in spiritual despair, the Cuban Church is positioning itself as a global training ground, reports a recent article in Christianity Today. “The Cuban Church has a robust view of its role as a cross-cultural, missionary-sending church. ...Pastors across denominations believe Cubans are well-equipped to be missionaries. They know how to live on little, possess a well-honed apologetic theology, and would find greater welcome in nondemocratic countries than Americans would.”

The article reports that this vision is still in its infancy because money to travel and government permission to go abroad are elusive. For now, LPN focuses its missionary zeal on urban areas of Cuba where 70 percent of Cubans live. “This movement started in the central, [more rural] part of the country,” explains Ken Thompson. “That's where property was available for the seminary, and it was centrally located for participants to come from various parts of the country. Now, there is a focus on reaching Havana and Holguin, cities on both ends of the island.”

Wolfe says it's exciting to see what is happening in Cuba. “Wherever there is an emphasis on discipleship and training and equipping, that seems to lay the groundwork for a movement,” he says. “That's what is vital about how MTW is contributing.” The way in which that training is offered will ensure that Cubans retain leadership of the movement, and gain the deep understanding of biblical theology they desire. “Our desire is to love Cuba the way the Lord Jesus loves Cuba,” says Ken Thompson. As Cubans experience that love, MTW hopes the church-planting movement will continue to grow, taking the deep, deep love of Jesus to many others within Cuba and beyond. [▶](#)

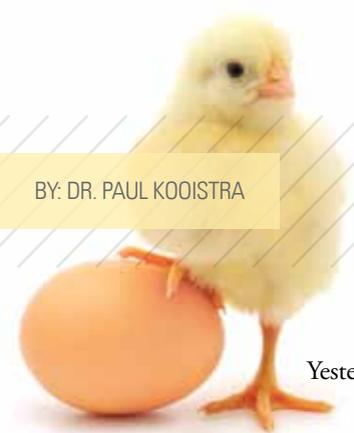




New Catalog Spotlights Short-Term Mission Trips

Don't Count Your Chickens Just Because They Have Hatched

BY: DR. PAUL KOOISTRA



Yesterday one of our international directors said to me: "I hate to bring discouraging news, but one of the people groups we are working with seems to have included many who made professions of faith that did not in fact come from being born again." I have thought about that. It is far harder in missions and evangelism to measure success than maybe any other endeavor. Jesus reminds us that being born again is the result of the Holy Spirit's activity (John 3:7-8). Missionaries are only instruments in God's great kingdom work.

Of course, while we want to see people come to faith and the kingdom of Christ expand, large numbers do not mean we are making great progress and small numbers do not mean we are making little progress. Phillip was having great success by

numbers in Samaria (Acts 8:4-8) when the angel of the Lord told him to go to the desert (Acts 8:26). Here he encountered just one man, the Ethiopian eunuch. Yet we learn from history that this encounter was from the Spirit and was the catalyst for a great revival and church plant in the area of northeastern Africa. What would have seemed like a waste of Phillip's time was a great work of God.

I am thankful for those who have come to faith in the people group we are working with. I pray that the Spirit will work in the lives of those who seem to have fallen away so quickly. If we keep our eyes on Jesus, we will rejoice when thousands come and we will rejoice when only one comes to faith in Christ (Luke 15:7). [n](#)

In 2011, our MTW short-term teams blessed our missionaries, national partners, and churches around the world. They helped expose people to the gospel—some for the first time—saw people make professions of faith, and assisted with a variety of ministry activities. And they returned home with an expanded view of who God is and how He is building His kingdom.

If you or your church have participated in short-term teams, you have experienced the value of these ministries and the joy and enthusiasm for missions that are a by-product of these trips.

Organized by geographic location, the new catalog makes it easy to find the wide array of missions opportunities ranging from one-week trips to internships of up to 11 months, and includes medical mission trips, which were previously categorized separately.

"The purpose of the catalog is to better serve the church by getting the majority of our short-term opportunities all in one place," said Mitch Gindlesperger, MTW's two-week director. "We have a range of geographic locations and ministry types that people may have no idea about, and this will enable them to see the many choices available to them."

The new 28-page catalog is more than just a list of opportunities; it's a photo-filled annual publication that includes challenging articles about getting involved in missions as well as testimonials from individuals who have experienced MTW's short-term missions first hand.

You may be familiar with the QR (or "Quick Response") codes which pepper the pages of the new publication. In fact, you'll notice that one of them graphically dominates the cover of the catalog. These square-shaped codes, much like a bar code,

are digitally scannable by using a smart phone with the appropriate software. And scanning one of the catalog's QR codes will take you directly to a location on the MTW website.



The codes found in the 2012 Short Term Mission Trips Catalog can direct you instantly to MTW's newly redesigned website, www.mtw.org, or to a specific page associated with a specific type of ministry. Or you may type in the URL next to each code.

All PCA churches should have received a copy of the catalog, but MTW will gladly send a copy to anyone who requests it. Check the appropriate box on the inside back page, contact us by e-mailing 2week@mtw.org, or call 678 823 0004, x 2311.

When you get your catalog, let's talk. We'd love to answer your questions, walk you through the catalog, or provide whatever assistance you need. [n](#)

MTW Welcomes a New Mercy Ministries Director



Kay Burklin, MTW's new director of mercy ministry, is a veteran missionary with broad experience in many areas of ministry. She and her husband Heiko live in Rock Hill, S.C. where he has served the Neely Creek Associate Presbyterian

Church (A.R.P) for the past three years as senior pastor. They have three sons, ages 23, 21, and 17, and have welcomed one daughter-in-law into their family.

Kay was raised in Massachusetts and graduated from Wheaton College with a degree in psychology and music. She also is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with an M. A. in theological studies in ethics.

Kay has long had a heart for missions and mercy. She is also no stranger to the work of MTW, having served with Heiko on an MTW/ARP church-planting team in former East Berlin, Germany for 10 years.

She has served refugees in the Philippines and in Boston, Massachusetts and has assisted with disaster relief. Her participation in short-term mission trips have included the U. S., Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Additionally Kay has experience as a social worker for a relief agency, a youth guidance instructor, and a teacher of international students.

Kay's new responsibilities as director of mercy ministries include oversight of StreetChild, medical ministry, and disaster response. As ONEChild director, she follows Dr. Tom Stewart who established the program (*formerly StreetChild*) and continues on as a consultant in retirement. [n](#)





Transforming Marriages in South Africa

Like millions of other South Africans, Nathan had given up on his marriage. His wife was controlling and made most of the decisions. Nathan was passive and uninvolved in the life of his family. It just wasn't working. They both wanted out.

BY: MELANIE BENEDICT

Nathan's story is a common one in South Africa, where the divorce rate is staggering and the number of families greatly outweighs the number of marriages. MTW missionaries Stan and Donna Armes are working to change that.

A year ago, Stan and Donna both resigned from teaching at the Bible Institute Eastern Cape to focus on training pastors and church leaders in the biblical foundations of marriages. "We were astounded by the many stories we were hearing about the devastation of marriage in our area," said Stan. They began talking with church leaders about the issue and discovered a critical need within the church. "We found out that pastors did not know what the Bible said about marriage. Both of us felt God calling us to address this enormous problem."

The backbone of the Armes' marriage ministry is a three-day seminar based on a book, *Biblical Foundations of Marriage*, which Stan and Donna wrote with the help of South African nationals who shared their vision and helped develop illustrations to communicate the principles in an African context.

The Armes' initial focus is on teaching the seminar to pastors and church leaders so that they in turn can teach their own people. The seminar addresses some of the main marital issues in South African culture such as unfaithfulness, the power struggle between men and women, and the need to "leave and cleave." "It is our belief that these principles, if taken seriously, will produce godly changes in family life," Stan said.

Nathan, the passive husband who wanted out of his marriage, agrees. His marriage was saved as a result of his and his wife's coming to faith and applying biblical principles to their marriage. She became more loving and respectful of his leadership while he, in turn, took on more responsibility in the home. Their family was dramatically transformed and Nathan was



called into ministry. Today Nathan is a pastor eager to see other marriages transformed through this ministry.

The response the Armes have seen so far has been

remarkable. "People were blown away," Stan said following their initial seminar a few months ago. "People said things like 'We have never heard this before,' or, 'I've never heard these verses taught this way.'" One pastor told Stan and Donna that if the church had put family first or taught biblical principles he would not have gotten divorced. "Before we left the people were asking when we could come back. All we can say is 'Praise God.'" [n](#)



news briefs >>

Jan's Home Update, South Asia

After many months of struggle to overcome an array of obstacles, the purchase and registration of the property for Jan's Home in South Asia is now complete, and plans are underway to break ground in early 2012.

Jan's Home, named after Jan Kooistra, late wife of MTW coordinator Paul Kooistra, will house abandoned and abused street children, providing a permanent place where they can be enveloped by the love of Christ through the local church and MTW's StreetChild Ministry. In addition to the children's home, the planned building will include a Christian school, facilities for training pastors and church planters, and a church-planting office.

Locating an appropriate property and then acquiring the land in an honorable fashion took time and perseverance. First the task of finding a property in the desired area with the necessary space proved difficult. Then, after two suitable adjacent properties were found, the question became, "How do we make this purchase ethically while operating within a system that encourages corruption?"

Through all of the hurdles, God was faithful. He not only provided a larger-than-anticipated piece of land in the desired area, He also provided a Christian real estate agent who understood and supported the desire to be honest, and who worked with the seller to agree on the proposed terms.

Much prayer is still needed as the project moves forward. The two adjacent plots have to be legally combined into one before construction can begin on the dividing property line. The government also needs to sanction the master plan for the design and construction of the buildings. Additionally, believers are being asked to pray that those who are against the growth of the church would not hinder the work.

Paul Billy Arnold, a local pastor overseeing the project, is elated with the progress to date. "We still can't believe that we have the property purchased, title registered with the government, compound walls constructed around the property, and a caretaker and family staying on the property," Arnold said. "As soon as we finished [finalizing the deal], we entered the property reading Psalm 100 and lifting up thanksgiving prayer to our awesome Father for His mercy in providing us this land."

Ministry Center Dedication Nagoya, Japan

Christ Bible Institute (CBI) in Nagoya, Japan, dedicated its new ministry center in September, and in so doing, celebrated not only the purchase of a new property, but also a strategic move into the heart of the city.

More than 100 people attended each of the two dedication ceremonies September 10 and 17; the first for donors, partners, students, and friends, and the second primarily for Japanese pastors. Visitors came from Korea and the U.S., as well as from throughout Japan to hear testimonies of God's faithfulness and to celebrate God's provision.

The new location is a significant step forward for MTW's ministry in Nagoya. Formerly housed an hour outside of Nagoya in a rental facility, CBI now occupies its own building a mere five-minute walk from Nagoya's central train station.

Nagoya Station, one of the largest train stations in the world, is not only the hub of the region, but also centrally connects Nagoya to Tokyo and Osaka, cities which together represent more than 50 million people, a fact that invigorates CBI president and founder, Dr. Michael Oh.

"One key missiological principle and strategy is very simply and obviously *presence*," said Oh. "This ministry center will allow us to be in the heart of

the city where culture is formed and where many of society's greatest hurting populations are as well, especially youth."

Heart & Soul, an outreach geared toward youth which has been ministering in downtown Nagoya for several years, will soon have a permanent presence on the first floor of Christ Bible Institute with the instigation of Heart & Soul Café. The café will provide a safe space for young people where they can enjoy coffee or tea, engage in the arts, sing Karaoke, and make friends. Additionally, staff and volunteers will be on hand to provide counseling, tutoring, and Bible study.

Other CBI ministries will benefit from the new space as well. All Nations Fellowship, an English worship service in partnership with several local churches, will begin holding services in the new building early next year. Christ Bible Seminary, a training ground for pastors and church planters, now occupies the third floor, which provides for not only more spacious classrooms, but also a new library with upwards of 10,000 volumes of Japanese and English books.

A few needs still remain. Engineering tests on the building revealed that the first and second floors require earthquake reinforcing, an urgent need in light of the recent earthquake and tsunami and the looming threat of an even larger quake. Roughly \$30,000 of the \$130,000 cost has been raised, with \$100,000 still needed to complete the project.

The transition to a larger, higher profile ministry space will move CBI that much closer to fulfilling the team's vision: to engage Japanese society with the gospel, expand the kingdom of God through church planting, and equip leaders in the gospel.

Michael Oh and other ministry staff are elated by God's provision and look forward to how God will use the ministry of CBI to make an impact in the heart of the city, where, Oh points out, there is such a desperate need for gospel light. For more information on CBI, visit www.cbijapan.org/jointheteam.



Pack Your Bags— We're Going to Japan!

The MTW Children's Mission Project is moving to Japan in 2012, and we hope you and your church will come with us!

Why Japan? It isn't hard to guess, is it? We all watched in horror as we saw again and again the heaving and cracking earth and the devouring waters of the tsunami as they attacked the northern coast of Japan. The aftermath was terrible and the lives of those who survived were unalterably changed.

In the days immediately following the disaster, the MTW missionaries and Japanese churches sprang into action to provide water, food, clothing, and other relief supplies. As time went on, there were community outreaches and cultural programs, even assistance to homeowners in rebuilding. And efforts have not ceased.



But this project is for children and about the children. How does one reach out to them? How about music? Appropriate

counseling? Play therapy? VBS- type programs? Yes! All of these and more.

The project video, which will be available in mid March, will tell the story of the children of northern Japan—children who need the love of Jesus in both our actions and in sharing the good news of Christ.

Would you begin now? Pray for the children—for those in Japan and for the children who will participate in this year's project. And don't forget to pack your bags!

THE 2012 WIC LOVE GIFT
— SUPPORTING —
The Gonaives Children's Home

A NEW VISION FOR THE CHILDREN & FAMILIES OF HAITI
In Partnership with Eagle Ranch, Gainesville, Georgia
Watch the project video at www.vimeo.com/mtwgoglobal

*Over 60% of women over 65 are widowed, divorced or unmarried.
Estate planning disproportionately affects women.*

Are You Prepared?

I am not a financial person. I thought I would leave a little bit to each of my favorite ministries and charities. But I am so grateful to MTW's Partner Relations Department. What they said made so much sense. They showed me how to really make an impact with my gift. They really showed me how much God has given us all.
— Mission to the World Partner, Carolyn Kullmar

Because of these statistics, Mission to the World's Estate and Gift Design Department has helped many women find God's plan of stewardship for their estate; providing for their needs, their families, and the Kingdom. *We would be happy to serve you.*

Estate & Gift Design Department
1600 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville GA 30043
678-823-0004 x2291

Restore Hope.

OneChild
MTW Child Sponsorship

streetchild@mtw.org • 678.823.0004 x2452

Mission to the World is the mission-sending agency of the PCA, helping to fulfill the Great Commission by advancing Reformed and covenantal church-planting movements through word and deed in strategic areas worldwide.

Paul Kooistra - MTW Coordinator
Marty Davis - Editor
Tom Mills - Graphic Design/Production

Editorial offices:
1600 North Brown Road Lawrenceville, GA 30043
(678) 823-0004
www.mtw.org

Please send address changes to:
info@mtw.org
Keep in touch:



WANT TO KNOW HOW MTW CAN BEST SERVE YOU AND THE MISSIONS VISION OF YOUR CHURCH?

E-mail us at cr@mtw.org or call 678.823.0004
and ask for Church Resourcing.

mtw.org

© Copyright 2011 by Mission to the World. All rights reserved. Material in Network may be reproduced with permission. Network requests a copy of the publication in which the reproduced article appears.

YES! I WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN WHAT GOD IS DOING AROUND THE WORLD.

Please send me information on the following:

- Two Week (individual, groups)
- Internship (1-11 months)
- Two Year
- Long-Term Opportunities (4+ years)
- Disaster Response Ministry
- Medical Missions
- Estate & Gift Design
- Living in Grace
- Church Resourcing
- StreetChild Ministry
- XChange (Business as Mission)

Please send me:

- 2012 Children's Mission Project video (available mid March)
- 2012 Short-Term Mission Trip Opportunities Catalog

- I'd like an MTW representative to call me concerning overseas mission opportunities.

Clip and mail this coupon to:

Mission to the World
1600 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

or e-mail your information to: info@mtw.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Home Church: _____

E-mail: _____

Comments: _____

FROM THE
COORDINATOR

Paul Kooistra



...by faith in Christ,
He is both our Savior
and our mentor.

Christ Is Our Mentor

Have you ever been envious of those who mentor others or are themselves mentored? Many seem to believe this is the most important ingredient in becoming a mature disciple in Christ. Perhaps the most important reality of discipleship is not in having a mentor, but instead finding oneself in Christ. Paul says in Galatians 2:20 that “the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God.” In other words, by faith in Christ, He is both our Savior and our mentor. This is the seminal work of the Holy Spirit. He gives us a new heart to love Christ and He starts a new work in us (Philippians 1:6), causing us more and more to reflect Christ who is the source of our new life. What better mentor could we have than Christ as the Holy Spirit lives within us (Galatians 5:16-25)?

Paul also teaches us that a disciplined life in Christ is a crucified life, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” A crucified life is a gift of Christ in which the Holy Spirit enables us to more and more let go of self love and love Christ and His kingdom work. We become increasingly dependent on the Triune God who loves us and saved us from our sins.

Discipleship is not simply getting the rules straight and disciplining oneself to follow them. It is a personal relationship with our “divine mentor” in which we grow in the understanding that confidence in our own strength is an insult to Christ’s atoning work. Instead, by looking to Christ, we find strength to surrender our personal will to the perfect will of God. By exercising such faith, we are enabled to trust God, pray in the Spirit, resist temptation, put others first, and even bless those who persecute us.

Even the motivation for discipleship changes from one of responding to Christ’s great love for us rather than out of duty or to look good. In Galatians 2:20, Paul says of Christ that He “...loved me and gave Himself for me.” There is no greater truth about God, nor a greater surprise to us than the fact that the God of the Universe has come to lovingly bridge the gulf between us. And He did it through the atoning death of His Son. As Luther said, “By dying in our place Christ became the worst sinner who ever lived,” and we in turn received His perfect righteousness.

No greater motivation is possible to live as a disciple of Christ!