

Tod and his friends knew they couldn't respond to the more than 20 million people in Mexico City, but they serve in a small way by offering collateral for a no-interest loan program designed to help break the cycle of poverty. Their efforts affect two or three families at the most.

We belong to the God of the mustard seed, who takes the smallest of actions and makes them significant in His economy (see Mark 4:30-32). Tom Sine writes in *The Mustard Seed Conspiracy*, "God has chosen to change the world through the lowly, the unassuming and the imperceptible."

2. **Start Here.** Involvement with internationals, serving other cultures in our cities or developing a second-language skill can all take place without going overseas. Yet God can use these efforts to prepare us for something international.

Mr and Mrs Anderson decided to start building their world vision at home. Each night they watched the network news together, taking special note of the international reports. During the commercial breaks, they turned down the volume and prayed together for the country or the issue that was cited. After praying about famine needs in North Africa, God led them there on an exploratory trip with World Visions.

3. **Start Now.** *These are good ideas, you may be thinking. I'll have to try them out someday when I have the time.*

If we procrastinate and never ask, we will never find out where God might take us. To grow in vision of God, His world, and our part in it, we need to start today.

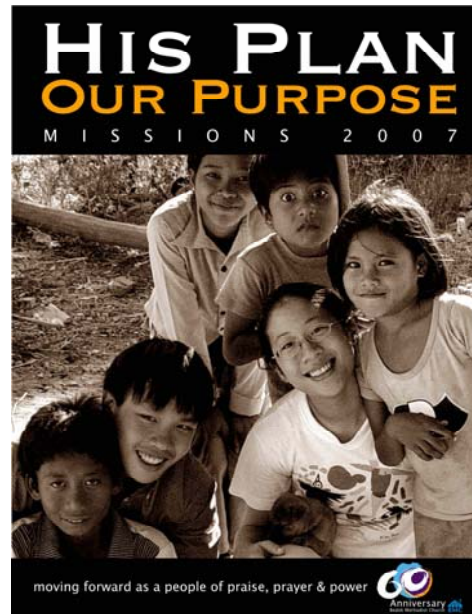
First we can submit ourselves daily to the Lordship of Christ. If we realize that we belong to Him – we are 'bought with a price' (1 Corinthians 6:20) – we will desire to see

the world as He sees it. Our care for the world will arise out of our relationship with Christ.

In spite of the pressures of being young parents, Lou and Donna are asking if God wants them to serve in another country. They tell others, "If we say, 'Our lives are too hectic to evaluate where God might be calling us internationally,' we develop a pattern of running from that question for the rest of our lives. Life will always be hectic, so we need to open ourselves to God's worldwide plans for us now – even if we think we're in no position to respond."

If we do not start now to open ourselves to God as His living sacrifices (Romans 12), we may never hear Him call us into an exciting opportunity to serve Him worldwide.

Start Small
Start Here
Start Now



Care Group Ministry



Especially for
Care Group Leaders
&
Assistant Leaders

Special Issue
MISSIONS



BEDOK METHODIST CHURCH
CARE GROUP MINISTRY

GOING WORLD-CLASS

By Paul Borthwick

YOU CAN BE PART OF GOD'S GLOBAL ACTION!

Will had a strong personal commitment to Christ, but he had never considered cross-cultural service. When I asked him why, he responded without defensiveness. "I cannot preach, translate the Bible or do medical work, so it never entered my mind."

Many of us understand Will's perspective because it is ours. We think that we have nothing to offer that would be useful in ministering to another culture. Before dismissing the possibility, however, consider these truths about missions today.

Ah, the Possibilities

1. A greater diversity of people is needed in cross-cultural service than ever before. A city team from Latin America Mission needs a bookkeeper, a dental hygienist, a child psychologist, and a business manager. The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) recently listed their worldwide needs. The list included :

- A teacher for missionary kids in Venezuela
- A computer programmer in Colombia
- A biomedical technician in the United Arab Emirates
- An X-ray technician in Pakistan
- A maintenance worker in Aruba
- A secretary in France
- A librarian in Spain

The diversity of needs makes it possible for almost anyone to consider a cross-cultural assignment in missions. A woman with grown children told me that her only qualification was her experience as a

mother. I introduced her to the need for dorm parents at schools for children of international workers. "If you become their surrogate mother while school is in session," I explained, "you will be a partner with their parents, who may be serving with a tribe in some remote village." A single woman considers using her degree and experience in plant pathology to help in a reforestation project in West Africa. A TV scriptwriter dedicates himself to Christian broadcasting in Philippines. These opportunities make it possible for many people to consider international service.

2. Short-term service offers a chance to discover if we should go into another culture long-term. Air travel, the existence of the Christian church in many parts of the world and an increasing awareness of other cultures make short-term missions possible. People now cross cultural barriers regularly for service opportunities that last two weeks to three years. Bob and Jean served eight days in West Germany. Then they decided to serve for a summer with Africa Inland Mission at their headquarters in Bristol, England. These two short-term experiences directed their steps and confirmed their call.

3. Tentmaking – using a secular skill to provide income for ministry (see Acts 18:3) – introduces possibilities for outreach into countries that are closed to full-time Christian workers. Tetsunao Yamamori, president of Food for the Hungry and author of *God's New Envoys*, points out that 100,000 new 'tentmakers' are needed. These tentmakers offer the only avenue for entrance into the countries where 90% of the world's unreached live. Several years ago, Bart began to pray with his wife, asking God to direct them on how he could use his banking training and leadership to further God's

kingdom. God led them to North Africa. After training their family departed for a Muslim country that does not allow Christian missionaries. Bart now works 25 hours per week in a bank, enough to pay for their basic needs, and dedicates the rest of his time to befriending Muslims and sharing the love of Christ with them.

4. Opportunities are open world-wide to those in their retirement years. Al and Marilyn serve in Europe. Through experience in the military, then in private business, Al and Marilyn lived in Asia, Latin America and Europe. They have chosen to give themselves to international work in their retirement years. Norm and Gladys use their retirement years to serve the staff of Jungle Aviation and Radio Service and Wycliffe Bible Translators. His computer experience and her nursing and administrative skills enable them to assist others around the world in the task of Bible translation. Mission agencies find increasing numbers of retirees who desire to serve. As a result, many older men and women are discovering greater purpose in their retirement years than they ever thought possible.

Stepping Out

Is God calling us into cross-cultural service? We know it needs to be done, but how do we get started? Three action steps can help.

1. **Start Small.** Malcolm Muggeridge writes, "Christianity is not a statistical view of life. That there should be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over all the hosts of the just is an anti-statistical proposition." In other words, our little efforts do matter!