



# Relief IN FULL

Three years after Japan's devastating tsunami, God's sovereign plan continues to unfold.

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**MEET MTW'S  
DR. LLOYD KIM**



**EVANGELISM:  
PRODUCED IN HD**



**MY SUMMER  
WITH REFUGEES**



**OPEN GATES  
TO OPEN HEARTS**

**LEADING WITH HUMILITY**

**NO REGRETS**

**On the afternoon of March 11, 2011, the earth started moving in Ishinomaki, a coastal city of 162,000 in the Tōhoku region of Japan. M-San\*, a piano teacher on the north side of town, grew increasingly terrified as the Tōhoku earthquake persisted for more than six minutes.**

## Compassion & Hope for a Devastated People

BY: PHIL MOBLEY

# Relief in Japan

But the long, violent tremors were only the beginning of the horror for people throughout the region. The quake, centered just off the coast, had produced a powerful tsunami. About an hour after the shaking stopped, the sea surged into the city in waves as high as 40 feet. M-San and her husband were forced to evacuate as the waters rose above the ceiling of their home, destroying her two pianos and ruining most of her other possessions. The chain of events that would lead her to Christ had begun.

The world's attention was soon riveted on Japan as workers raced to prevent a full-scale meltdown at the flooded Fukushima power plant, just 64 miles from Ishinomaki. The Triple Disaster (quake, tsunami, and nuclear crisis) would ultimately take the lives of over 18,000 people (including 3,600 in Ishinomaki—the most for any single city) and displace tens of thousands more. Amid aftershocks and fears of more tsunamis, the Japanese government warned people to stay away from the unstable nuclear facility.

\*Name has been changed.

### First responders

Despite this, Dan Iverson, the MTW Japan country director, and the team in Tokyo immediately made plans to drive north to help those in need however they could. Joined quickly by people from the Presbyterian Church in Japan (PCJ) and other believers, they headed toward the destruction. “That first night, we didn’t see a single emergency response vehicle of any kind,” recalled Iverson.

In the days that followed, this impromptu team began to exhibit the cooperation that would become a hallmark of longer-term work in the area. Carrying all the food, water, gasoline, blankets, and other staples they could manage, they arrived in Ishinomaki and set up what became known as “street stores” in the northern part of the city. “Soon our mobile street stores became a central gathering place for the community,” explained Iverson. When more Christians arrived, they pooled their resources, enabling the stores to feed hundreds on a regular basis.

In nearly 28 years of service in Japan, rarely has Iverson experienced as productive and sweet a partnership among evangelical organizations as the one born in Ishinomaki. And the fruit of this partnership continues to ripen. There are now five churches in the northern part of the city, an area that had no known church presence prior to the disaster. There is also the Ishinomaki Christian Center (ICC), itself a collaboration among MTW, a number of other evangelical groups, and Japanese churches.

### By this the world will know that you are my disciples

As the weeks passed, the Christians stayed and started helping people like M-San rebuild their homes and lives. Early on, a team of Korean, Japanese, and American Christians began investing in M-San, sitting with her and helping her dry out her piano music. After more than a month in an evacuation shelter, she returned to live in a

*Why had these people come—and more notably, stayed—when everyone else had left?*

steel-framed second story living room, the only part of her home to survive the flood. By September, a team from Samaritan's Purse had finished renovating, and M-San, like many other locals, was asking questions. Why had these people come—and more notably, stayed—when everyone else had left? And why were they asking nothing in return for the aid they provided?

As she studied this ad hoc group, knowing that they represented different organizations, she wondered what it was that bound them together. When she heard that Jesus was the reason for both their presence and their unity, she decided there must be something to Him.

### Emotional and spiritual devastation

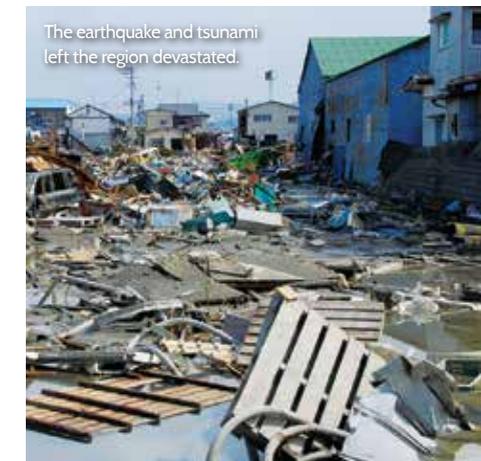
As time passed and relief work shifted from first response to

cleanup to reconstruction, the Christian presence remained. They developed a positive reputation as far away as Tokyo as they assisted with “mud-outs” (cleaning up the flooded first floors of dwellings), and hosted gospel music festivals and community meals. At first, people appreciated the food. Soon, these meals became a venue for emotional catharsis. Gospel seeds were planted.

Ross Lee, an itinerating missionary raising support to join MTW's Tokyo City Center church-planting team, has a unique perspective on the relief efforts in



Relief workers unload supplies in Ishinomaki after the tsunami.



The earthquake and tsunami left the region devastated.

the Tōhoku region. Having visited Japan twice in the years prior to the disaster, he had the opportunity to assist with the work in Ishinomaki during the summers of both 2012 and 2013. “In 2012, the area was

still devastated,” Lee remembered. “There were still huge piles of wreckage the government was sorting through.”

By the next summer, most of the visible evidence of destruction had been cleared. The emotional and spiritual need that had always been there began to surface. “The community was torn asunder,” Lee said, “and there is still a sense of communal loss that everyone feels.” The efficiency of the government's efforts to clear debris and setup temporary housing only underscored the lack of readiness the people had to “move on” after losing family and friends, homes and jobs.

According to Dan Iverson, the aftermath of the disaster has brought into the open a spiritual barrenness that already existed in →



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## Relief, continued

Japan. Despite universal literacy, long life expectancy, and excellent healthcare, depression and suicide are rampant. “The country needs the gospel of hope, which is the gospel of Jesus.”

In late 2012, about 18 months after she first encountered the people who restored her wrecked home and carried with them



Virginia Lavallee leads an English class in Ishinomaki.

this gospel of hope, M-San surrendered her life to Christ. Having been touched by the presence of those who came so far to help, it ultimately felt natural to become a believer herself.

### Expanding the beachhead

The ICC is now a visible part of the community in northern Ishinomaki. Its staffers include Virginia Lavallee, MTW’s sole full-time missionary in the city, who also hosts MTW interns

to the region. Lavallee’s sister and brother-in-law Abi and Roger Lowther, who work with MTW in Tokyo, persuaded her to join the Ishinomaki relief efforts for a couple of months after graduating from college in 2011. She has been there ever since.

“We continue to see more people coming to Christ, and even more are beginning to consider Christianity,” Lavallee said. Conversations about ICC’s ongoing presence quickly turn to the gospel, and several locals—even some unbelievers—gladly help out with programs and events. One such regular helper is M-San. Out of respect for her unconverted husband, she does not attend worship on Sundays, one of his few days off. But she stays involved in other ways, leading a senior citizens choir and linking the church to the community through her piano teaching.

With other evangelical groups having established plants in Ishinomaki itself, MTW’s long-term follow-up work is shifting to Sendai, a city of over a million people about 35 miles to the southwest. Sendai’s population has swelled since the tsunami with people relocating from damaged areas. And as the capitol of the region, it represents a strategic opportunity for MTW, one eagerly supported by those who contributed \$1.5 million to the organization for disaster relief and subsequent church planting.

“Prior to the tsunami, we didn’t have any ministry or plans in the Tōhoku region,” explained Dan Iverson. But God had plans. Now, in partnership with the PCJ, MTW is taking the “True Bread and Living Water” to a starving, thirsty people. [▶](#)



To find out about short-term projects go to [www.mtw.org/explore](http://www.mtw.org/explore) or email [zkwk@mtw.org](mailto:zkwk@mtw.org)

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FROM THE COORDINATOR

## No Regrets



*Dr. Lloyd Kim is MTW’s new provisional coordinator pending approval by General Assembly. Meet Dr. Kim and learn more about him in our Q&A on page 10.*

Sitting in the pews of the mortuary chapel, I glanced up and looked at the coffin. To the side of it, was a picture of my cousin Sue: beautiful, vibrant, smiling. Inside the coffin was someone I did not recognize. Her hair was white, her face was wrinkled, her cheeks sunk in, and her body emaciated. Stomach cancer had not only taken her life, but her beauty. *I reflected on the temporary nature of our life and asked myself the question, “Will I walk away from this life with any regrets?”*

I looked up again and noticed the two people standing beside the coffin, a middle-aged man and a young woman around 20 years old. The older man was embracing the younger woman, both were weeping uncontrollably. I looked into the man’s face and saw sorrow and grief so deep and mournful that it moved me to tears. What would it be like to bury your wife? What would it be like to lose your mother?

There is something that happens to you when you look death in the face. It snaps you out of the mundane routine of life and forces you to reflect on matters of eternal significance, to ask the deep questions of life, to gain perspective.

It was there at the gravesite, as we lowered her into the ground and placed our roses on her coffin that I was reminded of the reason we send missionaries all over the world. I was reminded of the great hope we have in a Savior who was “despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...” (Isaiah 53:3, ESV). I was drawn again to the One who “has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...” (Isaiah 53:4–5, ESV). This is the One who has conquered death: ugly, indiscriminate, painful death. His resurrection brings life, health, vitality, hope, and victory over the grave.

What an incredible message of hope we have for those who are experiencing deep loss and sadness. What amazing comfort we have in our times of darkness and disorientation. Jesus, our resurrected King, frees us from fear and enables us to risk boldly for His kingdom. Our life here is so short. When we live it for Him, we will live it with no regrets. [▶](#)

*Lloyd Kim*

**BURIED DEEP IN A CLOSED PART OF THE WORLD, STRATEGICALLY LOCATED AT THE CROSSROADS OF EUROPE, AFRICA, AND ASIA, AN EVOLUTIONARY MINISTRY IS BRINGING THE GOSPEL TO COUNTRIES OTHERWISE CLOSED TO MISSIONS EFFORTS. IN AN MTW BUSINESS AS MISSION (BAM) ENDEAVOR, A UNIQUE TEAM INTRODUCES PROFESSIONALISM AND REFORMED THEOLOGY TO A FIELD RIPE FOR THE GOSPEL. THEIR BUSINESS? MEDIA PRODUCTION.**

**THEIR TARGET AUDIENCE? PEOPLE GROUPS CUT OFF FROM THE CHURCH BY NEARLY ALL AVENUES EXCEPT ONE: SATELLITE TELEVISION.**

In many parts of the world, satellite television is as commonplace as basic cable or antenna. Millions of households buy a dish, hook up to the satellite, and enjoy free, private, unhindered access to every broadcast station in the world. Think of the implications of this sort of freedom in cultures where what

you eat and what you wear are legislated. The gospel is pressing forward on this enormous front, ministering to people who are otherwise unlikely to hear the Truth spoken aloud.

Just two years ago, a team of two families began work to establish a new media production company as a legitimate enterprise—no simple task as a group of blended cultures in a country of mixed European and Middle Eastern traditions. Slowly but surely, they waded through the red tape, networked in their community, and

began to produce media in Arabic. In just two short years, they've produced music videos, training materials, and a 13-episode mini-series on the names of God. In one project, the team used a format particularly familiar to Muslims who study the Koran: simple Scripture laid out on the screen in Arabic with a narration running throughout.

#### The cultural power of media

Earlier this year an immigrant believer and lay minister, Mirko\*, did some construction work for the team. As Mirko ended his work for the day, Franklin, a member of the team, invited him back to view a music video they had just finished developing. The video was a dramatized story about a drug addict who was challenged to face the consequences of his addiction through his relationship with Christ. Mirko was moved to tears. "Many Westerners may not understand the importance of music videos in Middle Eastern culture," Franklin said, "but Mirko got it—and that's what matters."

Christian refugees in neighboring countries. They are working to give a voice to believing refugees and shine a light on one of the largest events of Christian oppression in living history. And all this is done through a legally established business, invested in the local community, weaving the team into the lives of neighbors, colleagues, and local officials.

#### Training media makers and making disciples

It's not only the media produced that is making an impact. The business also provides a natural opportunity to build relationships in the community and to invite those they meet into Bible study groups and into the local church. One woman texted team member Lisa after a Bible study saying, "You have no idea the impact of how you affected my way of thinking about the Bible. I'm grateful for how God put you in my way when I felt lost." Locally and globally, God is using this team to make an impact.

As they look to the future, this team is now putting out the call for teachers and scholarship funds for a brand new school of media production with a decidedly Christian focus. In the summer of 2015, the team will host their first round of three-month classes, made up of students from a number of different countries, invited to participate in a program on media production and a study of the Christian worldview. Students will each be paired with a mentor, and guided not only toward excellence in their field, but also toward the full integration of their faith and their calling. They'll be disciplined, trained, and sent home on a mission to reach out to their own cultures in their heart languages, telling stories and singing songs that point aching hearts to Jesus.

When team member Seth speaks of these students, his voice and face light up with excitement. "There's the old saying about teaching a man to fish," he said. "But this school will be so much more than that. Every student will leave here equipped to speak the gospel to their own people on unlimited networks. It's a time in history not unlike the Gutenberg Press." 

Today, the team has doubled in size. They've produced several well-received videos and montages, which they've broadcast over satellite to the far reaches of the world. Non-profit organizations and NGOs have taken notice, and are reaching out to this fledgling company for help developing new projects. For example, as religious and political powers shift and strut in other parts of the world, the team has been asked to interview



**"Many Westerners may not understand the importance of music videos in Middle Eastern culture ... BUT MIRKO GOT IT—AND THAT'S WHAT MATTERS."**

BY: AMY ROBINSON



\*For security purposes, some names have been changed.



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# Open Gates to Open Hearts

Short-Term Missions in Mexico, Empowered by the Holy Spirit

MTW missionary Jamie Burkemper, along with Mexican national church planter Fernando and his wife Miralda, met Claudia during a short-term outreach in Claudia's Ciudad Juarez neighborhood this summer. During a prayer walk through the city, they noticed a neighborhood they'd never been able to access before. Today, the gate was open.

BY: KATHERINE SPEARING



Missionaries Jamie and Jennifer Burkemper pose for a picture with Claudia and her family.

It was in this neighborhood that they encountered Claudia. She said that she'd been given a Bible by her daughter but had trouble understanding it. Claudia welcomed them into her home. By the end of the visit, she hadn't just found a church, she'd found Christ.

After praying with Jamie and the others, an excited Claudia asked them to stay put while she ran to the bedroom. When she returned, she was holding her cell phone with the text message conversation she'd just had with her daughter. "Have you found a church yet?" her daughter had texted. "I am praying you find one tonight."

Encounters like the one with Claudia are repeated around the city. Jamie explained the method used by the volunteer teams who come each summer: "We spread out in groups of two and three ... and walk around the city, praying, handing out flyers, and inviting people to English camp." The previous summer, English camps—run primarily by short-term teams—helped many women in the community come to Christ and caused their congregation to triple in size.

## Are short-term trips effective?

Even though stories like Claudia's happen regularly, missionaries often hear the question: Is it really effective to spend eight days onsite with missionaries in a foreign country?

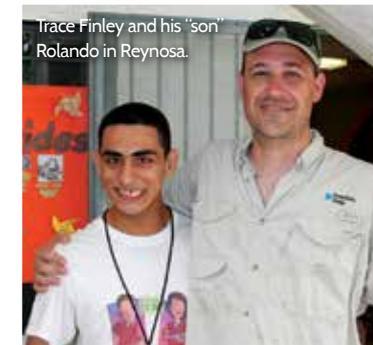
"One of the elders from Denver asked that question," said MTW missionary Dave Diaso, who serves in the Baja California Peninsula, referring to a partner church in Colorado that brought a team to Ensenada. "This is what I told him: The church in Ensenada hadn't done a VBS in three years. When they heard a church from the States was visiting, it gave them the energy and excitement to pull a VBS together. We had 60 kids come and 80 percent of those kids didn't go to the church. It was an amazing outreach opportunity."

Dave also explained that the Denver team provided an unexpected opportunity for him to develop relationships with the people in Ensenada. After the team was gone, they left behind a foundation that Dave could build upon.

Boni Davidson, an MTW missionary serving in Monterrey, added that teams provide much needed encouragement. "In Mexico especially, people in the evangelical Church, being few in number, can feel very isolated from the rest of the world. Knowing that there are other Christians out there, willing to spend time and resources to give them encouragement, helps believers to see they are connected to the bigger universal Church."

## The value of relationships

The encouragement flows both ways. For Trace Finley, who came on a trip to Reynosa, Mexico, to work with Isaiah 55 Deaf Ministries, this was his first trip since he'd become a student sponsor for Rolando, a teenage deaf student, 18 months earlier. Trace and his two sons were part of a team from Christ the King PCA in Austin, Texas.



Trace Finley and his "son" Rolando in Reynosa.

As Trace worked throughout the week moving rock at the school, other volunteers were assisting with the VBS for the deaf students. Not wanting to interrupt the work they were doing, Trace waited until the end of the week and then asked an Isaiah 55 missionary to help him meet Rolando.

The conversation, through translators, started out somewhat stilted—but then Trace asked if he could give Rolando a hug.

As Rolando and Trace embraced, tears began to stream down Trace's cheeks. Rolando's face spread into a huge grin. He proudly signed to his friends that Trace was his sponsor. For the last 18 months, Trace had been sponsoring Rolando to attend school. But suddenly it hit him. Rolando was a real kid whose life was being changed. Trace felt he'd gained not just a face to go with a name—but another son.

Short-term teams are full of unexpected opportunities. They create space for the Holy Spirit to work, and you never know how He will work. Or what opportunities He has waiting—like 60 kids attending a VBS in Ensenada, or a deaf boy meeting his sponsor family, or a woman like Claudia, meeting Jesus for the first time.

Claudia herself marveled at God's sovereign design. She asked Jamie, Fernando, and Miralda how they'd gotten into her neighborhood, as it was usually closed. They pointed out the open gate through which they had entered and with renewed awe, Claudia assured them that the gate was never open.

Never.

Except when the Lord decides to unlock it, just so He can send one of His messengers to answer the prayer of one of His children. [📍](#)

## IS MEXICO SAFE?

"Over the last two years I have heard from most all of our missionaries in Mexico that the situation has stabilized. We had hundreds of people go on short-term teams with us this summer. I would take my family there."

—David Campbell,  
MTW mobilization manager



Short-term team from Dallas heads to Durango, Mexico.



Photo by Andrew R. Slaton



Photos by Andrew R. Slaton



Photo by Andrew R. Slaton

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# Meet the Coordinator: Q & A with Dr. Lloyd Kim



Photo by Steve Glass

Dr. Lloyd Kim was called by the Committee on Mission to the World to be the next coordinator of MTW. This 42-year-old former PCA pastor came up through the ranks of MTW, first as a missionary and later as a field leader. A native of California, he graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in engineering and worked as a consultant with Ernst & Young before getting his M.Div. at Westminster Seminary in California and his doctorate at Fuller Theological Seminary in New Testament Studies. We spoke with him just before press time.

**Q: Tell us how you came to be coordinator of MTW.**

**A:** Well, as background, let me tell you a story. I once asked my son if he would want to be a missionary someday. He said, “There is no way. That is the last thing I’d want to be. It is so much work, you have to live in these places that are dirty and eat strange food, there’s so much stress—there’s no way.” He paused. “Unless God calls me.”

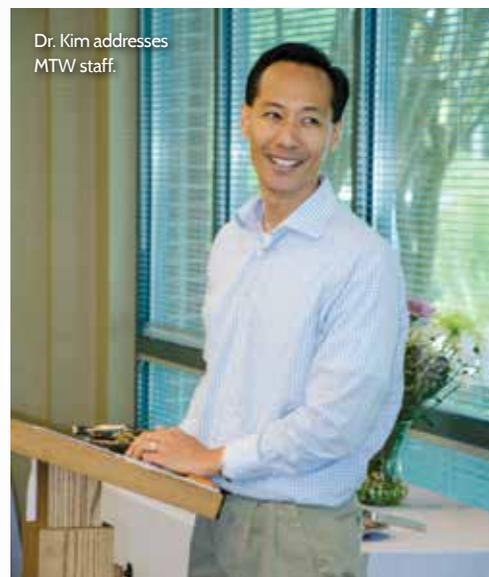
As I think about this particular position, if someone had asked me even a year ago, “Would you consider this?” I’d have said, “No way.” But that phrase from my son still applies: unless God calls me. And I do have a very keen sense that God is calling me to this.

**Q: How did God call you into missions?**

**A:** It was really more of a sober examination of who I am, and how God has made me, how God has equipped me. I grew up in a very small town in the central valley of California. Our

family was the first Korean family to live in this town. There were some struggles with that, some identity issues when I went to university, where I was surrounded by diversity all over the place. I think God was preparing me for cross-cultural missions.

I grew up in a Christian family, but at Berkeley I surrendered myself to God and fell in love with Jesus. Berkeley is an environment where you cannot be on the fence. Either you completely reject your faith and the ideology that goes with it, or you become almost militant in holding onto your faith because of the environment you are in. And that is what happened. I said, “Jesus, take all of me.”



Dr. Kim addresses MTW staff.



MTW home office staff host a welcome brunch for Dr. Kim.

**Q: You grew up in California as the son of immigrant Koreans. Do you feel being Korean-American will influence your position and the relations between the Korean PCA churches and the traditional—mostly white—PCA churches?**

**A:** Among Koreans there is an incredible sense of ethnic unity. So I think that will play a role in my position. But in terms of the more practical, how does MTW better engage the Korean-American church, that question is not simple. We’ve got to ask ourselves as an organization, how do we build bridges? But in terms of just general perception, reputation,

or whatever, it’s good that I’m in this position and it’ll be a good start to conversations.

**Q: What are MTW’s greatest challenges moving forward?**

**A:** It’s too early to know for certain. I do know we need to recognize the diversity we have in the denomination, in our mission field and mission force, and find a way to move forward

Collaboration, being able to engage and partner with other groups, is also going to be essential.

We have a lot to thank God for: those who have served in leadership, MTW’s financial position. But there are still opportunities for growth and room for improvement, and I do believe we need to continue to raise up newer, younger leaders.

**Q: Can you share with us your vision for the future?**

**A:** I believe our vision needs to be Jesus’ vision. What does He call us to pray? “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

This vision is bigger than MTW, bigger than the

PCA; it is a vision to see God’s glory fill the earth. Our vision is to see people transformed by the gospel, to see families reconciled, communities reflecting the ethics of the kingdom of God, and the nations worshipping our Lord and Savior. That’s how the Lord is moving us forward, with a vision bigger than ourselves. And I’m excited to be part of it.



MTW staff pray for Dr. Kim, Eda, and their youngest daughter Katy.

*I believe our vision needs to be Jesus’ vision. What does He call us to pray? “Your kingdom come, your will be done ...”*

together. The fact is, the world is changing and the landscape of missions is changing. The role of national partners and the Church in the Global South are factors that are going to influence how we as an organization will move forward.

The Kims have three children: two daughters, Kaelyn and Katy, and one son, Christian. To read an expanded interview, including how Lloyd met his wife, Dr. Eda Kim, go to [www.mtw.org/news](http://www.mtw.org/news).



# The Nations Have Come to Us My Summer with Refugees

*We've made it to Clarkston! My two teammates and I are settling into our apartment and approaching this refugee community just east of Atlanta with wide eyes and a huge lack of insight. I feel like an outsider. A rookie. An inexperienced child.*

BY: CHELSEY BENNETT



Chelsey with a group of refugee girls she befriended during her MTW internship in Clarkston, Georgia.

Even though there are over 40 nationalities here, I feel like the foreigner. When I first drove into our parking lot, a couple dozen kids ran out in front of my car. As I slammed the brakes, I surveyed the scene. The children playing in front of me were from all over the globe

I marvel at this diversity. We serve a very creative God.

An African girl who appeared to be 11 or 12 years old made laps around the apartment complex—once with a baby on her hip, then on a bike timidly waving hello, braided hair flying in every direction. I met my neighbor, a Bosnian refugee who seemed to be having some

kind of religious gathering next door. Since I have been here—just a little over 24 hours—I have learned one important thing: I have so much to learn.

### Great hospitality. Great need.

We visited some Iraqi women yesterday, enjoying Arab tea, learning a couple of words in Arabic, and meeting a dozen of their children. One woman quickly whipped up some delicious baked goods. (“We can only stay for a few minutes” is quite relative here.) We walked into her apartment, noticing the otherwise empty room crowded with people crouched on the ground. She had just recently sold her furniture to pay bills. In just one hour I observed great need. *Physical need. Spiritual need. Emotional need.*

I, on the other hand, am very comfortable in my clean, spacious apartment, sleeping on my comfy new mattress, budgeting easily for food, and driving my own car equipped with my iPhone to guide me wherever I need to go. I speak the national language and, even though I am

new here, I am in a position of power. I cannot relate to what it means to be in their position.

One safe assumption: I know nothing.

### A world of nations

Clarkston is a melting pot. I passed a church yesterday that listed seven different gatherings in various languages. There are over 70 mosques in and around the Atlanta area—a reminder to be careful about what we say and when to pray because of local religious group tensions. It really is a different world here. And all because the nations have come to us.

I am grateful. Expectant. Eager. Timid. Weak.

But He is strong.



# Leading Youth with Humility A Shift in Perspective Brings Freedom

*Before participating in MTW short-term missions trips, Trent Thomas, youth director at Church of the Redeemer in Monroe, N.C., admits, “I had a superiority complex.” He thought he had a good grasp on the best ways to do short-term ministry in various cultures, and was ready to make an impact.*

But leading a youth group trip to Cherokee, N.C., last summer and another to Belize a few months ago changed his outlook. “I learned that we aren’t coming to change their world, we are coming to help,” explained Thomas. This is one of the reasons Thomas and Church of the Redeemer have plugged in with MTW for their short-term missions trips. “MTW is committed to letting nationals do ministry; we just assist them,” said Thomas.

The 16-person group from Redeemer joined MTW’s Philip Ajamian and San Jose Presbyterian Church in Corozal, Belize. The team helped the church with construction projects and assisted with their summer VBS for children.

### The power of partnership

Thomas’ change of thinking about missions has been both humbling and freeing. “Working with MTW has taught me the importance of connecting with an organization that’s already doing work,” said Thomas. As the team leader, Thomas also felt that serving through MTW was the best use of the team’s time and resources. “We were able to come and be utilized quickly and effectively, and there was no confusion as to what we were doing.”

MTW missionaries in Belize provided a solid structure and direction for the youth trip, while also offering valuable cultural and spiritual lessons. “Our hosts did a great job of encouraging us to be flexible and to have open hands to see what God would give us,” said Thomas. “It was very much a missions trip showered in prayer.”

### Making an investment

Church of the Redeemer has sent several teams to Belize over the years, so this summer’s short-term experience was an opportunity for the church to again invest prayer and resources in the country. In addition, the missions trip was an investment by the church in its youth. “This trip revealed to our church that our youth can contribute in ministry,” said Thomas. “It showed them that our youth are serious about their faith.” Just as he has grown and matured through short-term missions

BY: KATIE WEAVER



Church of the Redeemer youth paint during their trip to Belize.



The Redeemer team poses with people they ministered to in Corozal, Belize.

experiences, Thomas hopes that Redeemer’s youth will continue to practice humble service and prayerful mindsets in their day-to-day lives back home. He also believes the church as a whole will continue to be encouraged by its connection with MTW missions opportunities.



For more information on short-term missions opportunities for your church, visit [mtw.org/explore](http://mtw.org/explore) or email [2wk@mtw.org](mailto:2wk@mtw.org).



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Check out our 2015 summer internship opportunities at [mtw.org/internships](http://mtw.org/internships), or email [go@mtw.org](mailto:go@mtw.org) to discuss longer internships available year-round.



# news briefs >>

## Helping National Believers in Gaza

The conflict in the Gaza Strip has claimed many lives and thousands are wounded, without homes, without basic necessities. Some of those suffering are believers. Many have taken shelter in churches.



National pastors in Gaza have called on MTW's Global Disaster Response to help raise \$150,000 for food, shelter, medicine, and other supplies for those taking shelter in churches.

MTW is responding by sending relief and medical support to believers who are caught in the crossfire, both Palestinian and Israeli, as well as for others in the community who have been wounded or displaced and have tremendous needs. More than \$18,000 has been raised since the campaign effort launched in early August, but much more is needed.

Donations to MTW's Gaza Disaster Response for Refugees are directed to pastors and partner churches in the area and are providing food parcels, medicine and aid for the sick and wounded, blankets

and light sleeping bags, gifts and toys for children, and hygiene packages.

In addition to financial gifts, national believers in the region have urged us to pray. They ask specifically that we would pray for local ministry leaders to be a source of peace and blessing for the community. Prayer is also needed for safety and protection of believers, for Palestinians and Israelis who need Jesus Christ, and for justice and peace in the land.

*Donations are still needed. To give a gift or for recent updates visit [www.mtw.org/gaza](http://www.mtw.org/gaza).*

## MTW West Coast Missions Conference

"Because of the rise of urbanization and the reality of globalization, the dynamics of our world are changing, shifting, even at this very moment," says Stephen Um, pastor of Citylife Presbyterian Church in Boston. These are exactly the changing dynamics that he will address as the keynote speaker of MTW's first West Coast Missions Conference January 30-31, 2015.

Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Encinitas, Calif., will host the conference, which will also feature newly nominated coordinator of MTW, Dr. Lloyd Kim. Kim hopes to use his experiences as leader of MTW's Asia-Pacific ministries, where church-planting networks are thriving, to inspire a rising generation of missionaries as well as those currently on the field.

Organizers invited 300 churches from California, Arizona, and New Mexico to attend the first MTW regional missions conference on the West Coast, but

anyone is welcome to attend. Hunter Benson, mercy and missions pastor of host church, Redeemer, said, "We hope anyone who wants to get more involved in missions personally will attend, as well as church leaders who want to build their church's capacity for missions ministry."

The conference will feature worship led by Indelible Grace's Matthew Smith as well as multiple breakout sessions led by indigenous church planters, MTW missionaries, and MTW staff.



The conference will also offer a myriad of opportunities to connect with missionaries from around the world, explore opportunities for service overseas—long-term or short-term—and learn about ways to engage in international ministry locally.

*More information and registration is available now at [www.mtw.org/WCMC](http://www.mtw.org/WCMC).*

## Dr. Paul Kooistra: A Tribute

After 20 years of faithfully serving MTW as coordinator, Dr. Paul Kooistra and his wife Sandi have moved to Due West, S.C., where Dr. Kooistra is now serving as president of Erskine College and Theological Seminary. Visit [mtw.org/news](http://mtw.org/news) to read a tribute to Dr. Kooistra.

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 — MTW Partner Doug Haskew

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