



*An Independent Church Journal
January - February 2004*

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In the late 1970s and 1980s the Lord began a movement of Church Planting. Many churches were planted all over the country. The different denominations, which are not connected to the state, tried to get these young churches to become a part of their organizations and were often very successful. It was during this time in 1983 that the Lord moved upon hearts and the Conference for Church Planting-Konferenz fuer Gemeindegruendung (KfG) was

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Once a quarter have a special Sunday service that appeals to non-Christians. Everything from the music to the message should be directed to the unbeliever. Prepare your message with the non-Christian in mind...

R. Larry Moyer

International Partnerships

**Rev. Les Lofquist
Executive Director**

One of my favorite pastimes here in the IFCA International Home Office is to spend time in the archive room studying our history. I find it extremely interesting to look at the IFCA membership information on men like J. Oliver Buswell, William Pettingill, J. Vernon McGee, John Walvoord, Louis Talbot and Charles Feinberg and then pick out their faces in our historic photographs. As I examine the minutes of business meetings held decades ago, I gain a better understanding why certain things have occurred in our history. Ours is a rich heritage I enjoy exploring.

I have been intrigued by the historic impact of the IFCA in other parts of the world as evidenced in our archives. For example, in the 1932 issues of what would later be named The Voice Magazine, you will find reports from Kwandsien, China and San Marcos, Guatemala and Ruda, Poland and Capinota, Bolivia. Articles were written by L.S. Harrison of Sydney, Australia and W.M. Robertson of Vancouver, British Columbia and W.J. Miller of Moosejaw, Saskatchewan. Peter Deyneka, Sr. reminded the IFCA members of the spiritual needs of Communist Russia. In February, 1932 George A. Bell wrote an article entitled, "On the Tibetan Border" all about his ministry in Kansu, China. These are just a few samples of the places around the world affected by the IFCA in our early history.

Several decades after our founding in 1930, you can begin to observe the influence of Faith Mission Boards in our history. The reports from around the world no longer came directly to the IFCA Home Office but were channeled through the various mission boards we have all come to know and support. As encouraging as this was, it also represented a subtle shift for our Fellowship.

In the decades of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, the IFCA turned over to our missionary members most of the responsibility for communications with the fellowships of churches in other countries. This makes sense, but there was one unintended consequence. The IFCA as a Fellowship of independent, fundamental churches lost influence and communication with those independent churches in other countries. The means of influence and communication was naturally replaced by the Faith Mission Boards. This gradually created a problem on the field: what would the newly planted churches do for fellowship once they were self-supporting churches and released from the nurture of the mission boards? Were they a fellowship of independent churches or were they _____ Mission churches (fill in the blank with your favorite mission board) even though they were released from the mission as self-supporting? This was a problem discussed by the nationals, the missionaries from America, and the mission boards. But the IFCA as an organization was left out of the loop.

Another problem regarding IFCA and internationalization took place in the late 1960s. The leaders of IFCA heard from an outstanding brother named Armando DiPardo of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was the leader of a fellowship of churches in South America which adhered to "The Philadelphia Testimony" (a doctrinal expression nearly identical to the IFCA's Doctrinal Statement). On December 1, 1966 Pastor DiPardo met with leaders from the IFCA in New Jersey. Thus began a lengthy dialogue between the IFCA and the independent South American churches that adhered to "The Philadelphia Testimony". Pastor DiPardo is pictured in numerous issues of the Voice from 1967 through 1973. He spoke at several Annual Conventions of the IFCA. A photo of a delegation from South America led by Pastor DiPardo is shown in the March, 1967 issue of Voice. During this time, our IFCA members were exploring ways to officially unite with these brothers from South America. But there was a problem: they were not sure how to proceed. So the IFCA leaders appointed an International Commission headed up by Pastor George Linhart of Grace Chapel in Havertown, PA. They discussed many possibilities and options, then presented a

Resolution for the 1973 Annual Convention in Winona Lake, IN. It provided a most useful roadmap for the IFCA and internationalization (in fact, it is so helpful that it is reproduced as part of this article). But for reasons unknown to me and the men I've consulted, no one knows why the communications with our brothers from South America were lost. It appears that we in the IFCA could not sustain the momentum (through no one's fault), and our brothers of "The Philadelphia Testimony" grew discouraged with our loss of interest. I deeply regret that as I review our history.

But the work of God continued in Argentina, Uruguay, and Spain through "The Philadelphia Testimony" churches. Of course that is because Christ is building His church. And despite a lack of structure designed to facilitate international contacts, we in IFCA International continued to learn about other nationals involved in church-planting. We heard of groups of churches interested in fellowship with the IFCA throughout the world. In our records, for example, I have read about official inquiries from Canada, India, Brazil, and Bolivia. There were continual contacts made by Dr. Richard Gregory through his leadership on the Boards of Directors of Biblical Ministries Worldwide and Slavic Gospel Association. We learned about groups of churches in Mexico. We were reminded of the need of supporting national Christians through IFCA member mission agencies like Fellowship International Mission of Allentown, PA and Spanish World Gospel Mission of Winona Lake, IN and Partners in Evangelism of Morton Grove, IL. We sponsored Ukrainian church planters in Operation Partnership. We had the privilege of meeting leaders like Pastor Donatilo Garache from Nicaragua at the 1997 Annual Convention in Schroon Lake (who had founded "The IFCA of Nicaragua"). We also met Pastor Wilfried Plock of Germany's Konferenz fur Gemeindegruendung (KfG) when he came to the 1998 Annual Convention in Lake Zurich, IL.

All of this activity came to a crescendo after the IFCA officially changed its name in 1996 to IFCA International. People asked: "that's a nice name, but what are we doing about internationalization?" A committee was appointed, but it quickly became apparent: What would our Constitution and By-Laws allow? This became part of the whole Constitutional revision process. Internationalization ground to an organizational stop.

In the meantime, members of our churches were hopping onto airplanes and visiting the "mission field" for themselves. They used their telephones to call the "mission field." Faxes and videos were sent back and forth. Then came e-mail, the Internet, and web-sites. They started supporting mission initiatives for themselves and partnered with our mission boards. The world was shrinking, and our IFCA churches took advantage of the opportunities. But as an organization, we still were not sure what to do.

The question was clarified: Do we want to ask nationals from outside the USA to join IFCA International? And if so, then how could we possibly process membership applications from men all the way around the world? How would we interview them? How could we determine those who were genuinely and sincerely seeking membership with us out of conviction?

As an organization, IFCA International responded. Slowly, one by one, we accepted into membership men from other countries well-known to a number of IFCA members here in the USA. First came Andy Girwarnauth of Guyana, South America, followed by Joel Mathai who returned to Delhi, India. Then A.L. Subramanian of India and Edward Buchanan of The Bahamas and Richard Wesley of Liberia joined IFCA International. But these were special cases: they were men who had some kind of close connections to Michigan and the members of the Credentials Committee could interview them personally.

A breakthrough in my own thinking came when I was back in the archive room reviewing our history. I came across that 1973 Resolution on Internationalization only weeks after I had

returned from my trip to South Korea. The concepts I had struggled to formulate and then advised for our Korean brothers (see my article later in this issue of the Voice) were actually outlined in that 1973 Resolution! Some of the language needed updating to reflect changes over 30 years, but the concepts were the same as the ones by which I was operating when I was in Korea.

This issue of Voice is intended to answer the question many have asked me. "What are we doing about internationalization?" Here is my answer. We are developing international partnerships with groups of independent, fundamental churches all around the world. Not in order to get them to join IFCA International, but to encourage them in their own national fellowships, and to maintain avenues of communication for prayer support, counsel, encouragement, and fellowship. It's only a beginning, but it will only increase in momentum now that the inertia is overcome.

Independent Fundamental Churches of Korea

**Rev. Les Lofquist
Executive Director**

On August 5-12, 2003 I went to South Korea in order to meet the pastors who are organizing a new fellowship called The Independent Fundamental Churches of Korea (IFCK). These three pastors are: Dr. Paul Myung-gil Yoon (no relation to IFCA International Army Chaplain Paul Yoon), Pastor Hyoung-ro Yoon (no relation to the above men), and Pastor Kyoung-tae Kim.

These three faithful pastors learned about IFCA International from the son of Dr. Paul Yoon, who attends The Master's Seminary and goes to church where Pastor Nam-min Cho ministers. Pastor Cho is a very enthusiastic member of IFCA International and he told Paul Yoon, Jr. all about the fellowship of IFCA International. Paul Jr. in turn told his father back in Korea, who then spent hours in South Korea on the IFCA website learning all about us. Pastor Cho has translated three IFCA documents into Korean with permission from the Home Office and sent them to Korea: the IFCA International Doctrinal Statement (including the Movements Contrary to Faith), the "Salvation by Grace Through Faith" brochure (distributed to all members in 1991 and included in every membership packet since then), and the IFCA International Application for Vocational Christian Workers. Dr. Yoon in turn has printed up 10,000 of the IFCA/IFCK Doctrinal Statements and "Salvation by Grace Through Faith" brochure for wide-spread distribution throughout Korea.

Pastor Cho communicated with these men prior to our visit, and then accompanied me on this trip to serve as my translator. We landed in Incheon International Airport outside of Seoul and traveled one hour south of Seoul to Suwon, a thoroughly modern and very beautiful city of over 1 million people. The three pastors live in different districts of the city, but meet together every Tuesday morning for prayer and Bible study. They have founded the Independent Fundamental Churches of Korea (IFCK) and seek to recruit more men in the days to come.

When we arrived in Korea, I met for over 25 hours with these brothers, interviewing them, carefully explaining the IFCA Doctrinal Statement, leading Bible studies covering IFCA doctrinal distinctives, telling them how we are organized, answering their questions. I went to their churches and preached in two of them. I came away with a profound respect for them.

They told me that because they have taken a strong position against the modern Charismatic movement, they are not able to fellowship with the Pentecostals in Korea. The Pentecostals are very strong in Korea and have Korea's largest churches (including the largest church in the world). To explain what the Bible teaches, Dr. Yoon has authored an excellent book entitled *Biblical Understanding of the Gift of Tongues* (also translated into English) and has distributed

over 20,000 copies in Korea. After reading this book, Pastors Yoon and Kim sought out Dr. Yoon and began meeting with him regularly.

They explained to me that because they clearly embrace a Dispensational hermeneutic, they do not hold to Covenant theology. Therefore, they do not baptize infants and are thoroughly Premillennial, Pre-Tribulational in their eschatology. These doctrinal convictions mean they are not received by the Korean Presbyterian churches, which comprise the majority of the Protestants in South Korea. It grieves them that they are called members of a cult by many Korean Presbyterians.

All three pastors have paid a great price to be doctrinally distinct from the Korean Pentecostals/Charismatics and Presbyterians. But they have done so with great determination and conviction. For the week that I was in Korea, I was constantly reminded of the founding of the IFCA in 1930 around Billy McCarrell's desk in Cicero, by men with similar conviction as these Korean brothers. I was deeply moved by those reminders.

Prior to my return to the United States, it was my advice to these three Korean brothers that they proceed in this fashion:

1. All three of them officially apply to join IFCA International. While in Korea I was able to thoroughly question them about their applications and verify that they indeed do believe exactly what we do in IFCA International. The Credentials Committee received their applications to IFCA International and after thorough scrutiny, these three pastors were accepted into membership with IFCA International.
2. All three of them stay connected to us as members of IFCA International for continued encouragement and accountability.
3. Continue to expand the IFCK without having the new IFCK members attempt to join IFCA International. In IFCK membership, they should use the same process and criteria that IFCA International uses, but IFCK members would not join IFCA International but the IFCK. These three pastors would then serve as the official leadership team for IFCK and all IFCK issues would be handled by them and not by us here in the USA.

When we were in Korea, Pastor Nam-min Cho began to consider how he would proceed. We discussed beginning Korean Bible Mission modeled after Chinese Bible Mission of San Francisco (founded by Pastor Sen Wong). The idea is that this mission would plant new IFCA International churches and sponsor ministries among Koreans here in the USA. It would also provide a rallying point for other Korean IFCA International pastors and churches here in the States. It would also provide a vehicle to "reach back" to Korea from the USA. Pastor Cho is hoping to do this in the days to come. Pray for this.

These are great and worthy goals for our IFCK brothers in Korea and Pastor Nam-min Cho in America. They will only come to fulfillment, however, if God wills it and enables it to be. Please pray for Korea and our Korean brothers all around the world. May they accomplish great things for the glory of Jesus Christ.

A National's Perspective on Missions

Andy Girwarnauth

As a national working in my own country of Guyana, South America, I believe I have an inside perspective on missions. It has been my experience in the last fifteen years of evangelism, church

planting, and training of nationals, that there is such a thing as a "national advantage". This is not to dismiss the valuable work of our North American missionaries, but only to show that our national brethren are uniquely equipped to reach their own people. It is the duty of the church today to come alongside the national churches and help in developing their potential.

It has been my privilege to observe that the national worker has a high level of fervency in their ministry. They take seriously 1 Peter 4:8, which says that we need to have fervent love one for another. The expression of love that the nationals demonstrate for each other and for the lost is very contagious. Many Guyanese believers, converts from Hinduism and Islam, are expressing the love of God in a radical way. In just one example, a Muslim man whom I led to the Lord went back to his village and brought out his entire extended family to hear the gospel. Because of his boldness, four came to Christ. Generally speaking, it is not uncommon to see these believers reaching out to those who despise and reject them for their faith. Christ's love and forgiveness enables them to overcome the fear of witnessing to their family and friends.

It is encouraging to observe the strong faith of the national Christian. They truly must live out their faith on a daily basis. It is humbling to see our national brethren around the world living out James 2:8, "I will show you my faith by what I do." There are many countries that are closed to North American missionaries. The national Christians are taking the lead even in the midst of severe pressure and persecution. In anti-Christian cultures, especially among Hindus and Muslims, the strong faith of the national Christians enables them to stand firm in the face of opposition. Their fervent love and courageous faith compel them not only to evangelize their people, but to disciple them in their walk with Christ. Others may come and go, but the nationals are there to stay. Many times, in the arena of missions, attrition is an issue. There are visa problems, family problems, ill health, and discouragements, allowing an opportunity to leave the field. For the national worker, such is not an option. His faith is tested and tried, and for the most part, he continues on in his country in spite of the obstacles Satan may throw in his path.

There is a personal sacrifice the indigenous missionary makes to spread the gospel to his own people. Philippians 4:11 says, "For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstance." It is at this juncture that we who are blessed with so much should come alongside and partner financially with them. When compared to the traditional foreign missionary's income, the national's salary is meager at best. He is required to subsist on \$50-\$200 per month, whereas the foreign missionary is asked to raise at least \$3000-\$6000 monthly. Let me also emphasize that in spite of their financial limitations, the results of the national missionaries' ministries are often more productive and long lasting. It is not uncommon to find national pastors in India, for example, establishing several congregations, running orphanages, and Bible institutes.

In these last days, it is important that we maximize our missions dollars and use the Lord's money as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If we do not take seriously the opportunities before us to undergird the remnant around the world, other religions will take over. It is no secret that Islam's agenda is to become world dominant, and they are not afraid to use their money to do it. It is a shameful thing when we who have so much fail to stand with the great number of national workers. God himself has raised them up to reach every tongue, tribe and nation for His glory.

Andy Girwarnauth was the first international from outside North America to join IFCA International. He did so after graduation from Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music. He returned to his native country in South America and has ministered in Guyana ever since.

The Great But Uncompleted Commission

Patrick Howell

Most Americans experienced a deep sense of pride as we watched the mobilization of the armed forces of the USA. As we engaged the Iraqi forces, the sheer superiority of American ability to engage in battle was evident. Our military strategy, the excellent training of our troops, and the effective deployment of an amazing array of technical weaponry give evidence to the serious nature of warfare and our resolve to engage in it for one single purpose--victory.

Among the preparations needed to develop an effective strategy for victory is a clear understanding of the tactics required to achieve it. And as important as tactical understanding is to victory, there is yet something even more essential. The resolve to tenaciously engage every battle until victory is complete.

The body of Christ is engaged in warfare far more important than any other in all of human history. Our warfare is worldwide, transcends time, and has eternal implications. Our Lord Jesus Christ defines the divinely determined ultimate objective of preaching the gospel to every creature. He requires that we make disciples of all nations. He commissions us as His witnesses to the most remote part of the earth. Our objective, the evangelization of the lost through the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of local churches is a global undertaking. There are billions of people yet without opportunity to hear the gospel. There are thousands of language groups without the Word of God, without the testimony of a local church. The divine objective is yet to be completed.

Unquestionably, we face bewildering obstacles and intense opposition. There is no question that our objective requires a carefully developed battle plan. This necessitates the candid and accurate assessment of our current strategies and resources. Thus, the three foundational elements mentioned above, strategy, tactics and commitment should be of paramount concern to the church as we embrace our responsibility to evangelize the world. We must examine our strategy, our tactics, and even our commitment toward the completion of the great but uncompleted commission. Would the church be more effective in the stewardship of our God-granted resources and our global objective if we paid greater attention to the details of these three foundational elements?

It may prove helpful to define these three elements. ¹

1. A strategy is "a careful plan that includes the art of devising or employing plans toward a goal."
2. A tactic is "a device for accomplishing an end."
3. Commitment is "an act of committing to a charge or trust" which can include "the state of being obligated or emotionally impelled, a commitment to a cause."

Every church should have a strategic plan toward the completion of the great commission. This plan will include specifically identified objectives and the means and methodologies to which they will be primarily, intentionally, and unalterably obligated--until the commission is complete.²

Some Critical Considerations

Here are some critical considerations that all biblical churchmen should consider carefully. Space limits the discussion, but these are submitted in the hope of stimulating greater strategic development of the church's ability to wage a good warfare on a global scale.

The Graying of a Missionary Generation

The majority of international workers who have faithfully served around the world are reaching the season of life that limits and in many cases precludes them from continuing their work. Is this faithful generation being replaced in sufficient numbers by a new generation whose depth of commitment and breadth of vision will ensure the continuance of their good work?

This reality compounds matters related to the need being great and the workers being few. There must be a determined church-wide effort to cultivate a world wide vision that permeates every congregation. Our pulpits and lecterns must challenge a new generation to international ministry. Moreover, every local church must be stimulated toward the demonstration of love and good works that leads to active participation in supporting the fulfillment of the great commission. Everyone in the church matters; everyone in the church must contribute in some way to this great objective.

A Myopic Commitment to Commitment

While there are many reasons suggested for this contemporary evangelical malaise of soul, the common refrain of the day "I am not comfortable with that" captures the essence of the problem. Our culture is fixated upon instant and ongoing self-gratification as the purpose for living--and some contemporary churches sanctify this notion. Thus, it is likely that many in the church will never consider international ministry as a genuine investment of their lives. May I be so bold as to suggest that they are rarely challenged to do so? Do our pulpits give equal emphasis to all the priorities of God's Kingdom or just those that will build our church? Do we challenge our people to cultivate the resolve necessary to fulfill the great commission? The demobilizing deceptions of earthly success will not survive divine scrutiny at the Judgment Seat of Christ. ³

An Unwillingness to Understand the Times

Many assume that since America enjoys an abundance of churches, this must also be true around the world. Moreover, since Americans can hear God's truth in person or via some form of media, we assume that this is also true of the rest of the world. This is not the case. As noted above, our generation is myopic when it comes to commitment, but it is "presbyopic" (an inability to focus clearly on objects nearby) when it comes to current reality. More than three billion people have not heard the gospel in their own language. Three Billion! This is not a matter of indifference to the gospel; they do not presently have the opportunity to hear the gospel. There is no Bible, no literature in their language. There is no church in their culture. No one is reaching them with the gospel. What is worse is that this situation will not change unless biblically minded churches embrace a cogent strategy and a persevering commitment to complete this uncompleted commission. This is a clear and present reality.

A Changing Geo-political scene

The world is changing, as is international opinion of America and Americans. According to a recent poll, citizens of the European Union overwhelmingly fear Israel as the most significant threat to world peace. Perhaps even more stunning, European Union citizens place America second to Israel, just percentage points ahead of North Korea and Iran. ⁴ In light of Europe's passionate embrace of postmodernism and its disdain for biblical absolutes, European tolerance of American evangelical ministry in Europe is uncertain. According to information from the Fellowship of Missions, ⁵ a growing number of European Union states are denying visa requests and renewals to biblically-minded American missionaries. ⁶ There must be a plan to effectively strengthen national churches and their leaders which includes an exit strategy for American workers.

Equipping Nationals Worldwide

Geo-political issues are matters for legitimate national concern. But for the church in America, they should serve as dramatic testimony of the breathtaking need to equip Bible expositors, church planters and exegetically trained theologians throughout Europe and around the world. We must clearly understand the magnitude of the task. The number of those yet unreached is staggering and the American missionary force simply does not have the numbers to meet the objective. Moreover, American missionaries face the formidable challenges of increasing levels of financial support, governments hostile to the gospel, and the time required for culture and language acquisition. We must also consider the growing challenges faced by American missionaries as they seek credibility among the people to whom they hope to minister. None of these issues are insurmountable, but every church must take them into consideration as they assess and develop their international ministry.

Unquestionably, there remains a great need for American missionaries as well as those from other countries. However, as to matters of stewardship and indigenous principles of cross-cultural ministry, it is time for the American church to focus even more intensely upon the effective equipping of national pastors and church planters. This may sound at odds with the need for more American missionaries, but this is not necessarily so. Our decisions regarding whom we send to the mission fields of the world must be informed by a clear understanding of well defined strategies and objectives. This includes a discussion as to what will most benefit the national church. In a situation almost parallel with some elements of American political foreign policy, the American church can unintentionally create a debilitating dependence upon permanent, in-country American resources for church leadership. It is critical that every American church examine its missionary priorities, methodologies, and stewardship. We are waging war for the Kingdom of God and "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."⁷ Is there anything more important than this?

Researchers tell us that as many as 95% of men who step into pulpits around the world every Sunday have little or no training. They have not had the privileged opportunity to study hermeneutics, biblical languages or theology. Most have extremely limited personal libraries or study tools, if any. For many more, ministry training is financially unaffordable, geographically inaccessible, or theologically unacceptable. Only in the most unusual of instances does reliable and substantive Bible exposition result from limited resources. Can we agree that the equipping of those who "have not" be a priority for those who "have in abundance?"

Confusing Missions with Mission

I suggest that we err dramatically when we relegate Missions to just one element of the church's ministry when in fact, Missions is The Mission of the Church. What is the objective of maintaining biblical fidelity and theological precision, of stimulating spiritual growth toward maturity as believers are edified and people evangelized? The church exists to bring glory to God by exalting Him through obedience in every dimension of Christian life and responsibility. Thus, the purpose of the church is to be the vital expression of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world--to all the world. Prior to our Lord's ascension He made His will explicitly known. We are to be His witnesses to the very last part of the earth.⁸ In other words, if the gospel has gone "everywhere" but is yet to go to one particular people or language group, the commission remains uncompleted. This is a clear and present responsibility and in this world--by God's gracious design--it is ours and ours alone. May every church and every churchman embrace the commission of our Lord with all the passion of a soul possessed by God and pursue the great commission with an all-consuming determination to hear from the lips of our Lord Himself, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." May God help us to this end.

1 Merriam - Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Electronic Edition Version 1.5, Copyright 1994-6; Merriam Webster, Inc.

2 For assistance with this process, please feel free to contact the author.

3 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11

4 <http://straitstimes.asia1.com.sg/topstories/story/0,4386,218234,00.html>

5 Personal Correspondence

6 Note that we have yet to say anything regarding the unrelenting influence of Islam, not only in Europe but also throughout Africa and Asia.

7 1 Corinthians 4:2

8 Acts 1:8

Patrick Howell is a long-time member of IFCA International and serves as Executive Director of Strategic Training Resources. STR is a ministry committed to the training of national pastors and church planters by developing active ministry/support relationships between American churches and select Ministry Training Centers around the world. For more information about how your church can partner with STR see www.STResources.net. You can contact STR at 661-718-2273, or email STR at pjh4str@earthlink.net.

Hispanic Church Planting in the USA

Gene Purvis

With nearly 40 million Hispanics in the United States and approximately one million additional Hispanics entering the U.S. annually, we have as many Hispanics in the United States as in all of Central America combined. Hispanics became the nation's largest minority group in 2000, four years before the 1995 projections. The Census Bureau released a report in June 2004 officially placing the Hispanic population at 38.8 million, an increase of almost 9 percent in the two years ending July 2002. That was four times the growth rate for the U.S. population overall and about 14 times greater than the rate for non-Hispanic whites.

However, this exploding Hispanic community is not homogenous. They come from 26 different countries and live in three distinct socio-economic levels, none of which spontaneously mix. They are united by the common thread of the Spanish language, Roman Catholic background, strong extended families, close long-term relationships, and a respect for God. Yet a 2001 Barna survey revealed only 3% of U.S. Hispanics consider themselves evangelical Christians.

Missions can no longer be viewed as across the sea, but across the street. God has brought the world to us and is pressing the vision of reaching the Hispanics for Christ, to disciple them for leadership and to establish Spanish-speaking, Bible-believing churches. How can we who are committed to missions ignore this opportunity and responsibility? This is a matter of obedience to Christ who is populating our Jerusalem with unreached Hispanics.

Missionaries of CAM International are teaming up with local church leadership in the U.S. to respond to this challenge. We are taking aim now, not because America will change but because it is already changing.

CAM History

CAM International was founded in 1890 by Dr. C. I. Scofield to reach his Samaria (the Spanish speaking world of Central America). We presently utilize over three hundred missionaries dedicated to evangelism and church planting from Mexico to Panama and Spain. Since 1979, Hispanic USA Field missionaries have worked with Anglo (English speaking) churches in the United States to reach their local Hispanic populations with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Hispanic USA Field of CAM International was officially established in 1980 for the following reasons:

There were as many Hispanics in the United States as in our combined traditional fields of Central America and Panama.

The numerous CAM-related believers who now live in the United States should be conserved within the evangelical camp by attending strong churches.

CAM has a cumulative expertise which should be shared with evangelicals attempting to reach Hispanics in this country.

Drastically changing political circumstances in Central America forced our withdrawal from some parts of the world.

An established structure for ministering to Hispanics in the United States would facilitate redeployment of many of those people to a meaningful work similar to that in which they are currently involved.

From the vantage point of experience, we now recognize additional reasons for the necessity of the Hispanic USA Field of CAM International.

CAM missionaries give advice and assistance to denominations, church associations, and local churches who seek to reach Spanish speakers in their communities.

CAM's bilingual missionaries are bridging the gap between its predominantly Anglo constituent churches and Spanish-speaking immigrants.

Qualified CAM personnel continue to be effective in ministering to Hispanics when family and personal circumstances call them back to the States.

We can assist local cross-cultural and urban outreach which appeals to the swelling numbers of baby boomers in the churches in the United States.

In the United States we can freely evangelize Mexicans. Mexico has one of the lowest percentages of evangelicals in the Spanish-speaking world, estimated at 3 to 5% nationwide.

Local Anglo churches can see visible results for their mission's investment. We promote a hands-on ministry that:

- 1) Has a successful impact on the people in their community that they formerly could not reach for Christ.**
- 2) Promotes a respect and love for these people in their community.**
- 3) Gives them an opportunity to make a difference in their community as the culture changes.**
- 4) Broadens their horizon for ministry as they witness believers from the Hispanic congregation sharing their testimonies and being baptized.**
- 5) Builds bridges of fellowship and ministry.**

The mission of the Hispanic USA Field of CAM International is to facilitate the planting of Hispanic churches within the United States by working in partnership with both Spanish- and English-speaking ministries. Our vision is that the next great wave of missionary movement from the shores of the United States be Hispanic.

In order to facilitate our mission and vision, the following areas are being addressed :

- 1) Evangelism and Church planting among Hispanics in the United States.**
- 2) Training, materials and resources to equip Anglo and Hispanic churches in new Hispanic ministries.**
- 3) Leadership development through discipleship and mobile Bible Institutes. (IB-FIEL)**
- 4) Formation of a fraternity of Hispanic evangelical churches (FIEL-HUSA) based upon fundamental, conservative doctrinal convictions.**
- 5) Formation of a Hispanic missionary sending agency (FAM-HUSA)**
- 6) Hispanic missionary conferences/seminars focused on local church Great Commission responsibility.**
- 7) Recruiting of bi-cultural missionaries to work among Hispanics in the U.S.**
- 8) Strategic reallocation of missionary personnel to areas of greatest new immigrant populations.**
- 9) Lots of prayer to the Lord of the harvest.**

CAM International currently provides advice and assistance to denominations, church associations and local churches that seek to reach the Spanish speakers in their communities. Its qualified personnel have gained experience from the traditional fields of Central America, Spain, Mexico and Panama and has used this vantage point to bridge the gap between established English-speaking churches and Spanish-speaking immigrants.

We seek to make a difference in our changing culture by promoting a respect and love for the Hispanic community, while broadening the horizon for ministry, and building bridges of fellowship. CAM helps local ministries make an impact on the people in its community that formerly could not be reached for Christ.

We have resource materials and can help with leadership training and can provide resource personnel for equipping the local church in beginning a Hispanic ministry. We also will provide our Hispanic Church Planting Guide together with workshops and seminars to promote and equip new Hispanic ministries.

Hispanic USA stands ready to assist. We have the cultural orientation and we know the relevant issues. We desire to help establish effective goals and strategy, assist in the preparation of a ministry plan and assist in the definition of roles between sponsoring congregations and newly emerging Hispanic ministries

Gene Purvis was trained as an engineer at Georgia Tech before being called to church planting and evangelism. He served 11 years in Central America before becoming CAM International Hispanic USA Field Director for the past 6 years. He lives in Atlanta. He may be reached at...

mepurvis@earthlink.net

The Conference for Church Planting in Germany

Wilfried Plock

First of all I would like to begin by sharing greetings from Germany. In Matthew 16:18 the Lord Jesus says: "I will build my church". To this day the Lord is still building his church, in the United States, in Germany and all over the world. I would like to share with you a little bit of what the Lord is doing here in my country.

After World War II, which Germany started and brought so much pain upon the world, there arose a vision and movement to evangelize our country. This was the time when Billy Graham came over conducting his crusades and when the Janz-Team from Canada and many others started ministries here in Germany. Many people came to know the Lord, but there were only a few Bible-believing churches that were established at that time. As you might know, our country has had up to this day its church-state system, which comprises the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches (made up mainly of Lutheran and Reformed Churches).

This church system is supported through taxes. There are very few denominational-free churches which have never been supported by the government (like America has Methodist, Baptist, Evangelical Free Church, Plymouth Brethren and Pentecostals). So after the war we had a situation where only a few churches were committed to the principles of the New Testament and most of these were planted by American missionaries.

In the late 1970s and 1980s the Lord began a movement of Church Planting. Many churches were planted all over the country. The different denominations, which are not connected to the state, tried to get these young churches to become a part of their organizations and were often very successful. It was during this time in 1983 that the Lord moved upon hearts and the Conference for Church Planting-Konferenz fuer Gemeindegruendung (KfG) was started. God used a church planter Eckehard Strickert, who had the vision, and Ernst Maier, who served as the "theologian" and Roger Peugh, another church planter, to start this conference. Ernst Maier and Roger Peugh are both graduates of Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana in the United States.

This Conference for Church Planting was not designed to be a denomination, but a conference or platform to help get churches started and to edify in biblical doctrine and life as well.

Today the KfG works with churches that are considered independent, fundamental, non-charismatic and non-ecumenical. By the grace of God, the KfG became a trademark for these types of churches in the German language throughout Europe.

It was our heavenly Father's good pleasure to take to Himself the founders of KfG, Eckehard Strickert and Ernst Maier. Both died of cancer. Since 1995 it has been my responsibility to be the Chairman of the Board.

At present our ministry involves the following:

1. We publish a quarterly magazine called Gemeindegruendung (Church Planting). It is distributed free to almost every Bible school student or attendee of a seminary in our country. That has had a huge impact.
2. We have two annual conferences a year. One is held in the spring and the other one in the fall. Our bridge to the IFCA came about in 1992 at our conference. Rev. Alex Montoya was our conference speaker in 1992. Then Dr. Richard Gregory spoke at our conference in 1993, Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum in 1996 and Dr. John MacArthur in 1999 (all of these men are IFCA International members). Also IFCA International member Rev. Dale Sigafos, a missionary to Germany, has been serving on the KfG board for a long time to this day. Our spring conference is

annually held in a place close to Berlin, in the eastern part of our country. In the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany), most of the people consider themselves atheists. We need missionaries and prayer especially for this area. I am grateful to report that there has been a tremendous growth in these conferences. Ten years ago we had 60 to 70 participants. The last few conferences we have had more than 300 people, of which most are involved in church planting. It is also significant that most of the people who come to our conferences are 40 years old and younger. In 1998 we started a branch of KfG in Switzerland. They also conduct seminars and conferences.

3. Our websites offer a good deal of information and materials for those interested. These sites are available in English too. You will find articles and MP3-files, which can be downloaded. We would encourage you to visit www.kfg.org

The Lord has done all this because He is in the process of building His church. We give our thanks and honour to Him! Thank you for praying for Germany!

Wilfried Plock serves as Chairman of the Board for the Conference for Church Planting (KfG). He also serves in pastoral ministry in Huenfeld, Germany and speaks throughout the KfG churches in Germany. He and his wife Sylvia attended the 1998 IFCA International Annual Convention at Quentin Road Bible Baptist Church in Lake Zurich, IL.

Building Church Structures Helps Reach the Lost

Dave Nixon

American fundamental missionary organizations that reach the lost in other countries-particularly impoverished nations-often work hard to equip pastors and plant churches. When they accomplish this it is usually a miracle of God and we rejoice with them as fruit starts to show.

However, this type of work can drain a missionary organization's resources quickly. Pastors and the new believers who make up their congregations are often left with sound Biblical training but lack other basic needs that we in the United States often take for granted. One example of a critical need of believers in other countries would be a building in which to worship.

Hagion International is a new worldwide ministry whose mission is to provide monetary support for Bible-believing congregations in impoverished nations for the purpose of building church structures. Hagion is unique in that it is a "home-grown" ministry of an IFCA church (Hagion is the neuter of the adjective hagios, which means "holy" and is used to describe those structures that are set apart for God. See Heb. 9:2.)

The Lord put the burden to start Hagion on my heart a few years ago and opened the door to partner with my brothers and sisters at Colmar Manor Bible Church in Colmar Manor, Maryland last year when we were incorporated. Our church's pastor, Rev. Ken Burge, gave his blessing and full support to the ministry and serves as vice president of Hagion's board.

Hagion is currently partnering with the Slavic Gospel Association to build church structures across the lands of Russia and is also supporting a building project in El Salvador. Members of the Hagion team visited these countries last summer to get a firsthand look at the conditions faced by believers there as well as to fellowship and witness what God is doing in the hearts of His saints.

What we saw was incredible! Across the lands of Russia, believers don't think twice about walking miles outside of their town in the middle of a harsh Russian winter just to get to their place of worship. Once there, they often worship in run-down buildings with no heat.

Christian saints in El Salvador also walk miles to a church with no air conditioning (it was a "cool" 90 degrees when Hagion team members visited), sit on dirt floors in dangerous neighborhoods and worship the Lord with all their being.

These circumstances may seem bleak by American standards but our brothers and sisters in these countries aren't discouraged by these conditions. What a testimony to finding joy in our precious Savior!

However, the believers in these countries do not protest the fact that if they had more adequate facilities, they could reach even more people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ! In many countries it is tough for our Christian brethren to "compete" with Muslims, Mormons and others who have attractive new buildings with windows and a roof that doesn't leak.

Hagion's desire is to "level the playing field" so the precious saints in these countries don't have to worry about raising monetary resources just to put up a building in order to be viewed as "legitimate" in their communities. Of course, the believers in El Salvador and the lands of Russia will keep worshipping the Lord no matter what, but this is a chance to provide them with resources they would not otherwise be able to obtain.

To most, if they receive enough money to put up a new church structure or renovate an old one, it is something that could only be done by the Lord. When that happens, the church becomes "legitimate" in the community, people want to come and worship and souls get saved and disciplined!

Dave Nixon is President of Hagion, International. He can be reached at 1-877-HAGION-1.

Editor's Note: In this day of developing international partnerships and supporting national workers, there is still a place for the missionary sent out from the U. S. But with soaring costs involved, how can we get our missionaries to the field quicker? This veteran missionary and mission executive provides some answers.

Getting Them to the Field

Jim Brown

Getting first-term missionaries to the field usually takes much longer than anticipated. New recruits spend two to three years doing support-raising activities. Obedience to God's call to become missionaries raises their expectations of God's quick provision for their financial needs. After all, the need on the mission field is urgent. But somehow it rarely plays out this way. Support-raising soon becomes a long, slow grind. It is not long before they realize that they are way out of their comfort zone and somewhat unprepared for the long haul.

Sending churches almost always have their fingerprints on individuals going to the mission field. They recommend them to a mission board, provide godly counsel and ministry experience, commission them, as well as promise a portion of their financial support. But raising personal support is just that--a personal responsibility. Historically most churches have had a hands-off attitude when it comes to support-raising. Yes, they pray and obligate themselves for some financial support, but beyond that there is little involvement. After all, it is thought that completion of support-raising is the final proof of God's call to missionary service.

Most churches cannot underwrite all of a missionary's financial needs, so help is needed from other churches and individual contacts. But change is in the air. Sending churches are becoming proactive in support-raising for new missionaries. Churches are sensing their need to take

ownership of these support-raising activities. When sending churches are willing to step up to the plate, a whole new dynamic is unleashed. Church leaders are coming alongside the new recruits and are contributing more than just prayer. New missionaries have the potential to arrive on the field much sooner when their sending church is involved than if they go it alone.

A variety of creative techniques are emerging. One rural, sending church pastor told me that he considered himself the missionary appointees' agent. He worked tirelessly to get meetings and exposure in other churches. This pastor took ownership! His goal was to get them to the field as soon as possible. It is not surprising that he saw his missionaries leave for language school fully supported in less than a year and a half. It can be done. But church leaders must be proactive and work alongside the missionaries they are sending out.

My grandma had a cistern at the corner of her house. As a five-year-old I was fascinated by the pump on top of this cistern. I would watch her take a pitcher of water and pour it directly into the pump and then immediately begin pumping. Grandma primed the pump to draw up the cistern water! If new ways of attacking support-raising are attempted, the pump has to be primed. So, let me do a little priming.

Planning

Support-raising is not a local church spectator sport in the twenty-first century. The sending church must say, "This missionary is our responsibility!" The first step is to bring together a core group of the church leaders to sit down with the missionary and set goals, establish a time line and begin mapping out the process. A division of responsibilities between the sending church and the missionaries is a vital starting point. Key areas are addressed such as contacting churches, caring for family needs and developing a strategy for sharing the missionary vision. Transition into missionary life for family members must be thought through carefully. Family life should not be disrupted any more than possible. But living expenses, housing, and children's education are issues that need to be adequately cared for. The goal is to gain momentum and then to sustain it.

Some churches make their missionaries part of the church staff. When they are accepted as missionaries, they ease them out of full-time employment so support-raising can be their primary objective. They pay them as they pay the church staff until their support is raised. Even while on the mission field, they are still considered part of the church staff.

If new missionaries are to raise prayer and financial support full-time, then there must be funds available for them to have their needs met. The church that cultivates a missionary vision will invest funds in these new recruits to get them started. Significant bonding is achieved when church members and new missionaries wrestle together in making sacrifices to achieve God's glory.

Financial investment of church funds requires accountability. The core group needs to have written expectations of the missionaries in the form of ministry descriptions. Then periodic evaluations should be done to encourage productivity and to stay on target.

The second step is to establish the percentage of regular, monthly support to be assumed by the sending church. Other churches will be encouraged to consider supporting this missionary when there is a sizeable commitment by the sending church.

The third step is to establish a hundred-mile primary target area around the church. The target area is to identify churches which might be approached for prayer and financial support. When the majority of the support comes from the target area, missionaries will most likely locate in this area during their missionary furlough. Reporting to churches will be much easier for the family

than having to spend months on the road going to distant geographical locations in various parts of the country.

The fourth step is to assist the missionaries in creating a presentation using PowerPoint, preparing missionary messages, developing a display board, as well as being prepared for all kinds of opportunities to share the vision. A clear, well conceived presentation is essential. Missionaries whose attitude is to seize every ministry opportunity whether to children or adults, will find churches more readily responsive to consider being involved in support.

Ministry opportunities within the sending church can provide a live audience to sharpen and hone the presentation skills. The sending church's core group can make a valuable contribution if they will evaluate the presentation and make suggestions for improvement.

The fifth step is for the core group to mobilize the sending church for prayer. A nucleus of volunteers can be enlisted to commit to daily prayer. All support, whether prayer or financial, is God-given. The sending church that engages in daily prayer will see God's provision.

Execution of the Plan

Churches within the target area need to be approached directly by the sending church. A key individual from the missionary's core group should go with the missionary to make the church contact. In the presentation to the pastor or missions committee, the church representative can lay out the vision. He can say, "Our sending church is going to plant churches through these missionaries, and by faith we have taken on one third of their support. We can't do it alone but are looking for other churches who will share our vision for evangelizing, discipling and planting churches on the mission field. Would you consider helping us?"

One church jump-started the whole process by inviting area pastors and their wives to a Saturday luncheon where a missionary couple was introduced and where they shared their missionary. A mission agency representative was present to share how the mission was partnering with the local church. The host pastor distributed an introductory packet of materials. Then he invited each pastor to get to know the missionary couple and consider inviting them for a missionary presentation.

Support is given on the basis of a relationship. Therefore, it is important that the sending church make the missionaries available to prospective churches to get acquainted, as well as for ministry. This might be for as long as a month at a time. Exposure is essential in building relationships with various groups within a church body. This kind of approach will ensure that the missionary has deep bonds rather than a shallow relationship with the church.

Cultivating relationships is crucial to the deputation process. Relationships with churches that invite missionaries for a meeting and individuals who provide hospitality must be carefully cultivated. Missionaries who keep a record of every contact and write these contacts regularly will find that significant relationships begin to develop. Once an individual or a church has committed themselves to monthly support, the missionary must continue to share regularly what God is doing in, through and for them while continuing in support-raising activities. Missionaries who eagerly assume this opportunity will build relationships significant ties that facilitate the bonding process.

The sending church's core group needs to do periodic evaluation of the missionaries' support-raising activities. A wise sage once said, "An unexamined life is not worth living." And that's true of deputation. Time must be given to periodic reviews to analyze and evaluate how well it is meeting the need. Course corrections provide opportunities to address problems, build a stronger presentation, and encourage the missionary.

Part of the evaluation process is for a representative of the core group to witness a church presentation. Objective examination helps the missionary know what is working well and what needs additional work. Ultimately, this shapes a strong and powerful presentation that God will use to impact others and use for His own ends and glory.

Support-raising is actually God's business. All support is God-given and God-provided. He has ways to bring in the necessary funds. It is He who calls. It is He who strategically places missionaries in His harvest and provides for them. It is not up to the missionary to convince people. God does that! But the sending church can be a powerful tool in the hands of an omnipotent God to thrust out workers into His harvest.

After graduating from Dallas Theological Seminary, Jim and his wife Betty invested nine years in ministry with Arctic Missions, Inc. working with Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos. After leaving Alaska, Jim served as Dean and Instructor at Sacramento Bible Institute, then the founding pastor for Cornerstone Fellowship Bible Church in Riverside, CA. Since 1996, Jim has overseen Biblical Ministries Worldwide's Candidate Orientation.

Updates From Iraq

There have been a number of military chaplains endorsed by IFCA International who were deployed in the Middle East this past year. They have been in places like Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, and on ships in the Persian Gulf. These men represent the Lord Jesus Christ and IFCA International as pastors to the military. We are grateful for all of them and have been praying for them during these days of tension and hostility.

One of our Navy Chaplains is LT Alan Lenz now serving with the Marines 1st Force Service Support Group (1FSSG), a transportation support battalion. Chaplain Lenz graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1983, then from The Master's Seminary in 1996. He has been serving as an IFCA International Chaplain in the Navy for the past six years.

Chaplain Lenz was originally deployed to Kuwait in January 2003 then was transferred to Iraq after the war began. He returned home on July 8, 2003 to his wife Brooke and their children Sidney (5 yrs), Elyse (3 yrs), and David (2 yrs). He now is scheduled to be deployed to Iraq once again in 2004 for up to 12 months.

The photos are representative of all the ministries performed by our 47 active duty military chaplains and 20 Reserve duty and National Guard military chaplains. They serve in the Army (37 of them), Navy (18 of them) and Air Force (12 of them). Also we have 12 Chaplain Candidates and 18 Chaplain Applicants.

Please remember these men and their families in prayer. Like our military men and women, they sacrifice themselves in order to serve our country. And as they do, our chaplains ultimately serve the Lord Jesus Christ. We are grateful for all they do!



What Is That In Your Hand?

Alice Zuiderveen

During the months following my husband's sudden heart attack and homegoing, I often found myself crippled with fear. My identity seemed shattered, my lifestyle radically changed. I knew the Lord had some purpose in leaving me here, taking only my husband, but the future looked like a dense fog.

Larry had a successful construction business. I ran the office, he ran the jobs. He often said we made a great team. He loved his work, and was a master craftsman. I didn't mind that most people around town referred to me as "Larry's wife", instead of by my first name. I was proud to be "the woman behind the man". It gave me great joy to assist him in becoming all that God wanted him to be. He was well-known for his beautiful work, his integrity and his constant witness wherever he went.

He often took his skills to mission fields as well. He loved using his carpentry to enable the missionaries to work more efficiently or live more comfortably. Sometimes we went together. Other times he went alone, while I managed business and family matters. The Lord had worked for years, teaching me how to be a true helpmate to him. I had grown to love my role, even the submission. Now all of that was gone.

I immediately took necessary steps to close the business and arranged for unfinished jobs to be done. We held an auction to sell all tools and equipment. The paperwork seemed endless. I'd spent many hours at my desk, working and anticipating Larry's smiles and comments of appreciation. Sitting there now brought great pain. Calls to customers, vendors and co-workers magnified the fact that this chapter of life was over. Nothing would ever be the same.

Our beautiful new home in the country must also be sold. We had designed the house together, line by line. Larry and his men built it. I decorated it with styles and colors we both loved. We had lived there just over one year. Now that, too, must change.

The car we'd driven began having major problems soon after Larry's death. I had to find a different one. Every aspect of life was changing. What would I do? Where would I go from here? What goals should I set? How should I go about finding my way through the rest of this earthly life? My faith was being tested. Surely the Lord would direct me, but how should I begin?

One day, the Lord brought to my mind the story of Moses, especially chapters three and four of Exodus. At one point, as Moses whined with fear of the formidable task God had set before him, God asked him one simple question: "What is that in your hand?" God then went on to demonstrate the many miracles He would do through Moses, if he simply obeyed God's voice.

Contemplating that incident and all the mighty acts of God that followed, I realized I had been suffering from some of the same fears as Moses. Inside, I was asking God how I could handle this new challenge of life He had set before me. As with Moses, God wasn't asking me to devise the plan. He wasn't asking me to set any lofty goals for myself. He simply wanted me to be His willing instrument, His useful vessel. He would show me how He wanted to use the things that were already in my hand.

He had started the first Sunday after Larry's funeral. I went to church with the kids, expecting someone else to play the organ. I thought I should take some weeks off so I could somewhat recover from this trauma. Sitting in the pew, I soon realized the other organist wasn't coming. I felt as if the Lord was pulling me up from my seat, sending me to the bench to join the piano music. As I played for that service, I knew it was the best thing that could have happened. The Lord knew time off would not be best for me.

The Lord also prompted me soon after the funeral to expand the cosmetic business I'd done for several years as a hobby. Larry and I saw it as a fun, relaxing diversion from the often intense office work. It provided times of fellowship and fun with other ladies, giving me many opportunities to encourage women in their Christian walk, and to witness to unbelievers.

As the months go by, the Lord continues to show me other "rods" already in my hand. He has reopened latent ambitions and desires He planted in my heart years ago. I had often pondered why I could not find time to do some of the things I felt sure the Lord had called me to do. I now realize He was saving them for this chapter of my life. One by one, doors open, and the Lord seems to say, "Let me show you how I want you to use this now for My glory."

The pressure is off when I fully place my trust in Him. One step at a time, He leads me. He shows me when to cast down the rod, when to pick it up again. Each day my faith is tested. Daily I must ask for His wisdom and clear direction. As with Moses, He continues to remind me to totally depend on Him. He will use that which He has caused me to have in my hand.

Alice Zuiderveen of Warsaw, Indiana faithfully attends Pleasant View Bible Church. Her husband Larry went to be with the Lord two years ago.

Midwest Church Extension Poised for Launch

It is with great pleasure we announce that many prayers have been wonderfully answered. Three of the IFCA International church-planting agencies serving the Midwestern states (Illinois Bible Church Mission, Indiana Bible Church Mission and Wisconsin Church Extension) have formally culminated their joint merger into one new agency. The name of the new organization is Midwest Church Extension, and it officially begins its operations on January 1, 2004.

Henry Vosburgh serves as the Executive Director of MCE, working with a Board of Directors comprised of the following men:

Pastor Ed Abbott (Gages Lake Bible Church, Gages Lake, IL), Rev. Darrell Bendorf (Harvard Bible Church, Harvard, IL), Rev. Sam Dallessandro (East Hazel Crest Bible Church, East Hazel Crest, IL), Dr. Larry Duncan (Bible Fellowship Church, Olney, IL), Pastor Tim Jeske (Dubuque Bible Church, Dubuque, IA), Pastor David Laborde (Community Bible Church, Paris, IL), Rev. Jim Thompson (Community Bible Church, Portage, IN), Rev. Richard Wahl (River Grove Bible Church, River Grove, IL), Rev. Mike Ward (Townsend Bible Church, Newburgh, IN)

Each of these men has served in varying capacities with the former agencies and collectively they bring to the table considerable experience and wisdom which we believe will serve the new mission agency well.

We invite you to join us in praise to our God for what has been accomplished. His hand of leading has been marvelously evident throughout this two-year process. The clarity of his purpose and direction is certainly attributable to the many prayers that have been offered on our behalf.

Please continue to pray for MCE. For those of you who are reading this, and who reside in our area of ministry, we are earnestly desirous of having an opportunity to share personally, with you and your church, the vision and ministry of MCE.

Throughout the coming year we shall endeavor not only to continue the ministry of planting and re-planting churches, but also to come and minister in as many churches as possible as we share what God is doing in and through MCE. We would welcome the opportunity to come to your church and share the goodness of God in this ministry. If you would like to discuss such a possibility please contact us and let's plan toward that end.

**Midwest Church Extension
PO Box 337
Remington, IN 47977
219.297.3131
Web site: <http://www.ifcamce.org>**

An Idea To Encourage Your Church in Evangelism

Once a quarter have a special Sunday service that appeals to non-Christians. Everything from the music to the message should be directed to the unbeliever. Prepare your message with the non-Christian in mind, using clear terminology and helpful illustrations. Print the passage you are speaking from in the church bulletin or have Bibles available for those without one. Consider topics such as "How do you know when you're good enough to get to heaven?" or "How do you know Jesus Christ was who He said He was?" or messages that address current issues such as guilt and shame. Explain a biblical text that allows you to show how their greatest need is met through the gospel. Consider canceling Sunday school that morning to make it easier for believers to bring friends to the service. Encourage them to invite the non-Christian to lunch afterwards. One couple taking a non-Christian couple out to eat is usually more effective than having a group lunch at the church.

If your church has an idea to encourage others in evangelism, send it to Larry Moyer at lmoyer@evantell.org. Visit EvanTell at <http://www.evantell.org>

To Answer Your Question

Q. I'm afraid the person I want to witness to will ask questions I can't answer. How do I handle that?

A. Satan loves to intimidate believers when they consider talking to non-Christian friends. He often gets us thinking about questions he might ask or about Scripture verses we may not be able to explain.

Do not lose sight of the simplicity of the gospel. Given the opportunity to speak to friends about Christ, many believers don't share the gospel; they try to share the entire Bible! We must be careful that we don't make difficult what God makes simple.

Paul asked the Colossians to pray that when he spoke he would make the message so clear that a non-Christian would have no confusion about what he must do to be saved (4:4). That should be our prayer too.

What is the gospel? Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-4). That is the good news. To be saved, one must admit he is a sinner, recognize that Christ died for him and rose again, and trust in Christ alone to save him. That message is simple yet we make it so complicated.

It's equally important to remind ourselves that men and women do not come to Christ by our persuasion. They trust Christ when the Spirit of God drives home the gospel message, causing them to come to God in faith.

Recalling his entry into Corinth, Paul said, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony about God. For I determined not to know any among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1-2).

Paul was a smart man. He could have refuted any argument opposing Christ's deity, death or resurrection. Yet he realized that what God wanted was a person who would clearly announce the good news of Christ and watch God do His work in people's hearts.

Anyone active in evangelism will agree that the power of the gospel is unfathomable. A young man who trusted Christ in an evangelistic meeting told me, "I walked into this service a convinced atheist. Your message was not designed to prove there is a God. You just sought to answer the question, 'How can a person live forever with the God who does indeed exist?' I can't explain what happened as I sat there but God convinced me that He's real and I want to trust Christ."

Keep your conversation cross-centered. A person who doesn't understand how God can allow so much suffering in the world, or who wrestles with how God can condemn those who have never heard of His Son, still has to face the cross.

The cross leaves no question about God's love. He made that clear when His righteous Son died for unrighteous people (Rom. 5:6-8).

The more cross-centered the conversation, the more difficult it is to refute. A college student once told me that the many imperfections in the world, which God would not allow if He loved people, were keeping her from Christ. I pointed her to the cross and said, "Even if you question God's intellect or wisdom, you can't question His love. Would you do what He did?"

As you consider questions an unbeliever might ask, remember there is nothing wrong with admitting, "I don't know." Offer to search for the answers, but don't feel defeated if you need to say, "I can't answer that."

The people who have all the answers are not necessarily the ones evangelizing the most. The ones who do are characterized by love for the lost and zeal for the Lord. Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, said it well, "Soul winners are not soul winners because of what they know but because of who they know and how much they want others to know Him."

Q. I know we are not to judge. Is it judging someone when you think they are lost and want to share Christ with them?

A. One of our biggest mistakes in handling Scripture is taking verses out of context. Suppose I were to say, "I am staying in Robert's house. Robert has a stove in his house. It reminds me of hell." If someone were not listening carefully, he could spread the rumor that I said Robert's house reminded him of hell. That is not what I meant. That second statement made the difference.

We sometimes approach Scripture just like that--without noting the verses before and after the one we are examining.

Scripture tells us not to judge. Paul said, "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore" (Rom. 14:13). He was discussing differing convictions Christians have about what they may or may not do. James addressed the judging we often do when we disagree with fellow believers (4:11-12). Neither writer referred to salvation in these passages.

Christ came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). As you develop relationships, one of your first concerns should be if a person understands God's free offer of eternal life and has trusted in Christ to save him. To be concerned about anything else and be unconcerned about that is to miss out on the very purpose for which Christ came. Such concern is not judging. It's evangelizing.

R. Larry Moyer serves as President of EvanTell, Inc. and is a consultant in evangelism to IFCA International. These questions may be reproduced in your church newsletter with the footer :

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