

Missions in the Modern World

a regular basis everywhere. Millions follow

the stories with morbid interest on televi-

sion, in newspapers and magazines, and via

the Internet. Perhaps the most frightening

element of wars in the twenty-first century

is that the technology to manufacture and

deploy weapons of mass destruction is no

longer limited to governments; wealthy in-

dividuals with a vendetta and the technical

know-how can control the ability to kill by

means undreamed of a few decades ago.

The very technology that cures diseases

previously thought incurable also can be

used to revive old diseases, make new

ones, or even manufacture machine-based

diseases (through nanobots) against which

flesh and blood may very well be completely

defenseless. As if that were not enough, ap-

parently new diseases such as AIDS and

Ebola have arisen in the past fifty years

that have devastated whole populations.

AIDS is projected to reduce life expectancy

in several African nations from over fifty-

five years to less than thirty-five years by

2010, and many Asian countries appear to

be facing parallel consequences. Patrick

Johnstone points out,

The world today is both frightening and fascinating. Wars—including wars of independence (Chechnya), civil wars (Liberia), ethnic wars (Rwanda, Bosnia), religious wars (Iran and Iraq), and, most recently, terrorist wars—seem to flare up on

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

If you are reading this book, chances are you are interested in missions. Maybe you already sense a call from God to go somewhere. Maybe you are interested in other cultures. Maybe you want to go into ministry but not mission and still hope to support mission in some way. Mission has changed dramatically in the past few decades, and we hope to introduce you to the changes and provide you with information that will help you understand what is involved in supporting a missionary work. To start, a brief survey of the modern world will help set the context. After that, we provide you with some exploratory thoughts on mission and missionaries that will set the stage for the rest of the book.

INTRODUCTION

SIDEBAR 1.1

NEW AND IMPORTANT TERMS USED IN MISSION

New terms for missionary working and thinking seem to be coming daily. The following ones, with basic definitions, are used throughout the book. Additionally, many of them are discussed more fully in relevant sections of the book.

10/40 Window: An imaginary rectangular window between the 10th and 40th latitudes, bordered around Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. This window contains the bulk of the unreached peoples in the world and the bulk of the non-Christian religions.

4/14 Window: Developed as a spin-off from the 10/40 Window, this refers to the age at which children are most likely to commit their lives to Christ as well as the ages at which they are most vulnerable.

Coniliar Movement: Among contemporary churches this refers to the churches and denominations that have joined together under various ecumenical organizations, especially the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. These organizations provide a platform for cooperative work through ecumenical councils or assemblies without actually binding the

In Malawi 6 people an hour die of AIDS, which is over 50,000 a year. The economic devastation is horrific with deaths most prevalent among the most economically

active part of the population and with an expected 10 million AIDS orphans in Africa by the year 2000. (Johnstone 1998, 258)

evangelism and church planting as well as development and social transformation.

Incarnational Mission: Just as Christ was incarnated as a person, so missionaries, it can be said, need to incarnate themselves into a new context. They cannot come as newcomers, but they can learn the language and culture of their new context in such a way that they can behave like one who was born in that context.

Indigenous Church: A church that fits well into the local culture. Traditionally, this is defined in terms of "three self's": self-governing (not dependent on outside agencies to make decisions), self-supporting (not needing outside funding to carry on its work), and self-propagating (able to evangelize within its own culture effectively). More recently, self-theologizing—the ability to develop its own theological understandings from Scripture—has been added to the criteria.

Indigenous Missionary: A missionary from what once was considered to be a receiving nation. This term tends to be used broadly of both indigenous evangelists (who do not cross cultural boundaries) and indigenous missionaries (who may cross significant boundaries even though they stay within their country of residence).

Ecumenical Movement: Parallel to the conciliar movement, this generally refers to the twentieth-century churches and denominations working together in the context of the World Council of Churches with a goal of achieving some type of external unity (see Ritschl 1991).

Holistic Mission: Mission that takes into account the whole of human needs: spiritual, social, and personal. Holistic mission includes

Mainline Denominations: The prominent denominations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in North America and Europe, including various branches within the Episcopal (Anglican), Presbyterian (and other Reformed groups), Methodist, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ traditions.

Majority World: Several terms have been used to describe the non-Westernized world, including *developing world, Africa, Asia, and world*, *1970, 9), third world, two-thirds world, underdeveloped world, and world A*. The terminology is still in flux, with political agendas tied to most of the terms. In this book the term *majority world* is used to refer to this area.

Mobilizer: A person who energizes a church or group of people and its resources for mission. This may be an outsider (a missionary, agency representative, a missionary, a consultant) or an insider (a missions pastor, an elder, a member of the church missions committee, a Bible study leader).

Nonresidential Missionary: A missionary who, for whatever reason, is unable to live permanently in the country or among the people group that is the main focus of his or her ministry. This tends to be the case more often in creative access countries.

People Groups: A people group usually is defined by ethnic or linguistic terms. It is estimated that there are some twelve thousand distinct languages and dialects and as many as twenty-four thousand people groups in the world today.

Restricted Access Country: An older term referring to the same thing as a creative access country.

Shalom: The Hebrew word for *peace* in the Old Testament, where it refers to wholeness, completeness, and soundness. It is a holistic term, extending to include spiritual peace (salvation), physical peace (healing), psychological peace (wholeness), and social peace (justice and freedom from war).

Short-Term Missions: This usually refers to trips with a mission focus that range from one week to one or two years. They may be organized by churches, agencies, or even individuals for a variety of reasons (English-language camps, church building projects, evangelistic campaigns).

Spiritual Warfare: Reflects the reality that Satan does not want unbelievers to come to Christ or believers to live fruitful, holy lives. The warfare that Christians face involves Satan and his hosts constantly trying to maneuver them toward spiritual lethargy or depression while they seek to live the abundant life that Jesus promised.

Syncretism: The replacement of core or important truths of the gospel with non-Christian elements (Moreau 2001c).

Tentmaking: A term coined from Paul's stay at Corinth when he made tents so as to not be a burden to the Corinthian church. Tentmaking is the practice of using paid employment to gain and maintain entry in a cross-cultural setting. Tentmakers work as professionals and engage in ministry activities in addition to their wage-earning work.

Transformation: Working to change society by transforming its unjust structures into more just ones. In the twentieth century evangelicals typically did not think of transformation as appropriate missionary work. However, advocates of transformation rightly note that the historical fight against the slave trade, infanticide, widow burning, and foot binding are all examples of transformational mission.

Unreached Peoples: People groups (see above) that currently have no access to the gospel. They are "hidden" not in the sense that there is no way, given current conditions, that they can hear the gospel in their own language in a way that makes sense to them.

As bad as these circumstances are, there are equally frightening religious realities. Converting to Christianity, preaching the gospel, and proselytizing were illegal, and all carried a penalty of death. In When the Taliban ruled, Afghanistan's legal code was notorious among human rights advocates. Converting to Christianity, preaching the gospel, and proselytizing were illegal, and all carried a penalty of death. In Indonesia by the end of 2000 the death toll

from Muslim-Christian clashes was over four thousand, the vast bulk of whom were Christian villagers slaughtered by Muslim jihadists. An additional four thousand were forcibly converted to Islam, and forty-one thousand were made homeless refugees in Mindanao. Christians and missionaries in India have been growing increasingly concerned at extremist statements and actions by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. The burning of a train carrying Hindu pilgrims in February 2002 sparked Muslim-Hindu clashes in which more than six hundred died. In 1997 two Filipino prisoners in Saudi Arabia were beheaded apparently for evangelizing other Filipino cellmates. Harassment and persecution of Filipinos there, including deportation and jail sentences for attending Bible studies in private homes, have been steady ever since.

In Pakistan the death penalty is imposed on anyone who demeans Muhammad, and reportedly, Muslims who have disagreed with Christians take advantage of this law to get rid of their antagonists. In Colombia rebel forces closed three hundred churches, killing twenty-five evangelical pastors in a six-month span in 1999. In Nigeria Brother Andrew's ministry, Open Doors, reported that six hundred Christians were killed and two hundred churches were burned from 1982 to 1996. In Peru Christian pastors were targeted throughout the 1980s and 1990s by Shining Path guerrillas. More than six hundred of them were killed primarily because they preached against the insurgents and gave their flocks strength to say no when coerced to join. The evangelical church, though less than 7 percent of the population, suffered over half of the casualties.

However, Christians not only are being persecuted, but also are persecuting. At

In the realm of ideas the encroachment of postmodern thinking is eroding traditional ideas of truth. Since the gospel is a message of truth, this will have a potentially huge impact on the missionary effort. Truth is no longer thought to be absolute. In 2001 pollster George Barna found that only 33 percent of Americans accept the idea of absolute moral truth (Barna and Hatch 2001, 80). His poll indicated that born-again Christians do better, but still only 49 percent of them accept that moral truth is absolute. For centuries motivation for missionary work has been founded on the truth of the gospel and the need to communicate that truth to people who do not follow Jesus. If Barna's polls accurately reflect American thinking, then motivation for future missionary work by Americans may be in serious trouble. What will the perceived need for the missionary enterprise be twenty years from now?

In addition to an erosion of the idea of absolute truth, other religious systems offer competing and well-articulated views of the world. While missionaries have long gone

QUESTIONS OF TRUTH

is happening?

times, unfortunately, people who claim the name of Christ are the ones who persecute others, even others who also claim Christ's name. Pentecostals in Chiapas, Mexico, have been harassed for years and denied justice by Catholic officials. By 1999 some thirty-five thousand had been forced to flee as refugees. Orthodox leaders and politicians in Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Russia have been working to enact and enforce laws banning or restricting newer religious movements, including evangelical and Pentecostal groups. What in the world

The tendencies of what I am here calling the forces of Jihad and the forces of McWorld operate with equal strength in opposite directions, the one driven by patriarchal hatreds, the other by universalizing markets, the one re-creating ancient national and ethnic borders from within, the other making national borders porous from without. They have one thing in common: neither offers much hope to citizens looking for practical ways to govern themselves democratically. (Barber 1992)

These forces are not unseen in missions. At times the Western dominance in finances and technology can reduce mission efforts to a McDonald's approach ("McMissions"?). North American Christians may "extra-value meal" their methodologies as packaged approaches that look the same everywhere in the world. They also may demand immediate service and solutions for spiritual problems. Within this same outlook many mission agencies focus their efforts on developing churches composed of a single demographic group. Such an approach can result in churches isolated from diversity and insulated by their ethnicity.

SPELUNKING IN THE CAVE OF MISSIONS

Spelunking is the exploration of caves. For many, mission is like an unexplored cave. Full of dark tunnels and twists and turns, and largely unmapped, mission bewilders them with talk of unreached people groups, contextualization, creative access nations, spiritual warfare, nonresidential missionaries, indigenous missionaries, tentmaking, and so on. This may also be the experience of many of the readers of this book. To help you understand the core vocabulary related to

out from American locations to the rest of the world, the rest of the world now is coming to North America, where universities and colleges are teaming with people in search of higher education unavailable in their own countries. Many, having completed their education, choose to stay and settle in North America. Mosques and temples are slowly becoming a normal part of the American suburban landscape. Many of these are being built not for outreach purposes but to service the needs of immigrant communities that are not ready to give up the faith of their home countries. This is a time of unprecedented opportunity; rather than being a world away, people of non-Christian faiths are the next-door neighbors of American Christians.

This influx, however, has had a by-product. As Americans have come increasingly into contact with people of other faiths, questions have arisen about issues of salvation. Is Jesus the only way to heaven? Aren't there many paths to God? Can't other religions produce good and virtuous people? A Barna survey in 2000 of adult Americans showed that 44 percent agreed with the statement, "It does not matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same thing" (Barna Research Online 2000a). Even among those who have had a born-again Christian experience, 31 percent agreed with the statement, "A good person can earn his/her way into heaven" (Barna Research Online 2000a).

GLOBALISM AND TRIBALISM

In the 1996 book *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Benjamin R. Barber proposes two axial principals of our age: globalism and tribalism. He explains in a 1992 *Atlantic Monthly* article,

SIDEBAR 1.2

SO YOU WANT TO BE A MISSIONARY?

*Jim Reapsome
(Reapsome 1999, 53-55 [used with permission])*

Be sure you are sent by the owner of the harvest—the Lord Jesus Christ—to work in his fields. You will go because his harvest is bountiful and his workers are scarce. You will go because others have prayed for you to be sent by him.

Be sure you have Jesus' authority to do his work. You must be in step with the Lord's program, policies, and practices. This is much more important than having some organization's authority to do its work.

Be sure Jesus knows you by name. Don't load yourself up with a lot of stuff you think you will need and that he knows all about you, wants and all. You are his companion and friend. He wants to live in you and bear fruit in within, and through you. You are his plan and program to bring in his harvest.

Be sure you know Jesus' commission and the message he wants you to proclaim. You will find this only in closest communion with him in his words and in prayer. Your calling is to listen before you work, to meditate before you lift a hand. Be sure you know the full scope of working in the harvest, because the fields are full of helpless, harassed, hurting people for whom few others—especially

those in power—have any compassion at all. Their needs are total—spiritual and physical. They must be touched as well as taught, brought to spiritual life in God's kingdom as well as to physical wholeness and health here and now.

Be sure you know that working for Jesus is not work for hire. You did not earn your way onto his work force, and therefore you must not expect wages from him.

Be sure you trust Jesus to give you all you need to survive in the fields. Don't load yourself up with a lot of stuff you think you will need.

Be sure you learn from Jesus how to size up the harvest. Pray to enter the lives of those who will welcome you. Don't be surprised, however, because some parts of the field are not ripe. In fact, some people will reject the workers who bring peace.

Be sure you know you will be working like a sheep among wolves. You will work in weakness, not power. Ask Jesus to teach you how to survive and be a proficient harvester, despite the risks of being caught off guard, or trusting your own cleverness. Be sure you are prepared for persecution at the hands of religious and political leaders.

This will be for the sake of Jesus, so you can testify to him. This is a tough way to harvest, but it is the Lord's way. The Holy Spirit will speak through you, so don't worry about this in advance.

Be sure you are prepared for frightful consequences of your harvesting. Not everyone will be happy. Families will be split by betrayals and even death. You will be hated for your allegiance to Jesus, but don't quit because he will save you. If persecution in one place gets really bad, go to another place.

Be sure you don't put yourself above Jesus. Expect to share his lot in every way. He didn't come for appreciation, respect, and power. He came to seek and to save the lost, and for that he was called the devil. He said his workers should expect much worse.

These are not my instructions. They come from Jesus himself. (Matt. 9:35-10:25).

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What is your first reaction to these observations?
2. Which observations are the most challenging to you? Why?
3. What would you say to a new Christian who tells you that she or he wants to be a missionary?

centered on the church and to express that mission actually is centered on God. In essence, it "refers to everything God does for the communication of salvation" (Stransky 1991) without neglecting the important role that God has assigned to the church in that process.

Missiology

Missiology is the academic study of missions, mission, and *missio Dei*. Missiology has three central concerns: (1) the identity or nature of mission, (2) the goal of mission, and (3) the means or method of mission. To get at those concerns, missiology includes the study of the nature of God, the created world, and the church and the ways they interact. Thus, theology and the social sciences play important roles in missiological thinking. As an academic discipline it is relatively new and not completely settled (see Moreau 2001a).

Mission and Missions

The first distinction made in contemporary mission studies is between *mission* and *missions*. Until the mid-1900s no distinction was made between the two. Generally, the preferred term was *missions*. Out of the work of the International Missionary Council, however, came the recognition that biblical discussion of the idea of mission was not limited to what the church was doing, since God has always been active everywhere in the world (Potter 1991) (we will expand on this idea later). Essentially, *missions* has been relegated to the specific work of the church and agencies in the task of reaching people for Christ by crossing cultural boundaries. By contrast, *mission* is broader, referring to everything the church is doing that points toward the kingdom of God (see Cardoza-Oriandi 2002, 31-48; Moreau 2000b).

Missio Dei

Missio Dei is another term used of mission. Taken from the Latin for "mission of God," its central idea is that God is the one who initiates and sustains mission. At most, the church is God's partner in what is his agenda. This term was coined in part to refute the traditional idea that mission is

Since the understanding of the role of missionaries has changed dramatically over the past century, we need to discuss what a missionary is. The types of work that are called missionary service are almost unlimited today. From Filipino domestic servants working in the Middle East to Brazilian church planters in Portuguese-speaking Africa, from European health workers in Latin America to American microenterprise specialists working in Asia, there are a multitude of Christians working cross-culturally on every continent and from every continent. In one sense they all have the opportunity to work out the general call of God that all Christians share—the call to urge people to respond to Christ and to live lives reflecting his kingdom. The question

Missionary

Since the understanding of the role of missionaries has changed dramatically over the past century, we need to discuss what a missionary is. The types of work that are called missionary service are almost unlimited today. From Filipino domestic servants working in the Middle East to Brazilian church planters in Portuguese-speaking Africa, from European health workers in Latin America to American microenterprise specialists working in Asia, there are a multitude of Christians working cross-culturally on every continent and from every continent. In one sense they all have the opportunity to work out the general call of God that all Christians share—the call to urge people to respond to Christ and to live lives reflecting his kingdom. The question

tor of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* and
World Pulse.

Misunderstanding I: Missionaries are su-

persptual. This may be the most common misunderstanding of all. Some assume that the commitment required to become a missionary puts people who follow that call into a category of super-saints. Others assume that the strangeness and the hardships of life in other parts of the world constantly put missionaries on their knees, and this results in a higher spirituality. The simple reality is that missionaries are human and that some go into missionary work with mixed motives resulting in mixed spirituality. Sometimes missionaries themselves make the problem worse by what they communicate to those at home (either through newsletters, Web sites, or preaching or teaching while on furlough). Missionaries are not superhuman in their faith, and the other members of the church could benefit from knowing this; it might help them see that they too perhaps could serve as missionaries.

A corollary to this misunderstanding is

that missionaries never have spiritual or psychological problems. However, the recent rapid growth of member-care emphasis in mission agencies, together with some of the data developed on missionary attrition and burnout (Taylor 1997b; Whittle 1999), indicates that this simply is not true. Mission agencies have responded to the fact that missionaries hurt just like other people by making available services for those who are seeking to deal with personal pain or anguish. We will return to this topic in chapter 15.

Part of the problem here is that the missionaries themselves may feel that they are not supposed to suffer from anxiety, depression, or paranoia—after all, they are missionaries! However, God does not separate out missionaries as a class to be shielded

remains, however, Are they rightly called “missionaries”? Traditionally, a missionary was a person who crossed cultural boundaries to establish new outreach on behalf of Jesus and plant new bodies of local believers. How are we to understand the new generation of cross-cultural workers who are engaged in effective ministries but do not correspond to the traditional idea of what a missionary is? Additionally, what is the difference between those

*A missionary is a prepared disciple
whom God sends into the world with his
resources to make disciples
for the kingdom.*

Ada Lum (1984, 21)

who cross cultures for a short time (from a week to a year or so) and those who go for longer stays (several years to life)? Are both missionaries?

When you think of the word *missionary*,

what do you imagine? Spiritual giants who look death in the face on a regular basis? People who give up vacation time to build homes in another city? Or, from a more negative view, people who sign their lives away with no chance to ever change their career? Hardy explorers who can't sit still? Religious zealots who travel far and wide searching for potential converts? Some of these misunderstandings are part of American culture, while others typically are found in churches. It will be helpful first to look at these misunderstandings as a backdrop so that what a missionary actually is can be seen more clearly. In addition, sidebar 1.2 provides helpful instructions and

insights from Jim Reapsome, the former edi-

adventure seekers who feel that the grass is greener on the other side—as long as that other side is anywhere but home. But although the life of a missionary indeed can be adventurous, and many of the mission-ary heroes of the past were explorers and adventurers, the glory of adventure seeking often fades quickly in the face of learning a difficult language, adjusting to a new cul- ture, and working with teammates who can be as cantankerous as they are loving.

Misunderstanding 4: Missionaries are al- ways good with languages. Although being adept with languages certainly can make the

*Had I cared for the comments of people,
I should never have been a missionary.*
C. T. Studd (Grubb 1933, 196)

missionary experience much more fruitful and valuable, missionaries (like the general population) vary in language skills. Some work diligently for years to achieve a basic level of fluency, while others seem to pick up the ability to communicate clearly by osmo- sis. Language learning, like culture learn- ing, is a task that the cross-cultural worker will be engaged in throughout life. We will return to this subject in chapter 10.

The good news is that contemporary tech- niques for learning a second language help students to focus on methods that match their individual areas of strength rather than force them all into a single methodological mold. This makes it possible for those who are less gifted in language aptitude to learn fruitfully how to communicate in a new lan- guage, even though they still need time and hard work to be successful.

One of the realities of the urbaniza- tion and globalization of the world is that also have been characterized as glory-bound

Misunderstanding 3: Missionaries are little more than adventure seekers. Missionaries those engaged in cross-cultural service.

stereotype does not apply to the majority of in their home cultures; but certainly that is that some missionaries truly are misfits ing to their home culture. The simple reality are going through reentry shock in readjust- well adjusted in their place of service and missionaries, especially if they have been communication at home seems hard for

It is also true that at times even normal of the past.

economy), that is slowly becoming a thing with the globalization of fashion (and the from those of their home country). However, of service, where tastes may differ radically they may be quite stylish in their country up on the latest in fashion trends (though stereotype. Missionaries typically are not sionaries dress and act can reinforce that

It is true that at times the way mis- alleviate the discomfort of home.

another culture is little more than a way to to fit into their home culture; moving to sionaries as those who simply are unable of skeptics is the characterization of mis- *misfits in their own cultures.* More typical

Misunderstanding 2: Missionaries are

cessing overwhelming events or feelings.

quickly when it's time to seek help in pro- or missionaries you know, recognize more of that from the beginning may help you, to cope with what life brings. Being aware sionaries do hurt, and they do need help delay until it is too late (Hicks 2001). Mis- when they have difficulties, and they may Thus, it is unnatural for them to go for help idea that their marriages have no problems. missionary counselor Scott Hicks points out, supernaturally from pain or distress. As mis-

English has been moving toward being a "world" language (though with countless variations). Urban settings are themselves polyglot, and missionaries who work among people with no common language have found at times that English is appropriate for ministry. This reality should be handled with care; we are not advocating that a missionary plan on avoiding the acquisition of a second language. Nevertheless, it is true that in certain locations language learning does not always occupy the core strategic role that it played prior to contemporary times.

Misunderstanding 5: Missionaries always have a very strong call from God. This misunderstanding builds on the idea that God's call is always identifiable through a tangible event (a dream or vision, an audible voice, an irresistible urge of some type). We will treat this topic in greater depth in chapter 9, but for now, suffice it to say that God's calls on the lives of his people are as varied as the people themselves, and it is wise not to box him into a particular method.

Misunderstanding 6: Missionaries are (bigoted) cultural imperialists. As with the third misunderstanding, this one tends to be perpetrated by those most threatened by the whole idea of mission. There has been an element of truth in this claim, especially in view of the stories of the early missionaries and their attitudes toward the people whom they sought to reach. Although today's Christians must be careful not to judge eighteenth- and nineteenth-century missionaries in light of twenty-first-century sensitivities, they should not shrink from the plain fact that missionaries, like all people, have biases and prejudices.

Particularly tempting to the missionary is the notion that he or she has been sent as an "expert" who is expected to have answered to religious questions. After all, the missionary typically comes to teach and reach rather than to listen and learn. Yet almost all contemporary missions training is geared toward helping the missionary to be successful in listening and learning, for that is the key to a heart of service.

Misunderstanding 7: Missionaries are no longer needed. Some say that the day of the missionary is dead. Perhaps this is a lingering side effect of the call for a cessation of missions that came in ecumenical circles in the early 1970s. It may be due to the recognition of the increasingly pluralistic attitude and growing global nature of the church. The reader may be surprised to know that the authors essentially agree that missionaries are no longer needed—if the missionaries we have in mind are the intrepid explorer, or the commercially minded person who serves in a neocolonial role, or

If every Christian is already considered a missionary, then all can stay put where they are, and nobody needs to get up and go anywhere to preach the gospel. But if our only concern is to witness where we are, how will people in unevangelized areas ever hear the gospel? The present uneven distribution of Christians and opportunities to hear the gospel of Christ will continue on unchanged.

C. Gordon Olson (1998, 12)

the "big man" who demands that things be done his (or her) way at the expense of indigenous sensitivities.

God's work of bringing all people to worship him is far from finished, and thus the need for missionaries will be present until

resent cultures that currently have little or no viable witness for Christ. While away from home, whether as students or professionals or refugees, people tend to be more receptive to the good news of the gospel than when they are in their home cultures with all of their support structures intact. At one time, *home missions* referred to pockets of indigenous people needing to be reached within the home country. Today, the meaning is much broader, and it includes work among resettled urban populations (e.g., Indians in Chicago, Cubans in Miami, Chinese in Los Angeles, Bosnians in New York) as well as work among international students present in every major university in North America.

Misunderstanding 9: Missionaries live in "the bush."

This misconception comes from a stereotype of pioneer missionary work carried out in remote jungles in Africa, highland villages in Papua New Guinea, or the Amazon basin in South America. Although many missionaries live and minister in remote rural settings, urbanization is changing that situation quite dramatically.

Soon more than half of the world's population will live in cities (Barrett, Kutian, and Johnson 2001, 2:541), and some mission agencies are beginning the difficult process of changing deployment based on this reality. Urban mission can range from helping the desperately poor in Manila, to dealing with bureaucracies in Sao Paulo, to meeting the needs of executives in Nairobi—a bewildering set of challenges that requires the very best of our efforts if the world's megalopolises are to have an effective gospel witness. Although it is true that much of the Bible translation work left to be finished is focused on rural pockets of people, our attention is commanded by the simple fact that half of the world's popula-

One of the exciting realities of our day, however, is that the Western missionary is no longer the only one tolling in God's harvest fields. Indeed, the evidence is clear that Western missionaries have become a minority in God's labor force. Even so, the need is for all peoples who have viable churches to be directly engaged in the task of sending their own laborers, and Western churches are not exempt from this responsibility.

A corollary to this misunderstanding is that missionaries, especially Western missionaries, cost too much. We will discuss this subject more fully later, but for now, three important arguments will help clear some of the fog surrounding this misunderstanding.

First, Western churches are not exempt from the responsibility to send workers into the harvest field simply because laborers from the West cost more. Second, if Western churches were to turn away from sending out missionaries and only send money to support less expensive missionaries from non-Western settings, the zeal of the church soon would decline and even the flow of money would be in danger of drying up. Third, although God commands Christians to be good stewards, he never asks them to determine their role purely in light of monetary considerations. God's focus is on reaching people, not on attaining the greatest efficiency in the process. The "most bang for the buck" is not God's ultimate standard of judgment on how to carry out our missionary obligation.

Misunderstanding 8: Missionaries always go overseas. This misunderstanding focuses on the idea that unreached people are always "over there," and the missionary has the task of going to where they are. Immigration and urbanization patterns have resulted in many arrivals in North America who rep-

CASE STUDY: KIDNAPPED!

Paul G. Hiebert

(Hiebert and Hiebert 1987, 230-32 [used with permission])

received word that the Reverend Mark Hanson, one of their missionaries, and Pastor Manuel

had been kidnapped by the Islamic Jihad, a radical Muslim movement in the Philippines. Mrs. Hanson was in Manila with her two young children when the kidnapping occurred. The kidnapers demanded \$50,000 and a promise that the missionaries would leave the area.

They gave the mission two weeks to respond. The year before, the general board of the mission had adopted a policy not to negotiate with terrorists, so the executive committee rejected the ultimatum. At the end of the two weeks, it received word that the kidnapers had killed Pastor Manuel and had set a new deadline for Mark Hanson's death two weeks hence.

Immediately after the kidnapping, the mission had informed the relatives and Hanson's church of the mission policy regarding kidnapping. Although they agreed that paying the ransom

the relatives and the members of the Hansons' church? They will never forgive us if Mark is killed. I can't blame them. I know how I would feel if someone let a person I loved die. I am convinced we must negotiate with the kidnapers on the ransom. If necessary, we can move the missionaries to Devao. They would be safe in the city, and the young Christians in the villages could still meet with them when Gerald realized he held the deciding vote. The committee had discussed the various possibilities many times over the past three weeks since the kidnapping took place. Now they had to make a decision.

The crisis began when the executive committee of the Mindanao Muslim Mission

"We have to decide now," said Gerald, chairman of the missions executive committee. "It is Wednesday, and it takes two days to get the money to the kidnapers. The deadline they gave us was Sunday."

"I vote against paying the ransom," said James. "If we give in now, it will encourage terrorists everywhere to kidnap missionaries for ransom. Besides, we can't agree to their condition that we take our missionaries out of Mindanao and abandon our new converts. That would sentence them to persecution, possibly even death."

"I know," said Sarah, "but what about Mark? I believe they will kill him, just as they did Pastor Manuel last week. They mean business! And what about Rachel and the children? What about all

the same way today. As we will see in chapter 9, God's call to ministry can be fulfilled in numerous ways, of which traditional missionary work is only one.

CONCLUSION

Those who seek to follow God's leading into cross-cultural missionary service face a more rapidly changing and dangerous world than ever before. This is a time in North America when the willingness to sacrifice in the service of Christ is harder to

tion is packed together in sprawling urban landscapes, desperately seeking work, educational opportunities, and a better life than the countryside offers.

Misunderstanding 10: Missionaries sign their lives away forever. Some people think that once you become a missionary, you are stuck for life, and for them, the idea of making a lifetime commitment is too overwhelming to contemplate. Although a permanent missionary commitment perhaps was truer of the missionaries of previous centuries, it certainly does not hold in the

