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BEAT THE FEAR
AND TASTE
THE JOY



WHAT IS
HAPPENING
WITH ISLAM?

Planting Churches.

Transforming Communities.



THE COST OF MISSIONS

THE PRIVILEGE
OF RELATIONSHIP

BUILDING ON THE
MOUNTAINTOP

Holistic Church Planting
in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Planting Churches.

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Gizaw Melese and Jason Polk Begin Holistic Church Planting in Ethiopia

There's something about his eyes. Gizaw Melese, an MTW national partner in Addis Ababa, has the kindest eyes of anyone I can recall. They are merry, too, but first they're kind, so he's approachable. And they do approach, the people in Suki, a poor squatter community on the outskirts of the city, calling out greetings, clapping him on the back in handshakes that turn into bear hugs, asking him, "When will you come back?"

BY: AMY GLASS

They want to know when the MTW medical teams will be back, a ministry that opens doors to conversations about the gospel, builds trust, and, God willing, will lay the foundation for a different kind of church in Suki.

We're on our way to visit a boy and his mother, whom Gizaw came to know through a medical clinic last fall. Estifo was a normal, laughing 2-year-old when meningitis robbed him of speech, bowel control, and the ability to walk or even sit up. That was 13 years ago.

Estifo's mother, Tigist, invites us into the family's two-room home of mud walls, scavenged furniture, and windows made of corrugated metal and sheet plastic. Estifo is propped on a mattress on the floor. He seems happy, smiling and vocalizing constantly; in contrast, his mother's mute pain is palpable. Tigist had brought Estifo to the medical clinic for seizures, which medication was able to control; but the family was devastated: they had expected the meds to restore his ability to walk and talk. Today, as most days, Tigist longs for someone to simply take him outside in the sun, but Estifo is awkward and heavy. So they remain in the house, with one bare light bulb burning and a poster of the alphabet tacked to the otherwise bare walls.

Gizaw: The Compassionate Evangelist

As we ask Gizaw questions, (How much money do they live on? Does Estifo understand what we are saying?), Gizaw's eyes well up with tears. "I have come to see him, emotionally, as my son," he says quietly. Gizaw has a son Estifo's age. He covers his face in his hands, which are pressed together in a teepee, and we are silent. Estifo is suddenly quieter, too, and his vocalizations distinctly change from happy to sober. He says the one thing that sounds to me like a word: "Oh." Gizaw takes his hands down. "Pleading for help," he says, barely above a whisper. Someone suggests that we pray.

Gizaw asks Tigist, who is Orthodox, if she would be willing. "Yes, please pray," she replies. As we pray Gizaw comes to life, translating our prayers into Amharic, gesturing and imploring the Lord to provide and for Jesus to be near. It is now Tigist who hides her face in her hands as she listens.



Gizaw translates our prayers for Tigist and her son, Estifo.

Jason: The Gracious Strategist

MTW missionary Jason Polk is a good driver. This is an essential quality if you want to get around in Addis, where streets and roundabouts are choked with aggressive taxis, scores of pedestrians, donkeys, horses, and the occasional ox.

He is unfazed when there are four lanes of traffic on a two-lane road and motorcycles are speeding between cars. He drives while talking calmly of church-planting methods and strategies, never pausing to just think—think!—as he threads through the rush-hour mayhem.

His house is similarly chaotic, as most houses with a baby and toddler are, especially when visitors pop in with little warning. Liz is gracious, easy, and tired. Parenting small children can be overwhelming in any culture, but leaving the conveniences of the U.S. for the quirks of Addis can feel like swimming in wet concrete. Add to it that the Polks have to cook gluten-free and help their 3-year-old negotiate culture shock. Right now the baby, Isaiah, has had it for the day and is letting everyone know that. Liz puts him down for the night, while Jason sits down with his mini-me, Nathan, and reads a book to him. In this context too, he is unflappable.

In this city known as the "capital of Africa" Jason stands out—blonde hair, blue eyes, over six feet, St. Louis native. He looks like a big kid, maybe someone who could be pushed around, but his self-deprecating manner disguises a sharp mind. Ask him anything, and his knowledge is encyclopedic: the history of Ethiopia and how that affects ministry (they were never colonized), the intricacies of the Amharic language (it's Semitic, and I can't remember why, but it's difficult), church-planting strategy (he's written a pretty inspiring plan), what the unspoken traffic rules are when you're negotiating the wild roundabouts in Addis (it's about momentum, which is speed plus size), how to decline an invitation in this culture (indirectly), the spiritual side of driving in Addis ("He will make a lane where there seems to be no lane," Jason jokes of the classic hymn). →



Jason Polk listens as a woman shares her story.



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A Different Kind of African Church

Gizaw and Jason are part of the MTW/ACT team (AIDS Care and Treatment), which provides about 350 families in some of the poorest slums of Addis with food, shelter, medical care, counseling, school fees, orphan care, and Bible study and discipleship opportunities. It's a large team comprised of MTW missionaries and Ethiopian leaders. The team's focus has been to care for people with HIV/AIDS, a program that's so successful the government adopted the same protocol throughout the city.

All along, they've had a vision to plant churches out of these works of mercy, and team leader and MTW missionary Andy



Tigist's eyes show the weight of caring for a special-needs child in Addis Ababa.

Warren believes they're now ready. He's providentially recruited the right people to the job: enter the Polks and Meleses. Jason, a former pastor at Grace Presbyterian in St. Charles, Mo., a clear-minded strategist, joined the team with his wife Liz a year ago. Gizaw, long-time leader of operational and pastoral care ministries for the ACT team and an Addis native, is a passionate evangelist. Andy is looking for one more Ethiopian to round out a church-planting trio.

In Addis, you can rent a plot of land anywhere in town, stick up a loudspeaker and tent, and have 50 congregants at your church the first week. Voila! You have planted a church. But Andy and the other leaders believe the city is hungry for a church that will go deeper: providing discipleship, teaching, and theological training for lay people and leaders, yet not neglect the team's original call to acts of mercy and ministry to the poor.

This is holistic church planting, a strategy birthed out of the recognition that all of creation belongs to God. Jason explained,

"Jesus cares about every facet of people's lives and every dimension of life. So, Jesus has something to say about HIV/AIDS, He has something to say about this family not having clean water ... He has something to say about people's relationships with Him being broken by sin, He has something to say about lack of jobs in the community, He has something to say about all that. So our message, our actions in the community should reflect that.

"So as we think about what it will mean to plant churches, to proclaim the gospel in [Suki], we are going to look there and see, What are the effects of sin? What are the issues in this community that Jesus has something to say about?"

Jesus has something to say about Estifo. While on earth, He raised the lame man from his cot; recently He raised Estifo off his floor mat and into a custom wheelchair through your donations and the efforts of Linda Swallow, the ACT Project's nurse practitioner and patient advocate.



Estifo's face brightens as he tries out his custom wheelchair for the first time.

Planting Churches That Transform Communities

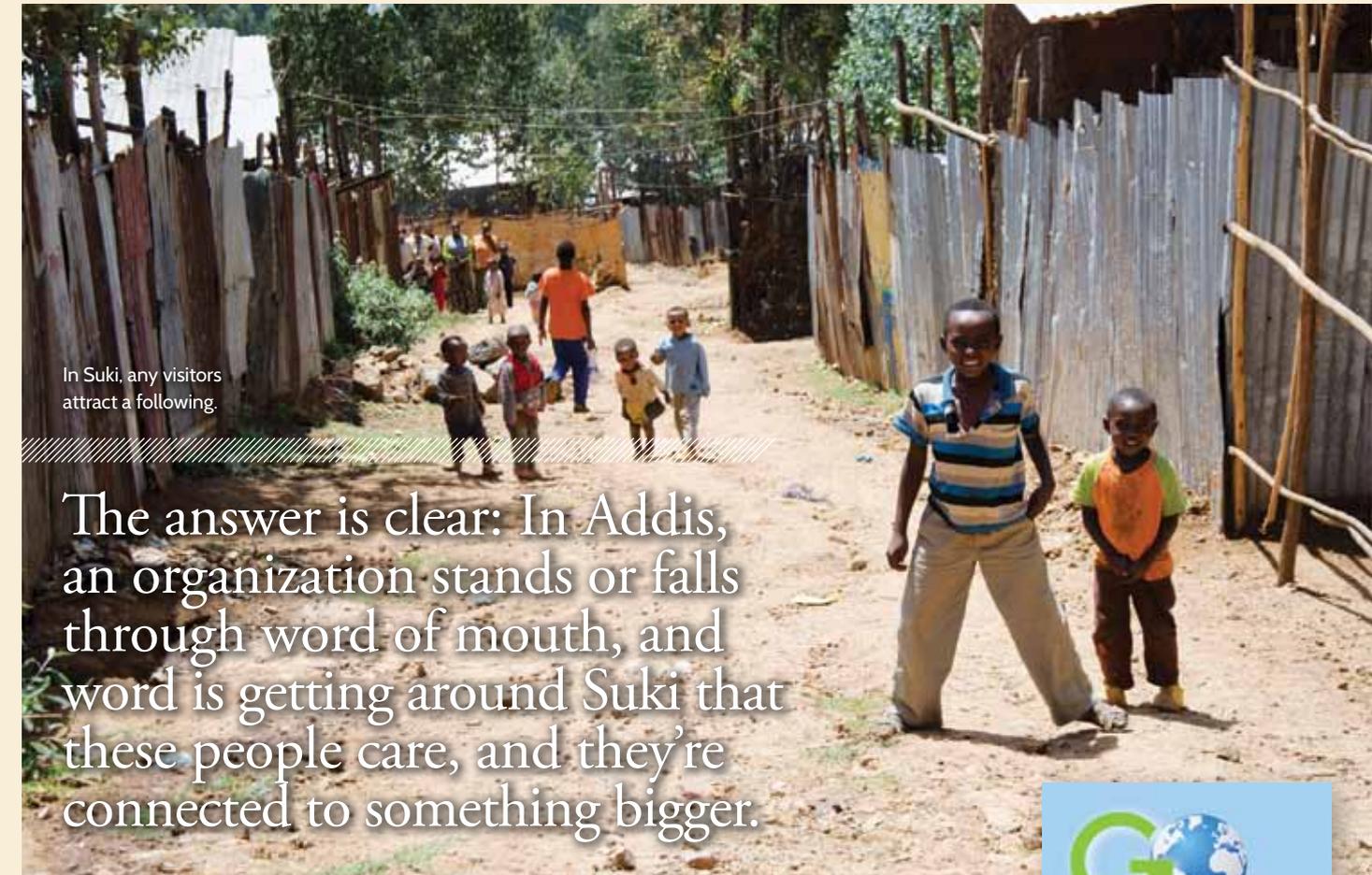
Because of this and many other kindnesses, the community of Suki is opening up. They're just launching this ministry—they've so far held six medical clinics (with another two scheduled for this fall) and have surveyed the residents and opened an office.

The news is spreading. Recently, a construction worker building high-rise condos on Suki's border was electrocuted and his fellow

workers rushed him to the as-yet-unmarked church office there. As he told this story, Andy Warren wondered aloud how they knew where to go for help. The answer is clear: In Addis, an organization stands or falls through word of mouth, and word is getting around Suki that these people care, and they're connected to something bigger.



Horse and cart are a step up in Suki. Most people just walk.



In Suki, any visitors attract a following.

The answer is clear: In Addis, an organization stands or falls through word of mouth, and word is getting around Suki that these people care, and they're connected to something bigger.

Building on this trust, God willing, Jason, Gizaw, and the rest of the team are praying not just for the establishment of one church in Suki, but a Spirit-led church-planting movement that will transform the city—body and soul. [📍](#)

If you'd like to partner with the MTW/ACT project, go to www.mtwact.org. Read about one intern's experience in Ethiopia this summer in "The Privilege of Relationship" on page 12.



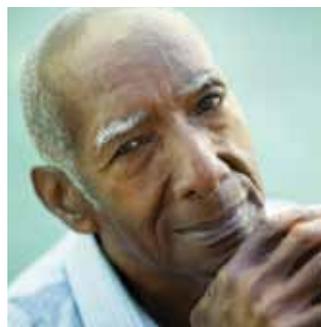
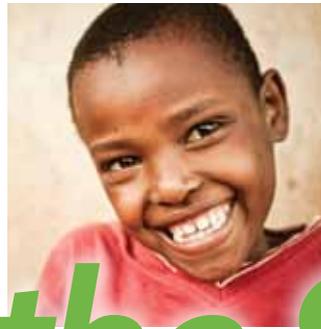
Jason and Gizaw outside MTW/ACT office.



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FROM THE COORDINATOR



Dr. Paul Kooistra

The Cost of Missions

Recently someone remarked to me that sending a missionary to another country was just too expensive. It is expensive. But my purpose here is not to defend the cost. What I am concerned about is that there seems to be a growing trend to treat God's kingdom work as if it were a secular investment. There was a time when missionaries went into the world knowing it would cost them everything. They would die, their spouses would die; even their children would die. Yet the entire Church was committed to spread the good news of Jesus Christ despite the cost.

Today I have observed a growing number of churches that have little or no enthusiasm for missions. Missions budgets shrink and no one seems to sound an alarm. Few pastors today preach about missions, and missionaries returning from their field assignments do not receive the encouragement and love they need.

Why should we even care?

Let us again remember the last words of Jesus on this earth, "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, NIV).

A disinterest in missions is a sign of a spiritually sick church. Such a church has lost its first love. They have lost sight of Christ. A vibrant, healthy church is always reaching out to bring others into the family and kingdom of God—whether it is in their local neighborhood or on the other side of the world.

When we pray for missions we ought to pray for ourselves—that the Holy Spirit would move us and empower us to do the ministry of missions. This is the Spirit's primary work, and it is our primary work.

If our church does not obey the call of Christ, it has no future. It will dry up and slowly die.

Paul D Kooistra

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS BEAT THE FEAR -AND- Taste the Joy

“ASKED HER IF SHE KNEW WHO JESUS WAS, ...
I’LL NEVER FORGET THE HOPE IN HER EYES. SHE SAID,
‘Jesus, no sweeter name.’
THAT WAS A WOW MOMENT! YOU LOOK AT WHERE
SHE IS AND SHE IS STILL ABLE TO SAY THAT ...
IT WAS AMAZING.”

In their book *Do Hard Things*, Alex and Brett Harris say that one of the hardest “hard things” for teenagers is stepping out of their comfort zone. “Everybody likes to feel strong and smart. That means as soon as we start to feel stretched or pushed past our limits, we hit the brakes, slam into reverse, and scoot back to our comfort zones.” This spring, 16 teens from Florida resisted that impulse and launched from their comfort zone into “the God zone” on an MTW short-term missions trip to Jamaica.



Gabrielle DiNardo with a newfound friend

“Teenagers want to be cool, and this kind of trip breaks through some of that ...,” said Mick Weltin, the youth pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Coral Springs, who led the team. “When you get out of your comfort zone in Jamaica, it’s easier to get out of your comfort zone back home.”

Assembling a packing list a month in advance and mapping out precise daily

activities, Gabrielle DiNardo thought she knew exactly what she needed to do in preparation for her short-term mission to Jamaica. But even planning ahead didn’t enable her to squeeze comfort into this zone. In true missions trip style, plans changed. “It helped me to realize that I’m not in control of everything,” said Gabrielle. “I need to adapt to changes.” She said this lesson will stick with her in a big way. “I learned that the point of the missions trip is to make the missions world your daily world.

BY: SUSAN FIKSE

You are supposed to come at your normal life with the same attitude [you had on] the missions trip Put others’ needs above your own. Change your plans. Trust God.”

Entering the God Zone

Jessica Monteiro, another member of the short-term team agreed. “We need to trust in Him. When we do, we’re not in a comfort zone, but a God zone!” Her most poignant moment of forsaking her comfort zone for the “God zone” was in a Jamaican infirmary where elderly people were packed 14 to each dorm-sized room. Jessica remembers spotting a woman in a corner, lying on her side, immobile. Flies swarmed all over her because she was unable to move enough to swat them away. Jessica’s eyes fixed on the woman’s wrist, where a bracelet read: Jesus. “I asked her if she knew who Jesus was,” Jessica remembered. “I’ll never forget the hope in her eyes. She said, ‘Jesus, no sweeter name.’ That was a WOW moment! You look at where she is and she is still able to say that there’s no sweeter name than Jesus. It was amazing. It’s the hope we all have.”



Jessica Monteiro holds a child while sitting with Philip Ajamian of MTW.



FPC students take Jamaican girls for a swing.

For Gabrielle, leaving her comfort zone behind may be an enduring theme as she heads to college this fall. “Being on a missions trip, you can see your role in God’s ministry in a bigger way,” she said. “I’m thinking about becoming certified to teach English as a second language. I wouldn’t have seen how I could use my gifts and personality and interests in this way unless I had tried it.” Gabrielle realized that in Jamaica, “you don’t have to go to seminary or even be a missionary doctor — if you are somewhere, helping someone, showing God’s love, you are a missionary.”

A Foundation for Growth

During the intensity of their week in Jamaica, the Coral Springs missions team left the comfort zone of their high school social groups and coalesced in ways youth group meetings never accomplished. “One of my favorite parts of the trip was when we finished work, we had worship together,” explained Gabrielle. “Some of the seniors spoke and led Bible studies. We talked about what we did for the day, how we reacted and how we felt. It helped me to get to know the students on the team.” For teenagers, expanding friendship and trust among their peers might be the hardest “hard thing” of all.

Jessica and Gabrielle, along with their teammates, dared to defy their longing for comfort and embrace the unknown in Jamaica. In this way, authors Alex and Brett Harris would say that these students have built a launching pad for the future. “If we want to continue to grow and learn for the rest of our lives, we must beat these fears—not by making them go away, but by recognizing that there is something worse than discomfort, worse than the unknown, worse than failure,” they said. “The worst thing is to never try at all.” As they leave the comfort of their homes, church, and youth group for college, Jessica, Gabrielle, and their teammates go in the confidence that they have endured discomfort, refused to be paralyzed by fear, and experienced the strength, peace, and joy of “the God zone.”

Learn how FPC’s short-term ministry is impacting their church and the community in our View from the Church article, “Building on the Mountaintop” on page 13 of this issue of *Network*.



FPC students on the construction crew.



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WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH ISLAM?

[THERE IS GOOD NEWS]

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Arab Spring, Arab Summer, Arab Fall, Arab Winter . . .

Egyptian youth are disillusioned. So are Iranian youth. Recent demonstrations in Turkey indicate that the same is true in that Middle Eastern country.

It is not just youth culture that is at odds with an older generation. Sunni and Shiite differences are exploding into increasing violence in Lebanon, Syria, and Pakistan.

Generational and religious differences are not the only factors that create violence in the Muslim world. Ethnicity plays a part as well. Often described as “the world’s largest people group without a country,” Kurdish people who are a minority group in a least a half-dozen Muslim countries are persecuted simply because they are Kurds.

Inaccurate Media Portrayal

American media focuses most of its reporting on the terror aspect of all of this unrest—primarily on the roles of Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Taliban in relation to the U.S.—and secondarily on “state sponsored” violence against Israel. Its profit margin is driven, more often than not, by sensation.

The question for the Church is whether or not U.S. news provides an accurate picture of what God is doing in the Muslim world. And then there is the question of whether or not we would do something more ourselves—given the knowledge that God is doing far more than we imagine.

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE MUSLIM WORLD

(source: Wikislam)

- Iran has the lowest mosque attendance of any Muslim country, with less than 2% of adults attending Friday services.
- Mosque attendance is dropping faster than church attendance in the Netherlands.
- The Maldives, an Islamic country with a 100% Muslim population, has the highest divorce rate in the world.
- Alcohol consumption in Muslim regions of the world (Middle East and North Africa) increased by 25% in five years.



Muslim World Coming Unglued

We know from the history of the Church that the gospel has spread rapidly during times of social and political unrest. The early

Church in the Roman world is one example. Luther’s and Calvin’s ideas swept through the Europe of the 1600s due to technological change (the printing press) and socio-economic change (the emergence of an entrepreneurial middle class). Wesley and Whitfield shared the gospel in mass gatherings driven by working conditions of the industrial revolution.

BY: JUD*

We know from Scripture that God is building His Church, expanding His kingdom and drawing the elect from every nation to Himself. Today we are seeing this in the Muslim world in the midst of rapid, unprecedented change in economic, political, social, and religious culture. It is as if the entire region is coming unglued.

We Need a “Ministry Spring”

In part, those changes mean that some of our MTW workers are being forced to leave their fields. Is that because God has stopped working among Muslims? Or is God asking us, His Church, to work differently? Perhaps the globalization of the Muslim world is calling for more global efforts.

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM

(source: Joshua Project)

- There are 6.7 billion people in the world.
- 2.3 billion are Christian (748 million are Evangelical Christian); 1.5 billion are Muslim.
- In AD 100 there were 360 people for every believer. Now there are 7.3 people for every believer.
- 86% of all unreached people groups lie within the region called the 10/40 window, which is between 10 and 40 degrees north and from the west coast of Africa to the east coast of Asia.
- 91% of all Christian outreach/evangelism does not target non-Christians, but targets other Christians.

While details can’t be shared in print, positive results are accompanying societal upheaval. Muslims are coming to Christ. Converts are meeting for fellowship, prayer, preaching of the Word, and celebration of the sacraments.

Partnerships between U.S. churches and local churches overseas have been created. The exchange of resources (prayer, training, mutual encouragement, as well as finances) has been very encouraging.

The missions force that MTW has working in the Muslim world is about one-fifth of the total MTW missions force worldwide. We work in over 30 countries. We need to grow. Rapid change calls for rapid response.

We need young men and women who will follow God’s calling in new and creative ways. We need a “ministry spring”—an “occupy” movement directed at the unreached nations of the Muslim world.



Jud is international director of Christian-Muslim relations for MTW. He began work in the Muslim world in 1972 and has spent extensive time in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. *last name withheld



The Privilege of Relationship Thoughts on My Internship in Ethiopia

My time in Ethiopia has come to an end. We had gone to love and serve some of the poorest children in the world. But what I realized was that over the course of two months we had become far more than just teachers serving the needs of these kids; we had become their friends.

BY: ALEX CARVER

On our last day, one of the boys in my 5th and 6th grade class, who was normally a tough, rowdy, rambunctious fellow, hugged me tightly and told me through tears that he loved me and would miss me. I was struck by his uncharacteristic display of emotion, but I later realized that many of these kids have very few mentors in their lives who make a consistent, dedicated, daily effort to serve their needs while building a genuine friendship with them and loving them for who they are. As a result, it makes it all the harder for them to watch people leave who have shown up every day for two months, tried their best to love them with Christ's love, and worked to make a significant investment in their lives. Such consistency is hard to come by in their lives. The reaction of our kids when we left gives me hope that the way we loved them gave credibility to the words we spoke during our Bible lessons and testimonies. My hope is that our actions and our words both testified to the love and grace of Christ.

As I witnessed how God is at work in Ethiopia restoring broken lives, families, and communities, my eyes have been opened to the vastness of God's mission to restore His fallen creation and to redeem people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. This trip has fueled a desire in me to support the work of Christ's Church across the globe in places of great need by praying, giving, sending, and going. I can't wait to see how God continues to use this experience to shape and challenge me going forward. [n](#)

This trip has fueled a desire in me to support the work of Christ's Church across the globe in places of great need by praying, giving, sending, and going.
— Alex



The last two weeks of the tutoring program went really well—we saw noticeable academic improvements in a number of the kids. But even more rewarding were the relationships we formed with them and the way they blessed our lives. I don't think I fully understood the bond we had until it came time to say goodbye. There were many hugs and tears all around. Many of the kids kept asking when we were coming back and when they would see us again—it was so hard to answer with, "Lelah gizay, munalibot," which means, "Another time, maybe." Saying goodbye to friends for what might be the last time on this earth is never an easy thing to do.



Invest Your Summer!

Check out our 2014 summer internship opportunities at mtw.org/internships, or email go@mtw.org to discuss longer internships available year-round.



Building on the Mountaintop Short-Term Mission Yields Hometown Impact

Anyone who has been around a PCA church long enough has seen the slideshows and heard the stories. "I went to bless others, but I ended up being more blessed myself!"

This is a frequent refrain from people returning from short-term mission projects, and it illustrates how the Holy Spirit works in ways that we don't expect. Individual spiritual development and "mountaintop experiences" are common. **But the impact can—and, perhaps, should—be broader.**

Mick Weltin is an assistant pastor at First Presbyterian Church (FPC) in Coral Springs, Fla., and also serves as chaplain at Coral Springs Christian Academy. He has led several short-term teams in recent years, including visits to Jamaica earlier this year and Haiti in 2010. These trips have influenced not only the congregation at FPC, but also the local community.

Involve the Church

Weltin has noticed that short-term trips help keep the church's mission to the nations in the forefront of the congregation's mind. Certainly this is true for the team members who go abroad for a week or two. As they prepare, they pray for those they are going to serve and forge friendships into the tight bond of a team with a purpose. And as they reach out for encouragement and support, other congregants are drawn in.

"Before our last trip to Jamaica, we had a big dinner with Jamaican food and steel-drum music," Weltin recalled. "It was moving for others in the congregation to hear the kids talk about their

expectations and to pray for them." Similarly, since the trip this past March, the team has had multiple opportunities to inspire both the church and the community.

Taking it Home

The town of Coral Springs, located in south Florida, provides ample opportunity to put this inspiration into practice. "As a church, we try to follow Acts 1:8, moving outward from our Jerusalem and Judea into Samaria and the ends of the earth," noted Weltin, "This is a cross-cultural community, so they are all right here." Serving locally is hard-wired into FPC's short-term trip process. "It's a rule that you

BY: PHIL MOBLEY



FPC students served in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake.



FPC students ministering to Jamaican women.

have to be serving here in order to go on a trip with us. So we'll have middle schoolers volunteering in nursing homes, or some of our bilingual students will work in ESL classes." Many times, according to Weltin, the team members jump right back into local involvement when they return.

"It's good for Christians to stay on the offense, to be engaging the world," said Weltin. "Christianity is not just about the 'Thou shalt nots.'" Short-term trips have been an integral part of maintaining an outward focus for the congregation at FPC Coral Springs. [n](#)

Hear from FPC students about their short-term project in Jamaica last spring with MTW in "Beat the Fear and Taste the Joy" on page eight of this issue of *Network*.



Involve your church in short-term missions!

Visit mtw.org/explore or email 2wk@mtw.org.



news briefs >>

The global Church is growing, transforming hearts and communities with the gospel. MTW is busy building partnerships with existing churches around the world, training nationals to plant churches, and welcoming missionaries to serve these efforts. Read about MTW's work in three particular regions and consider how you may participate.

Europe

MTW Europe is transitioning to new ways of reaching the continent with the gospel, relying less on non-native church planters and more on partnerships with existing churches.



"The need in Europe is tremendous," says Ken Matlack, MTW's international director for Europe. While the region's economy, values, and culture have huge global influence, Europe is known in some circles as the new "dark continent" due to its low percentage of evangelical believers.

Matlack and his team are praying for 20 new leaders who love the Church and are willing to serve. "We're

looking for different kinds of leaders to help Europeans plant churches," explained Matlack, "people who have vision and can be self-starters, yet not the primary person out front."

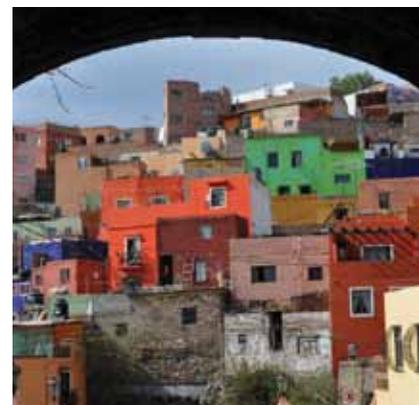
These new missionaries for Europe will have plenty of work ahead as Matlack continues to field requests from indigenous churches that want to partner with MTW. "I have invitations from several countries that we can't respond to immediately," says Matlack.

Northern Mexico

An exciting church-planting movement is underway in Northern Mexico through the Center for Church Planting in Monterrey. The new epicenter of Northern Mexico's Reformed church-planting movement is aiming to plant 54 churches throughout the region's 27 largest cities.

"Our vision," explained Andres Garza, MTW's team leader in Northern Mexico, "is to strategize and develop new gospel-centered and city-focused church-planting movements in the capital cities of Northern Mexico." In order to plant these 54 churches in a reasonable time frame, the Center offers a fast-track church-planter training course that better accommodates nationals. Participants receive theological training, practical skill development, and mentoring throughout the two-year program.

But in order to plant churches, and thereby transform cities, the Center needs help. "We need the experience, training, and insights of missionaries," says



Garza. Specifically, the Center needs mentors and coaches for the growing number of national church planters. "Americans and Mexicans serving together," says Garza, "is a representation of the kingdom of God."

Read more in the InVision article, "Accelerating Church Planting in Mexico," at invision.mtw.org/accelerating



Japan

MTW Japan's "Twenty-Twenty Vision" is an ambitious plan to bring the gospel to one of the world's largest unreached people groups by growing the presence of the Church in some of Japan's largest cities. "Japan is rich in material possessions, education, and technology," explained Dan Iverson, director of MTW's ministry in Japan, "but it is poor when it comes to the gospel."

While MTW has experienced growth in its Japanese church plants, more work is needed to reach a population riddled with high suicide rates, depression, and marital strife. "There are so few Christians, so few churches," said Iverson. "Twenty-Twenty Vision" is a project to raise up 35 new Japanese partners, and 35 new long-term MTW Japan missionaries by the year 2020.

Among those 35 new missionaries, Iverson is recruiting ordained pastors to plant new churches, RUF-type ministers, youth-focused missionaries, as well as teachers for missionary children and English as a Second Language classes.

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